



Official Funeral



for

Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE

5th July, 1930 – 22nd June, 2025

Multi-Purpose Sports Complex
Road Town, Tortola
Thursday, 17th July, 2025
10:00 a.m.



MY WAY

And now the end is near, And so I face the final curtain
My friend I'll say it clear, I'll state my case of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full, I've travelled each and every highway
And more, much more than this, I DID IT MY WAY.

Regrets, I've had a few, But then again too few to mention
I did what I had to do, And saw it through without exemption
I planned each charted course, Each careful step along the byway
And more, much more than this, I DID IT MY WAY.

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew
But through it all when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out, I tasted all and I stood tall

AND DID IT MY WAY

Lying in State

Wednesday, 16th July 2025

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola, Virgin Islands

Funeral Procession

Thursday, 17th July 2025

8:00 a.m.

Viewing and Pre-Service

Multi-Purpose Sports Complex

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Service

10:00 a.m.

Officiating Ministers

Reverend Morna S Christmas-Frazer,
Superintendent, BVI Circuit
Reverend Erick V Alexander, Circuit Minister
Reverend B Eva Cocks-Williams, Circuit Minister
Pastor Calvin Mills, Church of God Holiness
Dr. C Lucia Woods, Retired Pastor

Organists

Mr. Cedric Dawson
Mr. Richard Sawney, Jr.
Mrs. Annjel Flax-Frett

Interment

Methodist Cemetery

Road Town, Tortola, Virgin Islands

Order of Procession

**House of Assembly to
Multi-Purpose Sports Complex**

Preceding the Hearse

Royal Virgin Islands Police Force Sweep Car
Police Band
Police Honour Guard
Police Flag Party

Immediately behind the Hearse

Family Members
Inner Circle of Friends

Flanking the Hearse

Members of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force

Official Mourners

His Excellency the Ag. Governor
Members of the Fifth House of Assembly
Former Members of the House of Assembly
Senior Managers/Heads of Departments
H. Lavity Stoutt Community College

Survivors

Son

Mitchell Parsons

Grandchildren

Nicholas Phillip
Michelle Parsons
Mica Parsons
Alexandra Parsons
Aribella Parsons-Amoah

Sister

Edith Frett

Brother

Elroy Fahie

Children of

Evelyn Turnbull
Calvin Fahie
Eurman Fahie
Elroy Fahie
Ethlyn Fahie
Alvida Fahie
Nora Fahie
Thelma Fahie
Clarice Turnbull
Dora Fahie
Edith Frett
Elaine Blyden
Amey Boyd
(Her Sisters and Brothers)

Special Nieces

Dr. Janet Smith
Attorney Dawn Smith
Joann Turnbull

Special Nephews

Neil Cline
Reynold Corum
Denzil Daniel
Eddie Fahie
Floyd Fahie
Preston Fahie
Cecil Forbes
Bennet Smith
Dr. Neil Smith
Melito Todman

Close Cousins

Wilbert Venzen
Autley Crabbe and son Dion
Neville Smith
Brenda Lettsome-Tye
Kermit "Webb" Frett
Wesley Braithwaite
Lesmore Smith
Sandra Turnbull
Dion Smith
Calmelita "Calme" Thomas

Close Godchildren

David "Tiger" Smith
Cassandra "Sandy" Smith
Danny Evans
Allen Wheatley
Marc Downing
Rhodni Skelton
Natalie Matthias
Altisha Hodge
Krisma Butcher

Inner Circle Friends

V. Inez Archibald, OBE
Clarice Moore
Doreen Gumbs
Ashley Ritter
Dr. Henry Jarecki
Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton
Janice Skelton
Ishmael Hodge
Varrisse Hodge
Marvin Blyden
Meredith Fahie
Iris Freeman
Wendell Gaskin
Archibald "Archie" Christian
Daniel "Pops" Cline
Cyril Benjamin
Reynold "Rey" O'Neal
Bernice Heyliger
Clyde Lettsome
Beverly Hodge Smith
Andria Norman-Flax
Leroy Huggins
Dr. Charles Wheatley, OBE
James Todman
Ottley Rhymer
Mac Wallace Todman
Margarita Turnbull
Ariel Farrington
Karl Thomas
Wilhelm Samuels
Clement "Tony" Smith

Friends, Caregivers, Drivers

Carmen "Betty" Ortiz Claxton
Cherrylyn Fisher-Evans
Simeon Pope
Roselia Gardener
Lynette Harrigan, MBE
Vincent Foxe
Heather Butcher
Members of the Heritage Dancers
Members of the Blue Wings Softball Club
Dr. Christine Hodge
Dr. Angel Smith
Board of Governors as well as Faculty and
Staff of the H Lavity Stoult Community
College
Reuben Vanterpool
Elmera Blyden
Glen "Dagger" Smith
Prince and Staff of Stoult's Look Out

Many other relatives, friends,
and acquaintances too numerous to
mention

Pallbearers

Members of the Royal Virgin Islands
Police Force

Honourary Pallbearers

Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton
Neville Smith
Marvin Blyden
Karl Thomas
Neil Cline
Allen Wheatley
Denzil Daniel
Blue Wings Softball Club Members
Eddie Fahie
Cyril Benjamin
Wendell Gaskin
Gerald Chinnery
Ishmael Hodge
Archibald Christian
Varrisse Hodge
Reynold Corum
Raymond Mercer
Selwyn Dawson
Ottley Rhymer
Clyde Lettsome
Dr. D. Orlando Smith, OBE
Wilbur Todman
Mitchell Parsons

Children of

Adocia Todman
Frances "Missy" Fahie
Victoria Parrot
Alice Frett
Casilda Potter
Eloise Harrigan
Owen Frett
Weymouth Turnbull
Alton Turnbull
Alphonso Turnbull
Tilbert Turnbull
Lillian Stevens Venzen
Warren Stevens
Henry Stevens
Christinita Stevens Scatliffe
Enid Stevens Charles
(Her Aunts and Uncles)

Remembrance



The Journey to Today as written by Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE

It all began July 5, a bright Saturday morning, when as a girl child, I was born foot first on my great grandmother's estate in the country area of Tortola called Cooten Bay. As a very little person, I was taken to West End. When

my feet were strong enough, on a Monday morning, Mr. Ernest Romney took his grandchildren, Alice and Cyril and me to Zion Hill Methodist School where I learned to, in spite of my being left handed, learned to write.

As a little person in West End, there were the simple pleasures of going in the sea, sailing to Road Town on the Flame to attend Empire Day Celebrations, and staying at Miss Abbott's boarding house on Main Street. Walking to Zion Hill for school during the week and church in the same building on Sunday was as natural as breathing.

My little feet moved again and sailed on the Flame for Road Town where I was enrolled in the Road Town Methodist School. Attending school in Road Town was a wonder. You were in the City and everything was new and strange. The school was not the Church and there were new friends, new teachers, more places to go and, best of all, I discovered my siblings in the country.

By the time I was getting settled in school and accustomed to my new friends and visits in the country with my new found family, it was time to move again, this time to another island. This island, St. Thomas, was larger, stranger, with cars to run you down, wider streets to cross and things you had never seen or even imagined. The school was bigger with a room for every class instead of one room for all classes with the blackboard dividing the classes. The children laughed at the way you spoke and laughed even harder when you said you were from Tortola. They said if you were from Tortola the boom butt in your head or you went in the horse's mouth and came out through his back. Tortola was the last place in the world to be from.

In spite of the early teasing, the children became friendly after a time and school was fun. There were so many different things to do on this island. There were

the movies on Saturday and Sunday, where you suffered through the "Perils of Pauline", watched as Hopalong Cassidy shot all the bandits in the West. There were horse races at Sugar Estate race track where for a dime you could enjoy the Sport of Kings. Wonder of wonders there was ice cream cones, something unheard of in my still beloved Tortola.

With time and a twist in family circumstances, I was fostered by the Gordon family of Sugar Estate, completed high school with a Secretarial Diploma and graduated on June 24, 1949. I worked for a time on St. Thomas, married and relocated to Tortola to my childhood village of West End. There being no employment in West End, I soon moved to Road Town where I became fully involved in the life of the community. I attended church, joined the Girls League, the Festival Committee, organised the Women's Athletic Association, was a member of the Women's National Softball Team, Secretary to various organisations and associations, obtained a life-long friend, Doreen, and we were fixtures at every dance, picnic, and concerts.

I was fortunate to obtain scholarships to Puerto Rico, New York, and Florida which all prepared me for work in which I was involved at various times. I became a teacher in both the Post-Primary and Secondary Divisions of our education system, was responsible for the tourism promotion of the Territory, and was on the ground floor of our venture into tertiary education.

One morning I got the brilliant idea that the guiding hands of women were needed in the halls of our Legislature and I entered the political arena. After a couple of false starts, the walls of Jericho were broken down in 1995 with my election to Council as an At Large member. In Council I rose to Minister of three ministries and finally to Deputy Chief Minister, acting as Chief Minister on many occasions, opening doors through which females now walk with better confidence and ease.

The journey to today included the provisions of training at Umpire's School for six of our umpires, training at Jockey School for two of our jockeys, training at Cosmetology School for two of our young ladies, and provision of Associate Degrees for countless of our young people at our own tertiary institution, HLSCC. It has been an interesting and rewarding journey and while there have been a few regrets, they have been too few to mention, and I really did it my way.

Order of Service

Musical Prelude

Opening Sentences Minister

Opening Hymn: And Can It Be Congregation

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. And can it be that I should gain,
An interest in the Saviour's blood
Die He for me who caused His pain,
For me who Him to death pursued
Amazing love how can it be,
That Thou my God should die for me. | 3. He left His father's throne above,
So free so infinite His grace
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race
'Tis mercy all immense and free,
For O my God it found out me. | 5. No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus and all in Him is mine
Alive in Him my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine
Bold I approach the eternal throne
And claim the crown through Christ my own. |
| 2. 'Tis mystery all the immortal dies,
Who can explain His strange design
In vain the first born seraph tries,
To sound the depths of love divine
'Tis mercy all let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more | 4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke the dungeon flamed with light
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose went forth and followed Thee. | |

Prayer Minister

Declaration Minister

Formal Remembrance (Ms. P's Life Story). Dr. Angel Smith
Mrs. V. Inez Archibald, OBE

Selection: Someone Around God's Throne Scatliffe Sisters

The Old Testament Reading: Psalm 139 1-5; 7-10; 17-18; 23-24 (NRSV) Mrs. Beverly Hodge Smith

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or

sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

1. I was a wandering sheep I did not love the fold
I did not love my Shepherd's voice, I would not be controlled
I was a wayward child, I did not love my home
I did not love my Father's voice, I loved afar to roam.
2. The Shepherd sought his sheep, the Father sought His child
They followed me o'er vale and hill, o'er deserts vast and wild
They found me nigh to death, famished, and faint and, lone
They bound me with the bands of love, they saved the wandering one
3. Jesus my Shepherd is, 'twas He that loved my soul
'Twas He that washed me in His blood, 'twas He that made whole
'Twas He that sought the lost, that found the wandering sheep
'Twas He that brought me to the fold, 'tis He that still doth keep.
4. I was a wandering sheep, I would not be controlled
But now I love my Saviour's voice, I love, I love the fold
I was a wayward child, I once preferred to roam
But now I love my Father's voice, I love, I love His home.

The Gospel: Luke 15: 3-10 (NRSV)Minister

So he told them this parable:
“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.
And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over

ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Minister: This is the Gospel of Christ
People: Praise be to Christ Our Lord

Selection: The Holy City BVI Methodist Circuit Choir

The Sermon.Minister

The Apostle Creed Congregation

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of ThanksgivingMinister

Hymn: Lord I’m Coming Home Congregation

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. I’ve wandered far away from God,
Now I’m coming home;
The paths of sin too long I’ve trod,
Lord I’m coming home. | 2. I’ve wasted many precious years,
Now I’m coming home;
I now repent with bitter tears,
Lord, I’m coming home. | 4. I’m tired of sin and straying Lord,
Now I’m coming home;
I’ll trust Thy love, believe Thy word
Lord, I’m coming home. |
| Chorus
Coming home, coming home,
never more to roam
By Thy grace I will be Thine,
Lord I’m coming home. | 3. My soul is sick, my heart is sore,
now I’m coming home;
My strength renew, my hope restore,
Lord, I’m coming home. | 5. I need His cleansing blood, I know;
Now I’m coming home;
Oh, wash me whiter than the snow;
Lord, I’m coming home. |

The CommendationMinister

The Lord’s Prayer (Sung) Congregation

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Hymn: Will You Meet Me in the Morning Congregation

1. Will you meet me in the morning
On that bright and golden shore
Will your lamp be trimmed and burning
When He comes to take you o'er?

Refrain
Yes I'll meet you in the morning
When I hear the Saviour's call
Come Ye blessed of my Father
To a home prepared for all.
2. Oh to meet on that bright morning
When the clouds have passed away
Oh to walk and talk with Jesus
There to dwell with Him for aye.

3. When we meet our loving Saviour
What a happy hour 'twill be
When we are gathered with our loved ones
And their happy faces see

Selection Trumpeters

* Recessional: Clergy
Casket flanked by Pallbearers
Family Members, Circle of Friends
Official Mourners

*** Please remain in your seats until the Official Mourning Party leaves.**

Graveside Ceremony

Committal and Prayers Minister

Presentation of Territorial Flag to Son: Mitchell Parsons. Jacqueline Vanterpool, Commissioner of Police (Ag.)

Laying of Wreaths Family Members and Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton
Premier, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley
Speaker of the House of Assembly, Honourable Corine George-Massicote
Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn

TAPS André Brathwaite

Hymn: A Child of the King

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold. | 2. My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,
Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;
But now He is pleading our pardon on high,
That we may be His, when He comes by and by. |
| Refrain
I'm a child of the King,
A child of the King:
With Jesus my Savior,
I'm a child of the King! | 3. I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth,
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown. |
| | 4. A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King! |

Hymn: I will Sing the Wondrous Story

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ Who died for me;
How He left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary. | 2. I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way. | 4. He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet;
Then He'll bear me safely over,
Where the loved ones I shall meet. |
| Refrain
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ Who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea. | 3. Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrow's path I often tread,
But His presence still is with me;
By His guiding hand I'm led. | |

Hymn: I am so glad that Jesus Loves me

1. I am so glad that our Father in Heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

Refrain
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves even me.
2. Though I forget Him and wander away,
Still He doth loves me wherever I stray;
Back to His Dear loving arms I do flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me.
3. If there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song through eternity be,
Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!
4. Jesus loves me, and I know I love Him,
Love brought Him down my poor soul to redeem;
Yes, it was love made Him die on the tree;
Oh, I am certain that Jesus loves me!
5. If one should ask of me, how can I tell?
Glory to Jesus, I know very well!
God's Holy Spirit with mine doth agree,
Constantly witnessing Jesus loves me.
6. In this assurance I find sweetest rest,
Trusting in Jesus, I know I am blessed;
Satan, dismayed, from my soul now doth flee,
When I just tell him that Jesus loves me.

Hymn: O Happy Day

1. O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

Chorus
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
2. 'Tis done—the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on,
Rejoiced to own the call divine.
3. Now rest, my long-divided heart,
Fixed on this blissful center, rest;
Here have I found a nobler part,
Here heav'nly pleasures fill my breast.
4. High heav'n that hears the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear!
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless, in death, a bond so dear.

***Please allow the family to retire and mourn quietly**

A Champion of Virgin Islands Culture





I write to pay tribute to the late Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE, who I have only known for a short time but who kindly and generously opened her heart and home to me as Governor.

The details of Mrs. Parsons' life I will leave to those who knew her best. However, the occasions when I had the great fortune of engaging her at her home in Manchester and at functions at my residence were both enlightening and enjoyable experiences.

Mrs. Parsons shared her wealth of historical knowledge and enduring love for the Virgin Islands and its people and helped to put context around important topical issues. She often called me into conversations centred around one concern or another on the direction of the Territory that weighed heavily on her heart. I could sense her passion and fierce advocacy for preservation of the islands' stability and survival - evident in every word she spoke.

It is clear why she was selected as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, a medal which is presented to individuals whose lifelong commitment to the people and Territory is actively demonstrated. I see her many contributions to the life and culture particularly around the island of Tortola, some of which today carry her name.

My deep condolences are extended to family and friends who now mourn her passing.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Pruce', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Pruce
Governor



Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE, was a true trailblazer — a cultural icon, a devoted patriot, and a woman of remarkable vision and unwavering dedication. As one of the first women to serve as a Government Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Council, she shattered barriers and opened doors for future generations. She was among the first women elected to the Legislative Council and one of the inaugural at-large members, leaving an indelible mark on the political evolution of the Virgin Islands.

Ms. Parsons' profound commitment to public service matched her passion for education, healthcare, and preserving our unique cultural identity. Her academic journey took her from Puerto Rico to New York and later to Florida International University, where she studied hospitality management, equipping herself with the tools to serve her people excellently and with compassion.

A tireless champion of Virgin Islands culture, Parsons earned the fitting designation of "BVI Cultural Icon." She founded the BVI Heritage Dancers and led countless initiatives to celebrate, preserve, and promote the Territory's rich traditions. Under her leadership, cultural groups traveled abroad, proudly showcasing the vibrant spirit of the Virgin Islands and ensuring that our heritage would thrive for generations.

Her love for community life was just as passionate. Whether cheering at local softball games or supporting horse racing events, Ms. Parsons' vibrant presence and enthusiasm were felt in every corner of the Territory.

Her contributions and service did not go unrecognized. In 2013, she was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE). Today, the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College is a testament to her lifelong commitment to education, creativity, and community empowerment.

The passing of Eileene Parsons marks the loss of a pioneering leader and a cherished daughter of the Virgin Islands. Her voice, her spirit, and her vision will be deeply missed. Yet, her legacy, rooted in strength, wisdom, and an abiding love for her people, will continue to inspire the Virgin Islands for generations.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley
Premier of the Virgin Islands



It is with a heavy heart and deep sorrow that I express my sincere condolences on behalf of the members and staff of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands for the passing of the Mrs. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE — a remarkable daughter of our soil, a cultural icon, and a pioneering stateswoman.

Mrs. Parsons' legacy will forever be a cherished part of the history of the Virgin Islands. She was a true trailblazer, breaking barriers as the first woman appointed as a government minister, a former Deputy Chief Minister, and Deputy Speaker of the then Legislative Council. Her unwavering dedication to our Territory went beyond politics; her voice echoed with wisdom, courage, and a passionate commitment to the Virgin Islands.

Affectionately known as "Mrs. P," she embodied pride in her culture and heritage, often reminding us of the vital importance of preserving our traditions, sharing our stories, and nurturing the minds of future generations. Her tireless work in education, health, and culture paved the way for many cherished institutions and programmes that remain a cornerstone of our community today.

Mrs. Parsons was not just a leader; she was a staunch advocate for equity and fairness, particularly for women and youth. Her example proved that leadership knows no gender, and her influence in the Legislative Council helped foster a more inclusive and vibrant legislative environment.

As we mourn her loss today, we also take this moment to celebrate her remarkable life — one filled with dignity, purpose, and an enduring commitment to public service. We are ever grateful for her fearless spirit and the lasting impact she has left on the political and cultural landscape of the Virgin Islands.

To her family, loved ones, and the entire Virgin Islands community, our hearts and prayers are with you. May we honour her memory by continuing the essential work she passionately believed in.

Corine George-Massicote
Speaker of the House of Assembly

On behalf of my wife Kharid, the people of the Third District and the territory, I express heartfelt condolences to Hon. Parsons' son: Mitchell; brother: Elroy; sister: Edith; grandchildren: Nicholas, Alexander, Michelle, Mica and Aribella; extended families and friends in their time of bereavement. I also pray that God will show them the way to brighter days ahead.

Myself along with the people of the Third District which I represent, and indeed the territory, were shocked and saddened to hear of Hon. Parsons' passing on the morning of Sunday 22nd June, 2025. If anyone other than those very very close to her tell you they weren't shocked, they can't be serious, because she was reportedly seen at the most recent function prior. Hon Parsons was a fierce and unrelenting fighter for what she believed in, and seldom if ever failed getting it.

I was truly looking forward to hearing her 95th birthday announcement.

It would be disingenuous of me and anyone who knew Hon. Parsons to say she did not have health issues. For me, it started somewhere in her third term in office over two decades ago when she had a leg amputated, and not long after followed with the second. But if you asked anyone, they'll tell you, "that didn't slow her down one bit". As a matter of fact, what she lost in her legs, she gained in her speech. In other words, she didn't skip a beat.

Hon. Parsons and I worked together in the government of 99, she as Minister for Health Education and Welfare, and I as Minister for Natural Resources and Labour. She did not spend much time with the portfolio, as circumstances warranted her dismissal. But nonetheless, our time together in the Legislative Council spanned two full terms.

On the social scene, she was iconic. She was legendary in her every pursuit. Her mark is indelible in the culture of the Virgin Islands, from its fashion to the many persons she has molded.

Hon. Parsons and I shared something special, which I'm not sure if either of us had anything to do with, we would have done it. We shared the same birth date, and for the last 75 years, this is the first year I had to do it without her. We never celebrated together, but every year we knew of each other.

She'll never know this, but I missed her on my 75th.

You've left us without warning, but not without preparation. May the Good Lord guard you and protect you, and take you to that place he promised he went to prepare for you.



Honourable Julian Fraser RA
Deputy Premier and Minister for Environment Natural Resources and Climate Change
Representative for the Third District

As we gather to celebrate the life of a legendary icon, it gives me great honour to reflect on the remarkable and historic journey of the late Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, affectionately called Ms. P or Auntie I by many, including myself.

Ms. P was a woman of many talents and passions: a devoted mother, educator, author, seamstress, politician, sports enthusiast, cultural guardian, and loving friend. When I reflect on her life, I'm drawn to the significance of the dates that mark her birth and her passing. Yet, it's the dash in between that holds the weight of her legacy a lifetime filled with meaningful contributions, rich experiences, and a powerful impact on lives both near and far.

Her career path was one of passion and purpose. Her deep love for the Virgin Islands and her unwavering commitment to public service led her to the political arena. In 1995, she made history by receiving the highest number of votes in the general elections, beginning twelve transformative years in the House of Assembly. She proudly served as the first female Deputy Chief Minister and Deputy Speaker, breaking barriers and paving the way for generations to follow.

Ms. P's love for culture was unmatched. In 1979, she founded the BVI Heritage Dancers, a group created to preserve and promote the rich cultural traditions of the Virgin Islands. Her dedication carried the group across the globe, showcasing our culture to the world. Today, the group continues to thrive as a living legacy of her passion.

A true sports lover, Ms. P and I shared a mutual enthusiasm for horse racing, softball, basketball, and track and field. One cherished memory is the birth of the Fifth District Sankey initiative, an idea that began in her living room. I remember one Sunday vividly; she invited me over as her family was coming to sing, and together we sang as if we were a choir. That moment was filled with joy, unity, and faith. Since then, Sankey Sundays became a staple in the district. And if Ms. P wasn't in attendance usually alongside Ms. Moore, it was only because she wasn't feeling well. Her presence was consistent, and her spirit unshakable.

As we bid farewell to Ms. P, I say with confidence and comfort, "By Thy grace, we will." She held the fort, and this will forever be the song dedicated to her accomplished, inspiring, and unforgettable life.

On behalf of my family and the neighbours of the Fifth Electoral District, I extend my deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the family of the late Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE. May her legacy live on in all of us.



Honourable Kye M. Rymer
Minister for Communications and Works
Representative for the Fifth District

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, affectionately known as “Ms. P.” She was a woman full of life, knowledge, and an unshakeable spirit. She was renowned for her remarkable intellect, fearless conviction, and unwavering service to the people of The Virgin Islands. Her legacy is not only etched in the annals of our Territory’s political and cultural development, but also in the hearts of all who had the honour of knowing her.

Mrs. Parsons was a trailblazer, a pioneer, and a woman far ahead of her time. She dared to speak boldly in rooms where silence was the norm, and she championed causes that uplifted the underserved and protected the soul of these Virgin Islands. Her passion for education, culture, and national identity served as a guiding light for generations; encouraging us to embrace who we are and where we came from.

She wore many hats throughout her life, an educator, cultural icon, legislator, and advocate, but it was her fierce pride in these islands that defined her most. She was deeply proud of our culture and freely shared her knowledge and insights. In fact, she took Virgin Islands culture across the world. Whether through her unrelenting push for cultural preservation or her forthright debates in the Legislative Council, Mrs. Parsons gave of herself fully and unapologetically.

I had the pleasure of serving with her on several committees, including the Territory Day Committee, the H. L. Stoutt Birthday Commemorative Committee, and the Territorial Song and Dress Committee. I will miss visiting her home in Manchester for food and drinks, and of course, her parade float, always complete with that unforgettable peas soup. I admired her gift of storytelling; she could recount history with such vividness, it was as though she had lived every moment herself.

As we mourn her passing, we also celebrate her extraordinary life; a life lived with purpose, conviction, and service. May her memory inspire us to continue building The Virgin Islands she so passionately fought for.

On behalf of my family and the entire Ninth District, I extend my deepest condolences to the family and many friends of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE. We are forever grateful for her voice, her vision, and her valour. She will always remain a giant in our story.

May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.



Honourable Vincent O. Wheatley
Minister for Health and Social Development
Representative for the Ninth District

SHE WAS THE SOIL.

She was the soil.
Not just of it — she was it.
Salt-skin, sun-stitched, root-deep & rain-fed.
A woman grown from the arch of these islands' backs,
Not merely moulded by the land,
But moulded with it —
Braided into its culture,
Carved into its history,
Burned into its memory like footprints in concrete.
She was audacity wrapped in elegance —
A soft-spoken storm,
The kind that doesn't tear down houses,
But rebuilds nations.
She didn't just break barriers.
She bent them until they remembered her name.
Eileene. Miss Parsons. Miss P.
The Honourable. The Unmovable. The Unmistakable.
She walked where women were warned not to.
Spoke when women were told not to.
Stood tall where men once stood alone.
Not to compete — but to complete.
To contribute. To change. To claim.
She was more than Minister. She was mission.
Education wasn't her portfolio — It was her passion.
She wore knowledge like a kente cloth,
Passed it down in lessons and laughter,
In syllabi and song,
In doctrine and dance,
In quiet conviction that a child with books
Could become a nation with backbone.
She was culture's compass,
Tourism's torch,
Sport's spirit.

She was festival and freedom.
BVI Heritage in full regalia.
She was the why behind the what.
She was a mother of memory,
A matron of the arts, A steward of stories.
She didn't just dance our dances —
She dignified them.
Through dance, she lifted our culture.
Through movement, she mirrored our might.
She taught our hips to hold history,
Our feet to honour the fight.
She made our bodies remember —

That we come from freedom,
That we descend from flame.
She was BVI Heritage in motion.
Not just a keeper of culture — A conductor of it.
She didn't just perform heritage — She protected it.
She didn't just chair the parade. She carried it.

She was a mother of the Virgin Islands—
Not just in flesh, but in force.
She bore the weight of this Territory in her womb of will,
Carried its culture in her spine,
Its children in her chest,
Its future in her fingertips.
She birthed ideas before they had names,
Pushed through pain to give this land breath.
She mothered movements. Midwifed meaning.
Held the crying of a country and rocked it into peace.
She didn't just love the Virgin Islands —
She laboured for the Virgin Islands.
She led the Virgin Islands.

She didn't ask to be let in — She entered.
Not with noise — but with knowing.
Not with anger — but with ancestry.
She was purpose with pulse.
She didn't just open doors — she built the corridor
And I?
I walk in the hallway she carved.
Not with ease — but with honour.
Not by invitation — but insistence.
Because like her, I had to push past the pause,
To claim the space not often offered.
Not because the door was open,
But because her footsteps dared me to try.
She was the ink and the index.
The page and the publisher.
She didn't wait for others to write the record
She authored it.
She spoke truth in a tongue carved by fire and faith.
She was bold — Not belligerent.
She was proud — Not problematic.
And most importantly she was unapologetic!
She was not just from this place —
She was this place.
And even when she left the chamber,
She never left the cause.

So, what now, Virgin Islands?

Now — We carry the weight.
We lift what she laid down —
Not as a burden but as a birth right.

To her family —
the ones who knew her before the titles,
before the tributes —
who felt the full gravity of her love
when the rest of us only caught glimpses in speeches and
service — thank you.
You gave her to us — again and again —
when you could have held her close.
You lent us her laughter, her wisdom, her presence,
even when it cost you time,
even when it cost you rest.
She was so much to this Territory,
but she was everything to you.
The root. The rhythm.
The unspoken answer to a thousand questions.
We honour you as we honour her.
Because behind every great woman
is a family who bore the weight of her greatness in quiet
strength.

To the men — especially in these halls —
This is not a woman's tale alone.
This is a story of leadership.
Of courage. Of nation-building.
Of what it looks like when we honour wisdom
Not by who it comes from but by what it carries.

To the women —
You are not alone on this climb.
She climbed first.
She made a way where none was given.
And when they tried to silence her,
She made her silence speak louder than sound.
Let us not fight one another —
Let us fortify one another.
Let us stand, not just on her shoulders —
But beside one another,
Firm. Fearless. Free.

To the young —
The students, the seekers, the dreamers:
Your inheritance is not just sunshine and sea.
It is sacrifice. It is strength. It is stories like hers —
Of how one voice, unafraid, can change everything.
So, study hard. Speak truth. Show up.
And when your name is called —
Answer with your whole chest.
The future is not far off.
It's in you now.

To the people — all our people:

This Territory is more than land.
It is living.
It breathes through us,
From Jost to Anegada,
Yes — we are a melting pot.
But melting doesn't mean losing.
It means learning. Lifting. Loving.
And our culture — the one she carried —
Is wide enough for all who walk in respect.
So let us use our voices not to divide,
But to draw near.
To build bridges, not bonfires.
To lead with dignity, not ego.
To speak from truth, not tribe.
Because in the end —
We are one soil.

So, when I say she's gone,
I do not mean vanished.
No. I mean... Returned.
To the soil she once shaped.
To the womb of the wind,
To the hush of the hilltops,
To the drumbeat of destiny.
Her life? A ledger of legacy.
Her name? A north star in the archives of our becoming.

And the soil she now returns to
Still remembers her name.
She was the soil.
She was the standard.
She is the legacy.
Rest, Honourable Eileene L. Parsons.
You've tilled the ground.
Now we will plant.
And one day —
May we bloom like you.



Honourable Sharie B. de Castro
Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
Territorial Representative

Today, I join the Territory in reflecting on the remarkable life of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, a distinguished public servant and cultural champion, who served the Virgin Islands with unwavering pride and purpose. From her first appointment to the Public Service in April 1951 until her passing on 22nd June, 2025, Mrs. Parsons remained a steadfast advocate for these islands and our people.

Her life's work was a testament to her unyielding commitment to the advancement of the Virgin Islands. Her legacy is not only etched into the foundations of our nation, but interwoven into the very fabric of our Territory: in our classrooms, our political institutions, our cultural expressions and our sporting achievements.

Over the course of nearly six decades in public service, Mrs. Parsons held numerous roles, ranging from Junior Clerical Officer to educator, legislator and ultimately a cultural preservationist and icon. In each of these capacities, she exemplified the highest ideals of service, demonstrating integrity, resilience and an abiding love for her country.

She was, without question, a trailblazer: resolute, principled and ever courageous in the face of adversity. In the House of Assembly, Mrs. Parsons was known for her forthrightness and fearlessness, often challenging the status quo in defence of justice and equity, even when doing so meant confronting colleagues or personal acquaintances. She was the voice of the voiceless, and in her commitment to principle, she embodied the very ethos of public service: maintaining impartiality, honesty and integrity.

As a cultural advocate and icon, Mrs. Parsons played a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining the Territory's cultural identity. She was instrumental in the evolution of the Emancipation Festival, actively participating in the parade, whether in a troupe, aboard a float, or as a member of the Heritage Dancers. She was a tireless proponent of preserving our beloved fungi music and is rightly credited as the founder of the BVI Heritage Dancers, a group which continues to serve as a living embodiment of Virgin Islands tradition. To Mrs. Parsons, dance was more than performance; it was a form of storytelling, a means of honouring heritage through movement and rhythm.

Her contributions extended far beyond the realms of government, education and culture. In sports, too, she left an indelible mark. Mrs. Parson also held leadership roles with the Blue Wings Softball Club, the BVI Softball Association and the BVI Olympic Committee, exemplifying her belief in the transformative power of sports.

Whether advocating for political progress, uplifting communities through education, preserving culture or promoting national pride through the arts and sports, Mrs. Parsons stood as a beacon of excellence and conviction. She was not only a legislator or civil servant, not merely a historian or cultural icon, she was a nation-builder who believed in the promise of these islands and laboured tirelessly to preserve and elevate our heritage.

The Office of the Deputy Governor and the Public Service of the Virgin Islands honour the extraordinary life and legacy of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE. May her life's work serve as an enduring inspiration to generations yet to come, reminding us all of the sacred responsibility we carry to continue the noble mission she so valiantly advanced: the continued betterment of the Virgin Islands.



David D. Archer, Jr.
Deputy Governor



We celebrate the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of the incomparable Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE—a woman of grit, grace, and unwavering dedication to our Virgin Islands. Known affectionately as “Ms. P,” she transitioned quietly on 22nd June, just shy of her 95th birthday, leaving behind a life filled with historic firsts: the first Director of Tourism, among the first women elected to the Legislative Council, the first female government minister, and Deputy Chief Minister. Her leadership was rooted in service, dignity, and a fierce commitment to nation-building.

Eileene Parsons was a cultural torchbearer—reviving traditions, founding the Heritage Dancers, creating symbols of our identity, and helping shape our national consciousness. Her influence extended into education through her pivotal role in establishing H. Lavity Stoutt Community College and her visionary input into our healthcare infrastructure via the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital.

A formidable politician, she challenged the status quo, sparred with giants, and elevated debate with purpose and eloquence. Her voice commanded attention—stirring hearts, inspiring change, and reminding us all that politics, when grounded in principle, is a noble pursuit. Beneath her formidable exterior was a deeply human woman who endured loss and pain—raising grandchildren after the death of her daughter and overcoming physical hardships, yet her spirit remained unbroken.

Her generosity knew no bounds; she dedicated herself to her community, her friends, and her country—embodying the resilient, caring spirit of the Virgin Islands. Her contributions to arts, culture, education, and civic life ripple through generations. Every institution she influenced and every tradition she preserved bears her mark.

As the representative of the Sixth Electoral District, I am truly elated that the people of our district saw it fit to honor Ms. P with the Lifetime Achievement Award just last month. We expressed our gratitude while she was with us—an act of profound respect. Today, I vow to carry forward her torch, honouring her words, her work, and her spirit, which will never be forgotten.

May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

Honourable Myron V. Walwyn
Leader of the Opposition
Representative for the Sixth District



Today, we pause to honour the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Eileene Lucia Parsons—cultural icon, educator, political trailblazer, and fiercely patriotic Virgin Islander. Janice and I extend heartfelt condolences to her family and close circle of friends. Your loss is shared by a grateful community.

West End, in my District, was part of her early nurturing before pursuing opportunities for education and development in Charlotte Amalie, Puerto Rico, Oswego State University in New York, Leeward Islands Teacher Training College, and eventually Florida International University where she earned her BSc in Tourism. She was deeply committed to learning—not just for herself but as a mission for others. In the USVI, she worked closely with Dr. Arthur Richards, serving during his time as Commissioner of Education and later at the College of the Virgin Islands. Upon returning home, she made her mark at the Tourist Board and became the first Cultural Officer in the territory.

Her voluntary life was rich and varied—ranging from Festival Committees to the BVI Community Singers (though she couldn't carry a tune!), the BVI Heritage Dancers, the BVI Amateur Softball Association (where she once served as Vice President of the Regional Softball Federation). She loved the arts and was a regular for any performance at the HLSCC Auditorium named in her honour. She was instrumental in bringing legendary acts to the territory such as trumpeter Chuck Mangione and the Harlem Boys Choir. Her passion for the arts will also be remembered in her leading role in the Heritage Dancers, that group's memorable August Monday floats and the commissioning of the Fahie Hill murals, led artistically by renowned VI artist Reuben Vanterpool.

Eileene was persistent. In politics, she stood in the face of fierce competition—running in 1983, 1986, and 1990 against Hon. Cyril B. Romney before making history in 1995 as a top vote-getter At-Large.

Personally, my closest working relationship with Ms P was at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. For over 25 years, I was privileged to work with her either a colleague or a Board Member at an institution that we both loved. She was the College's first employee, serving as Registrar, and was instrumental in establishing the College Board and guiding the opening of H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (then BVI Community College) on January 14, 1990. Drawing on her previous experience at CVI, she used her relationships and deep institutional memory to help launch the College.

Ironically, her departure from the College proved to be a gift. In her role in government, she championed a bold and transformative policy: requiring all high school graduates to attend HLSCC before receiving a Government Scholarship. This significantly increased enrolment, enriched the student body—especially with Virgin Islanders—and lifted the College to new heights. Later, during her tenure in the NDP Government (2003–2007), she played a role in introducing free college tuition for Virgin Islanders, which eventually helped the College surpass 1,200 students.

But Eileene was not only a leader—she was a liver of life. She loved an artistic performance, a softball game, a plate at Dagger in Sea Cows Bay, a drink at Stoutt's Lookout in Ballast Bay or hosting friends at her Manchester home. She found joy in the small and the splendid.

And then, the poet. The elegant wordsmith. Eileene Parsons was a master of tribute, regularly penning poems in *The Beacon* and delivering eulogies with dignity, detail, and a touch of rhyme. She honoured H. Lavity Stoutt with a moving poetic piece—and so many others through her unmatched eloquence.

Today, we salute Eileene Lucia Parsons, a national treasure, a cultural icon, and a true daughter of the soil. Thank you for your wisdom, your wit, your work, and your wonderful way of being. You loved these Virgin Islands deeply—and we, in turn, deeply loved you.

Honourable Dr. Karl Dawson
Deputy Speaker
Representative for the First District

Today, my husband Orlando and I join with this Territory in celebrating the extraordinary life of Mrs. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE—a stateswoman, fearless educator, cultural powerhouse, public servant, and beloved daughter of the Virgin Islands. Affectionately known as “Ms. P,” she was a household name whose influence spanned classrooms, stages, ministries, and hearts.

She was once my teacher, and I will never forget how she contributed to my learning by gifting me books my mother could not have afforded. Those books became some of my earliest possessions, and that single act of generosity mirrored the countless other gifts she bestowed on so many throughout her lifetime. Even then, her lessons were never just about Spanish, stitches, or seams; they were about patience, precision, and pride in one’s work. Her true legacy was the belief that hard work always brings reward.

In education, Mrs. Parsons played a pivotal role in shaping our modern system. I recall my time as Permanent Secretary to the late Chief Minister H. Lavity Stoutt, when he committed to expanding tertiary education in our Territory. He chose Mrs. Parsons to help lead that vision—not because of politics, but because he knew she was the right person for the job. Today, the auditorium at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College bears her name, a reflection of her excellence and enduring impact.

Her contributions to culture were equally profound. She founded the Community Singers—of which I was a founding member—and the BVI Heritage Dancers in her own home, often sewing our uniforms herself and teaching the quadrille and promenade with joy and pride.

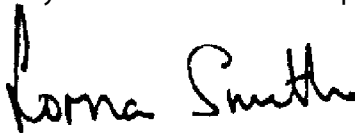
As head of the Tourist Board, she helped connect tourism and culture in meaningful ways. I recall the pride she felt as the Heritage Dancers carried our traditions to audiences far beyond these shores. Even in recent months, she remained active, contributing her wisdom to preparations for the 75th Anniversary of the commemoration of the 1949 Great March and the Restoration of the Legislative Council. She sat among us, full of ideas, passion, and purpose—her spirit never dimming.

Mrs. Parsons possessed a vast and deep knowledge of our Territory and the wider world. That is why she was so often called upon to moderate important events, guiding discussions with insight, clarity, and grace. She was also a gifted writer and poet whose eulogies captured lives with vivid detail and respect. Whether speaking through a megaphone on the campaign trail or presiding with authority over a gathering, her political voice was always clear, courageous, and entirely her own.

As a fellow woman in politics, I admired her independence and her strength. I remember seeing her at home and thinking that Mrs. Parsons showed me—and showed all of us—that a woman can do anything a man can do, and that determination and self-reliance are the keys to making a difference.

Mrs. Parsons’ legacy—across education, culture, and governance—is among the richest our Territory has ever known. We will miss this BVI patriot deeply, but we will never forget her.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.



Honourable Lorna G. Smith, OBE

Junior Minister for Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation

Territorial Representative

On the passing of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, I extend sincere condolences to the immediate and extended families, those who were closest to her, those she called her friends and those whose lives she affected in one way or another. I do so on behalf of my family and I, and the entire fourth district community.

As a community, we honour the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, and a true Virgin Islander whose impact resonated deeply within our community and far beyond. Mrs. Parsons was a trailblazer, a cultural icon, and a dedicated public servant who devoted her life to the betterment of the British Virgin Islands.

Mrs. Parsons' political career was marked by her unwavering commitment to progress. She served with distinction as Minister of Education, Health and Welfare, Deputy Chief Minister and as Deputy Speaker, roles in which she championed initiatives that shaped the future of our youth and preserved our rich heritage.

Her cultural contributions were nothing short of monumental. A founding member of the BVI Heritage Dancers and the founder of the BVI Community Singers, she instilled a love for our traditions in countless individuals. As Chairperson of the Festival Committee 1975 Ltd., she brought our community together. Her foresight ensured that every school was equipped with a plait pole and instruction booklet, safeguarding a vital place of our cultural fabric. The BVI Heritage Dancers float in the August Monday Parade, a testament to her dedication, consistently won first or second prize under her guidance, a source of immense pride for her and the members of the BVI Heritage Dancers. The 50th Anniversary of Festival was named in her honour for the profound impact she made to the development of our Emancipation Festival over many years under her leadership.

Mrs. Parsons was also a prolific writer, her words touching many hearts. She penned countless eulogies, capturing the essence of lives well-lived, and her poetry offered beauty and reflection. Her significant contributions as a co-writer and editor of the "1834 – 1984: 150 Years of Achievement" further displayed her commitment to documenting our history.

Beyond her formal roles, Mrs. Parsons held a profound love for her community. Her passion for softball, particularly her cherished Blue Wings team, revealed a vibrant spirit that connected with everyone around her.

I had the distinct privilege of working alongside Mrs. Parsons as the Education Officer for Culture during her tenure as Minister for Education, Health and Welfare. Her guidance and mentorship were invaluable, shaping my own path. On a personal note, I will forever cherish the memory of Mrs. Parsons selecting and purchasing the gown I wore to compete in the Miss Universe Pageant in Lima, Peru, in 1982 – a testament to her thoughtful and generous spirit.

Our career paths, in many ways mirrored each other. We both served at the BVI Tourist Board, held the post of Education Officer for Culture, and ultimately entered the field of politics with me having the honour of serving as Junior Minister for Culture. Her journey paved the way for many, including my own.

Mrs. Parsons, OBE, has left an indelible mark on the British Virgin Islands. Her legacy will be truly missed, not just by the BVI, but also by communities throughout the region and far afield. She was, to her core, a true Virgin Islander, whose dedication to education, culture, and community uplifted us all.

May the memories of her and the profound contributions she made to the development of our beloved Territory live on forever. May her soul rest in eternal peace.



Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith, MHA
Junior Minister for Tourism and Culture
Representative for the Fourth District



As I write this tribute honouring my beloved and treasured friend, Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE, my heart is filled with sorrow, overwhelming gratitude and love. She was a most extraordinary woman who has been a part of my life for fifty incredible years. She has been one of the greatest gifts in my life and her impact is immeasurable. She has truly been a shining example of what it means to live life to the fullest.

Our journey during those fifty years was filled with precious memories. She was a source of strength and comfort to me during challenging times. She was always an encourager who had the ability to see the best in me and others even when it was not clear to me and those others. It was such a joy to be around her, to be inspired by her unwavering optimism, her infectious smile, and her generous heart. Everything she did was done with a spirit of enthusiasm and creativity.

Mrs. Parsons has been a trailblazer in many fields - education, culture and politics. She has been a great inspiration with her tenacity and devotion to women's equality in politics. She did this by challenging the scope of politics in this Territory when she valiantly fought to become a member of the then Legislative Council, which was, at the time, always dominated by men. Her drive in this area was phenomenal and she was relentless in her efforts to bring about that change. After several attempts, her goal was realised in 1995. Her becoming an elected member to the Legislative Council and being appointed as a Minister of Government, propelled her to a new beginning for women in the Territory. She then became the first woman in the Territory to become a voice in both the Legislative and Executive branches of Government.

She, being deeply tied to her heritage, was relentless in her commitment to the preservation of the culture of this Territory. She saw this as very important to shaping our national identity and consciousness. Among her many cultural likings, were dance and fungi music and she embraced these with a passion like none other. Her passion led to the creation of a dance group called the BVI Heritage dancers, which is still in existence today. She made sure the world got a taste of our culture and was able, with the help of the Government of the Virgin Islands and the BVI Tourist Board, to get the BVI Heritage Dancers and the Lashing Dogs, one of our famous fungi bands, to represent the Territory regionally and internationally. And they did not disappoint her in performing and exposing others to our culture!

I have had the privilege of working with Ms. P in organising festival activities for many years. Those years we worked hard keeping fish fries to raise funds. Ms. P treated us all as members of her family and embraced us with such love and warmth, which continued long after our festival committee was non-existent. Our relationship continued to grow and blossom. With everything she was able to accomplish in the time of her years on earth, I can say with certainty and without a shadow of doubt that she was one of the most loving, compassionate, and dedicated human beings I have known. I am grateful to her and I honour her for the significant contributions that she has made to shape our Territory and to my life and that of my family. May her legacy long live on and continue to inspire present and future generations.

On behalf of my wife Janice, my family and the extended Skelton family I extend my deepest sympathy to her son Mitchell, granddaughter's Alexandra and Arabella, Michelle and Mica, grandson Nicholas and family, her brother and sister as well as Mrs. Parsons extended family and dear friends.

Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton
Member of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition
Territorial Representative



As the Representative of the Eighth District, and on behalf of the East End Community, I extend my deepest condolences to the family of the late Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, especially her son, Mitchell and her adoring grandchildren.

The British Virgin Islands has been shaped by many hands, but few have left as profound and lasting an imprint as the indomitable Eileene L. Parsons, OBE. A woman of fierce intellect, unyielding integrity, and boundless cultural pride, she has stood as both a political titan and a cultural matriarch, not just in the BVI but across the wider Caribbean.

Born in an era when opportunities for women, especially in politics, were few, Eileene Parsons defied the odds with elegance and tenacity. Her name is synonymous with resilience, having risen through the ranks to become the first woman elected as Deputy Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands. Her service as a legislator was marked by fearless advocacy, an unwavering commitment to the people, and a passion for education, equity, and justice.

Eileene Parsons was never content with the status quo. In the House of Assembly, she was a trailblazer who spoke with clarity and conviction, often challenging her peers to think critically, act courageously, and serve selflessly. Her influence on public policy was profound, touching on everything from education and youth development to women's rights and cultural preservation.

But her legacy does not end in the halls of government. To speak of Eileene L. Parsons is to speak of culture — Virgin Islands culture. She was, and remains, a tireless guardian of the Territory's heritage. Her work in founding and supporting institutions such as the BVI Heritage Dance Company, the Virgin Islands Folk Museum, and the BVI Cultural Week cemented her place as a cultural icon. Her voice, both literally and figuratively, sang the stories of the Virgin Islands — from quadrille dances to storytelling, from folk music to oral history.

Her impact was recognised formally when she was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) — but for the people of the BVI, the highest honour is the example she set and the inspiration she provided. She gave generations of Virgin Islanders, especially young women, the courage to speak up, stand tall, and never let their roots be forgotten.

Today, her name graces institutions and hearts alike — a living tribute to a woman who gave all she had for the betterment of her people. As we remember and honour Eileene L. Parsons, we do so, not in mourning, but in celebration of a life lived with passion, purpose, and profound love for the Virgin Islands. As we bid her farewell, we join as a territory to share in the family's grief and loss. Take comfort in the words of Rev 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

May her voice echo through our stories.
May her strength guide our leaders.
And may her legacy inspire generations to come.

Rest in power, Eileene L. Parsons — your light will never dim.

Honourable Marlon Penn, MHA
Member of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition
Representative for the Eighth District



There are souls who don't merely walk among us—they shape us. Mrs. Eileen Lucia Parsons, OBE, was one such soul. She was not just a mentor, cultural warrior, or politician—she was a mother to many, and to the Virgin Islands itself.

To me, her voice was a lighthouse in the storm of public life—whether praying, debating scripture, scolding me in words never found in Genesis or Revelation, or simply offering a moment of calm. Her words carried wisdom, wit, and weight.

In my political journey, I know that behind many silent nudges and quiet votes of confidence stood the firm hand of Eileen Parsons. She had a way of pushing you forward without you realising—until you found yourself halfway up the mountain.

She was a walking archive, a living museum, able to move from scripture to scandal in seconds, often with “swing” in hand and an honest word. Her home was a gathering place, her legacy a living rhythm—seen in the Heritage Dancers she founded to keep our culture's heartbeat alive.

She served as Minister for Education, Health, and Culture. But more than titles, she was Minister of Ministers—unafraid to speak truth, to cross party lines for principle, and to lead with courage others only read about.

And when I sat beside her that final Saturday night and she squeezed my hand—no words, just that squeeze—I knew she was still mentoring, still mothering, still ministering. That squeeze said: “I see you. I hear you. Keep going.”

M.R.S. E.I.L.E.E.N.E P.A.R.S.O.N.S. O.B.E.

A name that deserves its own alphabet:

- Mentor • Resilient • Storyteller • Educator • Inspirational
- Loyal • Elegant • Eloquent • Nurturer • Energetic
- Pioneer • Authentic • Radical • Strong-willed
- Original • National Treasure • Spirit-filled
- Outstanding • Bold • Everlasting

Rest well, Mama Eileen.

Your work is done.

Your seed is planted.

And your legacy?

It will dance, sing, and soar for generations to come.

Honourable Melvin M. Turnbull
Member of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition
Representative for the Second District



It is with a deep sense of gratitude and admiration that I pay tribute to the late Hon. Eileene Parsons, OBE. She was a true daughter of the Virgin Islands and a woman whose love for her country was evident in every word, every action, and every dream she held for our people. Hon. Parsons was not just a participant in our nation's progress; she was a passionate architect of its future, always striving for more—more opportunity, more justice, and more unity for all Virgin Islanders.

As a leading lady among men, she stood with unwavering courage and dignity, clearing a path for women in politics and public life. Her pioneering spirit and determination broke barriers and inspired generations of young women to believe in their own power to lead and to serve.

Hon. Parsons was a torch that carried our culture and lit countless others with what is our Virgin Islands' spirit. Her joyful personality, paired with her strong convictions, created a legacy that will be spoken of for years to come. The people of this territory are better because Hon. Parsons gave of herself so selflessly and loved our islands so deeply. Her light continues to shine in the hearts of all who were touched by her wisdom and warmth. Miss P will be deeply missed. May her memory forever inspire us.

***Honourable Stacy Mather, MBE
Member of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition
Territorial Representative***

Tributes from Former Members of the House of Assembly

TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEENE L. PARSONS

I offer this tribute to Eileene L. Parsons fondly called Miss P in a very personal way because many would pay tribute to her based on their own experiences and the selfless contributions she made to her beloved Virgin Islands.

I met Miss P in 1977, having returned from school in Barbados. She drafted me to be a member of the Festival Committee (1975) Ltd. having been selected by Hon. Ronnie Skelton, Robert Mathavious, Ishmael Hodge and others to save festival from dying. From that moment, Miss P became a very special person in my life for decades to come. In 1983 I was asked by Miss P to be her campaign manager to contest the seat in the fifth District held by the late Cyril B. Romney. She was narrowly defeated.

On 22 December 1984 Euriniece Romney and I were married and Miss P was one of our guest speakers. A few years ago, she gave me a copy of her hand written speech. She was also a guest speaker at our 25th anniversary celebration in December 2009.

In 1986 and 1990 she again contested the seat in the fifth District narrowly losing again. Determined to win, she contested the 1995 election as an At Large independent candidate and won. She contested the 1999 and 2003 general elections as an At Large candidate and retired at the end of the 2003 to 2007 term in the House of Assembly. She was one of the first of two women elected to the House of Assembly and had finally arrived at a place where her voice would echo in its hall for many years, serving in various capacities.

Her contributions to education, culture, the performing arts, sports and politics is second to none and she will be remembered and appreciated for many years. Eileen L. Parsons was respected at home, regionally and internationally. Our territory mourns the passing of a proud Virgin Islander, daughter of the soil, patriot, cultural icon, social and political advocate, leader, trailblazer and role model.

It was an honour and privilege to have known Miss P for nearly fifty years and to be a part of her inner circle. I will miss my dear friend and the bond of love and friendship she shared with my wife and daughters over those years will be in our hearts forever. The many parties and the Thursday gatherings with her close friends will always be cherished.

To her son Mitchell, sister Edith, brother Elroy, grandchildren Nicholas, Bella, Michelle, Lexie and Mica and her extended family, inner circle and friends, may God give you strength during this difficult period to cope with your loss. Miss P will be deeply missed but remember God is your refuge

and strength during this time. We thank God for the years Jehovah allowed her to be with us.

My wife Euriniece, daughters Raeshen and Eryn offer our sincere condolences and sympathy to the entire family. May she rest peacefully.

Archibald C. Christian (Archie)
Former Legislator and Inner Circle Friend

TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEENE L. PARSONS

Like many in our community, my family and I were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Parsons- an icon, a patriot, and a cherished pillar of the Greater Virgin Islands. Affectionately known as 'Ms. P,' she lived a life of remarkable purpose and left an indelible mark here in the Virgin Islands.

I was fortunate to share a special bond with Mrs. Parsons, rooted in our mutual love for horse racing. I remember those days at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, when, as the desk officer for Agriculture, she would call on me to arrange her tent for the races. Ms. Parsons wore many hats: sister, mother, aunt, politician, leader, public servant, and friend to many. Above all, she was a cultural icon- a true patriot whose passion, commitment, and unique style touched every facet of our society. Whether championing sports, preserving our culture, or engaging in spirited public discourse, she did it all her way, with unwavering dedication and grace.

A trailblazer in every sense, Mrs. Parsons broke barriers and opened doors, especially for women across Greater Virgin Islands. Her pioneering spirit continues to inspire generations of leaders, young and old. The footprints she has left in the sands of our islands are undeniable and everlasting. While we mourn her loss, we take comfort in knowing that the God we serve loved her even more and has called her home.

Let us hold fast to our faith, trusting that we will see Mrs. Parsons again. Until then, may her legacy live on in each of us. Rest in Power, Mrs. Parsons!

With heartfelt sympathy,

Julian Willock & Family
Former Speaker

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE, GREAT, HONORABLE EILEENE PARSONS, OBE

One of the last things Honourable Parsons ever told me is something I will cherish for the rest of my life. She said I reminded her of herself when she was younger. That remains one of the greatest compliments I have ever received—and ever could receive.

Honourable Parsons was a cultural ambassador, a cultural icon and a fearless champion of the Virgin Islands. Her dedication to preserving and promoting the culture and heritage of the BVI was unmatched. She understood the significance of Virgin Islands culture and made it her life's work to ensure it was seen, heard, valued, and passed on.

She welcomed literally the entire BVI community into her home, especially on Thursdays—an open-door tradition that fostered connection, conversation, and continuity. I deeply cherish the moments I spent with her during those times.

Outspoken and passionate, she never shied away from expressing her views, even when they were unpopular. But her voice always came from a place of love—for her people, her culture, and her country. Though not everyone agreed with her all the time, there was no denying the weight of her wisdom, or the depth of her commitment.

Honourable Parsons played a significant role in shaping the tourism landscape of the British Virgin Islands. As a member—and a leader—of the BVI Heritage Dancers, she traveled the world sharing our traditions and our story. She didn't just dance; she ensured the traditional dances were documented and taught to the younger generation. She safeguarded the cultural flame and passed it on.

She was also a stalwart in the sport of softball. Her contribution to sports in the BVI is just another testament to her wide-ranging impact. Culture, tourism, heritage, sports—there wasn't a corner of the Virgin Islands she didn't touch.

We must find meaningful ways to honour her legacy—through programmes, initiatives, and institutions that carry forward the work she began. She is a legacy, a national treasure. The epitome of culture. The Honourable Eileene Parsons, OBE—lovingly known to many as “Miss P”—will be deeply missed, but never forgotten.

Her spirit lives on in every dance, every story, every song, and every step forward in preserving our Virgin Islands heritage.

May she rest in eternal peace.

Shereen Flax-Charles
Former Territorial at Large Member

Tributes

HON EILEENE PARSONS OBE

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the Honorable Eileene Parsons in a message from my former Civil Service colleague, Mr. Clyde Lettsome, who I first appointed as Her Permanent Secretary back in 1999. I first met Ms. Parsons when she served as a first-class Minister in the Hon. Ralph T O'Neal's Government, always punctual for Executive Council Meetings and on top of her extensive portfolio of Ministerial responsibilities, and also knowledgeable of the responsibilities of all her fellow Ministers. She always made a positive contribution to Council business and could always be relied upon to articulate the needs for decisions to be fair and for the welfare of the community as a whole. She always spoke with conviction, and passion, for matters she held dear for the good of “her” BVI community.

Eileene, who was at one time the Minister for Education, was passionate about education for the children and youth of the Territory and was one of the architects of the HL Stoutt Community College during the premiership of the Hon. H. Lavity Stoutt. She was also one of the key supporters of the new hospital in Road Town which in time became the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital. She was a great

believer in the independence of the BVI Public Service and supported the advancement of the brightest irrespective of their background or supposed political allegiances. She was an icon for her support of BVI Culture and Sports and was an outstanding role model for girls and young women in the community.

Eileene was always personally very supportive of the receptions which my recently deceased wife, Veronica, and I held at Government House in support of BVI Charities and in particular for The BVI Red Cross, Girl Guides, BVI Reading Council, BVI Animal Society, VISAR and many others. The Hon Eileene Parsons, OBE, was one of the outstanding BVI politicians of her generation and an outstanding representative of her community and territory.

May she rest in the eternal peace of the Lord.

Frank Savage
Former Governor (1998-2002)

EILEENE L. PARSONS OBE

There are few people in life who you feel truly honoured to have known and that, even if your encounters were brief, leave a mark of inspiration that stays with you. Mrs. Parsons was one of those.

I recall in my early introductions in the British Virgin Islands people mentioning that I must meet Eileene Parsons as one of the great 'older generation'. On meeting, I remember my first thought being that she was anything but 'older'. Mrs. Parsons was as lively and quick in debate, ideas, discussion and thought as anyone I had ever met. She combined great intellect, with challenge, wit, humour and a smile, and I valued her insights and ideas greatly.

The histories of nations are made by the people who lead for the future, shaping progress and leaving a legacy for the next generation that is long remembered after their time has passed. Mrs. Parsons will be long remembered. Not just as a political leader with a remarkable career which shaped the development of the islands, but also a cultural icon,

TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF HONOURABLE EILEENE L. PARSONS, OBE:

It is with profound sadness that I extend my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and the people of the British Virgin Islands on the passing of the Honourable Eileene L. Parsons, OBE.

Ms. Parsons was a trailblazer whose voice, leadership, and unwavering commitment helped shape the political and cultural fabric of the BVI. Her distinguished service as Deputy Chief Minister, her key role in the founding of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, and her tireless advocacy for education and the arts will forever be etched in the history of the British Virgin Islands.

She was more than a legislator—she was a cultural icon, a mentor, and a guardian of the islands' identity. The honor of having the main auditorium at HLSCC bear her name is a testament to her enduring impact. Her recognition as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire was well deserved and emblematic of a life lived in service to others.

Even in retirement, Ms. Parsons remained a powerful voice of wisdom and conscience, never hesitating to speak up for what she believed was right. Her legacy will continue to inspire generations.

On behalf of my office and all who respected her vision and voice, I offer heartfelt sympathy and prayers. May her memory be a blessing, and may she rest in eternal peace.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for

supporting the BVI's heritage, tourism and education.

Mrs. Parsons was a remarkable figure whose contributions to the British Virgin Islands have left an indelible mark on the community and beyond. Her unwavering commitment to public service and her legacy of dedication, service, and cultural enrichment will continue to inspire me and many others.

My family and I, send our deepest condolences and best wishes to her family.

Gus Jaspert CMG
Former Governor (2017-2021)

I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

May God grant you peace and comfort as you commit her to eternal rest.

With my deepest sympathy,

Senator Ray Fonseca
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands

TRIBUTE TO HONOURABLE EILEENE PARSONS, OBE

I am honoured to write this tribute for my dear friend and BVI cultural icon Eileene Parsons OBE, whom our mutual friend, Chief Minister Lavity Stoutt, always called "Mrs. P." Eileene was pioneering in every way.

She was an athlete on the first BVI traveling softball team, the first woman Minister, among the first at-large members ever elected (and by the widest margin), founder of the BVI Heritage Dancers, and the most steadfast promoter I know of all aspects of BVI culture. We became fast friends during her days developing HLSCC, where I served on the Board for many years.

I was fortunate to be in a position to assist when she traveled to New York for medical care, losing her legs but keeping her life and high spirit. Eileene loved her family very much, especially her grandchildren. She was lively, beautiful, interested in everything, irreverent, and a great debater. She and I had long debates about a hundred things. While we didn't always see eye-to-eye, we did agree on many things, above all the importance, energy, and beauty of our beloved Virgin Islands. When I think about our time together, I realise we were not just making memories -- we were also having fun! I know I am joined by everyone when I say that I will miss her deeply.

Henry G. Jarecki

Tribute on behalf of the Virgin Islands Honours Committee

I write as Chairman of the Virgin Islands Honours Committee in extending my heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of the late Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE.

On 14 June 2013, Ms. P., as she was affectionately known, was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire during the official ceremony commemorating the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The OBE medal is presented to individuals who have rendered outstanding service within the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories. Her lifelong commitment to our beloved Virgin Islands and the preservation of our heritage made her a most deserving recipient.

Her contributions, spanning culture, tourism, education, and politics, deeply impacted the lives of many. She was once quoted as saying, *"I think I have a love affair with this country,"* a sentiment that reflected her enduring devotion. A passionate advocate for culture, tourism, education and sports, and politics, Ms. P's cultural legacy within the Virgin Islands is both well-known and deeply respected.

She founded the Community Singers and, in 1979, the BVI Heritage Dance Company; an achievement she regarded as her greatest. Under her leadership, the dance company traveled extensively, promoting the Virgin Islands and showcasing our culture to the world.

Ms. P. is also remembered as the visionary behind the iconic murals at Fahie Hill. She once said it brought her great joy to see her idea realised, noting that at the time, "it was the only thing for the tourists to see." Her pride was further amplified by the support she received from then-Chief Minister Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal, who helped secure funding for the project.

Another of her crowning achievements was her instrumental role in the establishment of the Ellis Thomas Downs, regarded as one of the best small horse-racing tracks in the Caribbean. Ms. P was a familiar face at every horse-racing event, embodying the spirit of community and cultural celebration.

She was proud of her journey, often sharing that she came from humble beginnings, and believed that anyone could achieve greatness through preparation and seizing opportunities. Her advice: *"When an opportunity opens a door, enter it. Don't wait to be asked; do what needs to be done to push yourself forward."*

Eileene L. Parsons was a cultural ambassador, a fierce advocate, and a beloved daughter of the soil. As we mourn her passing, let us honour her legacy by continuing the work she so passionately began; preserving our heritage, advancing our people, and loving our Virgin Islands as she did.

May our Lord and Saviour comfort, strengthen and grant peace to us all during this time of mourning.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.



Mr. Ulric Scatliffe, MBE
Chairman, Virgin Islands Honours Committee



SAYING GOOD BYE TO A NATION BUILDER

The Virgin Islands Department of Culture joins the Territory as we mourn the passing of perhaps one of our greatest cultural icons – the Honourable Eileene L. Parsons, OBE - a leader, historian, cultural icon, tourism ambassador, author, sports enthusiast, founder of the BVI Heritage Dancers and the BVI Community Singers – and so much more. She was also a poet, a poet who in 2023, at the age of 92 submitted an unpublished poem in our department's then, LOVE YOUR BVI POETRY COMPETITION. We see it very fitting on the occasion of the celebration of "Ms. P's" life to share this work with everyone. The poem is fittingly titled: BVI LOVE – FOR ALL SEASONS. This poem confirms her unwavering love for these Virgin Islands.

BVI LOVE – FOR ALL SEASONS BY HONOURABLE EILEENE PARSONS, OBE

We love in, with and for BVI Love
Who can forget our love for then politician
"Glannie" Fonseca
Whose oily tongue won hearts with love
With a Civil Servant, Norwell Harrigan, who preached
pride of country
A young man from North Side loved his country
And he swore to render his undying help - with love-
from the burning love of a young Lavity
We were fully immersed in a new BVI Love that is
evidenced in the strong love and the lasting
legacies he left behind
We honoured our BVI Culture
With the dances of our ancestors
Portrayed by Eileene Parsons' BVI Heritage Dancers
And we exhibit our culture with sweet fungi music
Played so tantalizingly by our own Lashing Dogs
We show BVI Love in our Sankey Sing Outs
And more BVI Love is shown to our visitors
With BVI Love we cherish our beautiful beaches
With BVI Love we glory in our okra fungi and fish
With BVI Love we praise the God of our ancestors
All in, with , and for our precious BVI Love - For All
Seasons

May the soul of the Late Honourable Eileene L. Parsons
rest in peace. She is now an ancestor.

The Department of Culture

A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEENE PARSONS

Mrs. Eileene Parsons was truly a beloved treasure of the Virgin Islands, leaving an indelible mark upon the hearts of all who had the privilege to know her. Spanning an extraordinary life from 1935 to 2025, she shone as a beacon of culture, leadership, and dedication.

A trailblazer in politics, Mrs. Parsons broke new ground as one of the first two women to serve in the Legislative Council. Her passion for celebrating and revitalizing local traditions led her—alongside an energetic band of like-minded souls—to breathe new life into the cherished August Festival, ensuring that the vibrant cultural spirit of the Territory would endure for generations.

Her commitment to community blossomed early, as she excelled athletically in high school in St. Thomas and later championed women's softball upon her return home. Renowned for her prowess on the field—as both a powerful hitter and swift baserunner—Mrs. Parsons inspired others to join and grow the sport she loved.

When the British Virgin Islands Olympic Committee was formed in the early 1980s, Mrs. Parsons quickly became an indispensable part of its journey. After the Territory's Olympic debut in Los Angeles in 1984, she generously volunteered her time and talents as Secretary (later Secretary General) of the Committee.

Through her tireless efforts, she attended regional and international Olympic meetings, often working behind the scenes to prepare teams for the Central American and Caribbean Games, Pan American Games, Commonwealth Games, and three Olympic Games—Sydney, Barcelona, and Athens.

Among her many achievements, Mrs. Parsons was especially proud of helping to secure the Territory's participation in the 1987 Pan American Games in Indianapolis, following a challenging year for the team.

Under her stewardship, the team's remarkable fourth-place finish became, and remains, the British Virgin Islands' highest achievement in an international team sport—a testament to her boundless encouragement and belief in our athletes.

Mrs. Parsons's legacy is one of warmth, perseverance, and uplift—a guiding light whose spirit continues to inspire the Virgin Islands community she so dearly loved.

May these cherished memories live on forever

Rey O'Neal
President Emeritus

Ephraim Penn
President

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HON. EILEENE L. PARSONS, OBE

The British Virgin Islands Nurses Association joins the Territory in mourning the loss of a formidable daughter of the soil, the late Honorable Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE. A woman of immense intellect, unwavering courage, and unmatched cultural pride, her passing marks a profound moment in our national history.

As Minister for Health, Education and Welfare from February 25, 1997 to July 20, 2000, Hon. Parsons left an indelible mark on our healthcare landscape. She was a steadfast advocate for the betterment of health services in the Virgin Islands, and her instrumental role in the establishment of the Annex building at the Peebles Hospital stands as a testament to her forward-thinking vision and commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure for our people.

To the nursing community, she was not only a policymaker but a supporter, a woman who understood the critical role nurses play in the development and maintenance of a healthy society. Her leadership opened doors and laid foundations that continue to benefit the healthcare sector today.

Beyond health, Hon. Parsons was a towering figure in education, the arts, and cultural preservation. She taught us to stand boldly in our identity to speak, write, and perform with authenticity and pride. Her voice rang out on platforms across the Territory, always clear, always passionate, and always for the people.

Her legacy is one of service, scholarship, and strength. She inspired us to think critically, act purposefully, and lead with conviction. Her contributions to the Virgin Islands will live on in every nurse who walks through the halls of the hospital she helped shape, in every student who learns about her life, and in every citizen who dares to dream of a better Virgin Islands.

As the BVI Nurses Association, we honour her memory with deepest gratitude. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and the entire community she so deeply loved and served.

May her soul rest in eternal peace, and may her legacy continue to guide and inspire generations to come.

With Respect and Remembrance,

The Executive and Members of the British Virgin Islands Nurses Association



Tributes

A TRIBUTE TO MY DEAR FRIEND, MS. P

There are women who live quietly — and then there are women like her.

Ms. P was a force. A fire wrapped in grace. A woman who spoke her mind, stood tall in her truth, and never once apologised for taking up space. When she entered a room, you felt it. When she spoke, you listened. And when she laughed — oh, how I laughed with her.

Our Thursday meet-ups at her house were more than a routine — they were sacred to me. That was our time: to talk, to reason, to share stories, and lift each other up. Her door was always open, and her spirit filled the space with warmth and wit. Thursdays will never feel the same again.

And then there were our gatherings at the Watering Hole — our little escape, our corner of joy. She brought the energy, the jokes, and the real talk. That was her way: blending wisdom with humour, truth with compassion. She didn't just show up — she made everything come alive.

She was more than just a friend. She was a sister to me. She lived with pride, with purpose, and with a deep love for her culture and her people.

Now that she's gone, there's a silence I can't ignore — a space that will be hard to fill. But what a legacy she leaves behind. I will carry her memory in my laughter, in my reflections, and in the quiet moments where I'll feel her most.

Goodbye, my friend. Rest well, Ms. P. Your presence may be gone, but your spirit will live on in me forever.

AN ICONIC DAUGHTER

This tribute is to a fallen friend of my wife, the late Jennie Wheatley, and me for sixty-two years.

"Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time." - Marion Wright Eldman

Eileene Lucia Parsons, a woman of many parts,
a formidable creation by God,
strong, piquant, and resourceful,
passionate within an ordinary spirit,
carried her homeland's future in her heart,
gave birth to aspects in earth's furnaces.
She provided nurture for that future,
toiled in joys, sweat, and tears,
never bending to defeat or failure,

though knocked about by her own.

She created ways despite great odds
where there were no ways.

She set goals, made plans, and built bridges,
sharing with the unfortunate who could not build.

The family's generous provider,
she withstood and overcame society's grueling blows
holding her brood like a hen keeps her chicks,
mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, family cheerleader,
excelled from slate to iPad and beyond,

from sunny fields to the classroom yields,
from taking instruction to instructing men,

from being led to leading them,
from shaping plans for builders,

to the architect of builders' work

God's child, beautifully and purposefully made.

At Charlotte Amalie High, she blossomed,

In Oswego she matured,

at UVI she excelled,

at FIU she shined

at the slipper factory she taught,

at V. I. Secondary School, she led,

at Post-Primary School, she led and fed,

at the Tourist Board, she created,

as Cultural Officer, she invented,

as Minister of Government, she provided,

at HLSCC, she mended and blended.

always made the best festival float,

founder of the BVI Heritage Dancers.

With legs, she danced with her dancers,

without legs, she danced in her chair,

she danced in the morning,

she danced at noon and in the moonlight.

She walked eight miles to dance

at "Swing High" and "Parachute"

all night till morning light.

The greatest horse race champion,

any day, every day, at Albion.

She opened her heart to the youth and the needy,

lifted those who needed help,

opened her doors to all and sundry,

never despised, rejected, or disowned.

The meek and lowly, friend and foe,

could come, refresh, and leave.

If you 'mash her corn,' take what you get.

Her tongue was boneless

in politics, culture, church, and state,

sometimes like "Damocles sword"

other times "Androcles sword,"

always talented with the gift of gab.

She soared above the ordinary,

with unassumed pride and humility.

Tributes

She lived a selfless life
giving as the Lord had prospered,
sharing with great and small,
struggling with the vices of humankind,
fighting her dragons until she escaped.
Her life embodied the principles she believed,
principles that shaped her character
while weaving the fabric of her community.
On twenty second June, twenty twenty-five
the icy hand of death came and seized her,
then took her to the world beyond.
An earthly loss! A great loss! A silenced voice.
"But death is not the greatest loss,
the greatest loss dies within us while we live."

(Cummings)

Now, the footprints of a vibrant life,
remained ingrained in time,
on the sands of her homeland.
Many women in one woman,
an "E Pluribus unum" woman.
Today the drums will beat loudly,
the funeral notes will rise high,
farewell-tongues will speak exaltingly,
but only the torch of an earthly life remain
burning on in perpetuity,
while her soul rests in eternal peace,
and the bands play on.

Charles H. Wheatley
Friend and co-worker

TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED MOTHER FIGURE

For over 40 years, she was more than a friend, more than a mentor — she was like a mother to me.

There is so much I could say. From a very early age, she welcomed me into her life with warmth, compassion, and unconditional love. She had a way of making you feel seen, heard, and valued — no matter who you were or where you came from. Her kindness didn't ask for recognition; it flowed naturally from a heart that gave freely.

She was there through life's highs and lows — offering wisdom when I was uncertain, comfort when I was hurting, and joy in times of celebration. Her words carried the weight of experience and the gentleness of someone who truly cared. I now find myself thinking, What would she do? — and more often than not, the answer brought peace.

She taught me, not through lectures, but by the quiet power of her example: how to be strong without losing softness, how to care deeply without being consumed, how to give without expecting anything in return.

Even as the years passed, her love never wavered. It became a steady presence in my life — a place I could return to, time and again, for grounding and guidance.

To say I'll miss her doesn't begin to capture the depth of this loss. But I carry her with me — in the lessons she taught me, in the love she gave so freely, and in the person, I've become because of her.

She may not have given me life, but she gave me so much of what makes life meaningful. And for that, I will be forever grateful.

Rest in Peace, Lady P.

Meredith
Adopted daughter/friend

TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED FRIEND

These Virgin Islands lost a giant trailblazer in culture, socio-economic and politics with the passing of Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE on 22nd June 2025. She was beautiful, brilliant, loving, kind, articulate fearless, and witty.

I had the privilege of working with her from 1998 through 2000 in her quest to revive our dormant August Festival activities. She was passionate and resilient in achieving her quest and she pulled together persons who she felt could bring success. When Mrs. Parsons called on you to serve, it was hard to say no! She called me and I replied affirmatively and became a member of the Committee. I was appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the Amusement Rides. What a mammoth of task I was given! In my research to find the rides I found out that our Territory had a negative reputation in the past with owners of amusement rides and so companies with these rides were very reluctant to do business with us. Through dedicated efforts and great support from Ms. P, we were able to build back the Territory's reputation in that area.

I would further develop a relationship with her. In 2000 while she served as Minister for Health, Education and Welfare, she sought my assistance to work with her as her Private Secretary to which I agreed. I gave of my best and she was pleased. Among the many memorable things I did for her, was effectively arranging her protocols for her travel to London to attend Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebration. She was most impressed with the arrangements I made and the treatment she received from her arrival to her departure. She said to me on many occasions that "she was treated royally".

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I admired Mrs. Parsons for her ability to work with varying individuals throughout her working career as a Minister of Government. This and her ability to listen to others, even if she was not always in agreement, were among her greatest attributes.

As I reflect on the rich tapestry of her cultural, socio-economical, and political journey, I have an even deeper appreciation for her work and fight to shape the history and culture of these Virgin Islands. She has left a rich legacy of shaping our Territory's identity that should inspire us to carry on the torch. May her legacy long live on!

**Beverly Hodge Smith,
Former Private Secretary and Friend**

A TRIBUTE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN WHO EMBODIED LOVE AND GENEROSITY

Eileene Lucia Stevens-Parsons left us very peacefully on June 22, 2025, weeks before her 95th birthday. Miss P, as she was affectionately called, was a model of love, compassion and generosity until her very last moments with us on earth. Her mission had a profound impact on the lives of many people. The large number of people who will attend her funeral says a great deal about the kind of person she was. She was a celebrity or a well-known political figure; her death would be widely reported in newspapers, on the radio, and social media. However, her departure touched many. She left like she lived: gently, making sure she had prepared all her loved ones for the final day down to the last Psalms and giving each one a small token of affection. She was thinking of others until her very last moment. Miss P spent her whole life helping others. She was always there for those who were in need, whether they needed to take shelter in her home during a difficult time or wanted an ear that would listen without judgment, condemnation, or prejudice.

She was a reassuring presence as a mother, grandmother, aunt, writer, poet, and sage to everyone, including her friends, coworkers, and the entire family. She was well-known and admired in her community. Here are some of the qualities that Miss P mastered: authenticity; humility; generosity; respect for self and for others; integrity. She continually expressed love, and her mission was a great one: she taught others around her the importance of loving and not being afraid to say it. All of her relationships were transformed by one, single ingredient: love—the most essential ingredient for our time here on earth. The best remedy for a difficult event that turns our lives upside down is to give love freely and to receive the love that comes to us in return.

The death of Miss P has really brought home to me that when we leave this world, our material goods, roles, titles, and profits no longer matter. All that counts when we leave, when we have completed our mission, is that we loved fully and were loved in return. When you love fully, only then are you truly alive! You get back what you give! We can die having been miserable with others, or we can die having made a difference, like Miss P did, leaving beautiful memories in the minds of those around us. Thinking of her makes me smile, and I am sure it does to many others who knew her, as she truly loved life. She always had a smile. Since 1973, when I first met Miss P, we have developed a friendship, and through all her successes, failures, good times, and bad, I was there with and for her. She was a mother to me who left an indelible mark on my life, and I will forever cherish the memories we shared. I will deeply miss her. We were two Cancerians; my birthday is July 2nd, and hers is July 5th. We got along very well. Things she told me she did not tell anyone else. I can say that I was her confidant. Thank you, dear Miss P, for the great privilege of knowing you for 52 years. Thank you for reminding us that the present moment is precious and that we should make the most of it by loving fully and generously.

Rest in eternal peace!

**Wendell M. Gaskin "Poww"
Adopted Son**

TRIBUTE TO MRS. PARSONS

My earliest encounter with Mrs. Parsons was while she was a teacher at the Road Town Post Primary School and I was a student at the Virgin Islands Secondary School. It was World Series time with the Los Angeles Dodgers playing the New York Yankees for that coveted title. At that time, most of the people in the Territory who followed baseball were almost evenly divided as fans of these two teams. Mrs. Parsons was a fan of the Dodgers. The great game of the series was on a Wednesday in the afternoon. In our classroom, there was a student with a transistor radio secured in his desk, who kept the rest of us informed as the game progressed. But that scheme was soon detected and the radio was confiscated. We were then left, as they say, like fowls that had fallen in molasses. But then came Mrs. Parsons to the rescue. Standing outside her classroom, she would hold up a cardboard with the score as the game moved along. Shortly after that encounter, Mrs. Parsons re-located to St. Thomas, USVI.

On her return to the BVI, many years later, she found that many activities, especially those of a cultural nature were lacking in the Territory. One such activity was the

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preservation of traditional dances. So, she invited her old friend from the USVI, Mungo Niles, and started the BVI Heritage Dancers. I remember when I was asked to join this group, I said, "I do not think I can dance." Mrs. Parsons simply replied, "you can learn." I do not know if I have learned, but I am still dancing (occasionally) or still trying to dance.

Two years after the formation of the dance group, we started entering floats in the August Monday Parade earning many first place finishes and some seconds. In later years we would unanimously agree that the group would not be participating in the next year's festivities but that agreement would stand only until the slogan for the year's celebration is released. Then I would receive a call, "Presi, the slogan for the August festivities has just been released, and I have an idea." I would reply, "but", and from the other end would come, "but nothing; we cannot let our festival be just flesh and feathers. We have to do something cultural." Like Sancho Panzo in the novel "Don Quixote", I would reply in the affirmative.

Mrs. Parsons had an affinity with some of Mr. Johnny Walkers's products. Too many, and that was what defined her. But to think so narrowly about Eileene Lucia Parsons was not to know her. Mrs. Parsons was kind, generous, outspoken, (sometimes too outspoken) and loved to interact with all and sundry, no matter their status. My only regret after knowing Mrs. Parsons is that she did not find time to pen her autobiography. It would have made interesting reading for many generations.

In paraphrasing the words of one of Frank Sinatra's great hits – My Way – Mrs. Parsons lived a life that was full. She travelled each and every byway, but more, much more than that, she did it her way!

Varrisse Hodge
Inner Circle Friend

TRIBUTE FROM THE BVI HERITAGE DANCERS

To our Founder and Presever there are individuals whose light does not merely shine - it ignites a flame of inspiration, illuminating a path for generations to tread. Ms P, in our eyes, stands as one such beacon in the BVI. Her contributions to culture, education, and community reverberate far beyond the dancefloor. As the founder of our group, she has not only preserved the traditions, but through her countless appeals to 'keep culture alive' over the years, has ensured that the cultural heritage beats strong in the hearts of both young and old. This tribute honours.

Ms. P's monumental legacy, celebrating her as a guardian of culture and a mentor, whose legacy is woven into the very

fabric of the BVI. She would always tell stories of how she watched as elders taught children the old quadrilles and jigs, as storytellers told tales under the moonlight, and as the fungi musicians made melodies from simple instruments. She recognised very early the fragility of these traditions in a changing world and resolved to become their mouth-piece. It was with this sense of purpose that Ms. P founded the BVI Heritage Dancers on 17th March, 1979. She recruited dancers from all walks of life, and under her guidance the group flourished, evolving into a multigenerational group that dazzled local audiences and represented the BVI on stages around the world. The many costumes she expertly made for us—each piece lovingly created, have become symbols of identity, pride, and resilience. Through her teachings, the group has been exposed to the origins of each dance, exploring the African, European, and indigenous influences that have shaped the BVI's cultural landscape.

As the BVI moves forward, her legacy remains a guiding light. The BVI Heritage Dancers will continue to captivate audiences, and new generations of performers will find joy and purpose in the traditions she helped to revive. We celebrate Ms. P's enduring power of cultural heritage, and her perseverance and love for her community have enriched the British Virgin Islands beyond measure. She has shown that tradition, when nurtured and shared, can become a symbol of hope and unity. Our efforts to complete our building will continue and we are indeed happy that she was able to see it move forward to the point of the installation of the windows. That brought her great joy. Ms. P has left us the gifts of hand-sewn costumes, much laughter, and a group to carry on the traditions. May her legacy continue to inspire, and may her soul rest in peace.

President and Members of BVI Heritage Dancers

IN MEMORY OF EILEENE L. PARSONS, OBE

It is with profound sadness that the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College pay tribute to the life and legacy of Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, a towering figure in the cultural and educational landscape of the Virgin Islands.

Ms. Parsons was a pioneer in educational and cultural advocacy, a living testament to the power of education and the preservation of Virgin Islands culture. As a former teacher herself, she left her mark as the first woman to be appointed a Minister of government, fittingly with responsibility for education. Her trailblazing credentials were only further solidified when she became the first woman to serve as Deputy Chief Minister.

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Her role in the founding of HLSCC cannot be overstated. Ms. P was there from the onset, driving much of the work that saw the College open its doors in 1990. She also served as the first Registrar and Board Secretary before later returning as a longstanding Deputy Chairman before being honoured as the first Governor Emerita of the Board of Governors.

Ms. Parsons championed the mission of accessible, high-quality education for all Virgin Islanders. Her advocacy helped lay the groundwork for what HLSCC has become today: a center of academic excellence and cultural preservation.

Few of us could match Ms. Parsons' vigour and unwavering devotion to the history and traditions of the people of these islands. Through her writings, fiery addresses, and fierce participation in social and political dialogue, she was always a guardian of the preservation of our distinct way of life.

Today, the HLSCC family joins with the wider Virgin Islands community to mourn the loss of a stalwart, a cultural matriarch, an educational visionary, and political dynamo. In our grief, we celebrate a life lived passionately in service of the Virgin Islands. We will do well to uphold the standards and values she espoused, to recommit ourselves to continue the work of building a better community for us all.

May her memory forever be a blessing and inspiration to us all.

Richard Georges, PhD
President HLSCC

TRIBUTE TO HON. EILEENE LUCIA PARSONS, OBE

It has been an immense privilege and honour to have known and learned from the Hon. Mrs. Parsons - "Ms. P," whom I have been associated with for years in organizations/groups such as the Heritage Dancers, Festival Committees, various cultural committees, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the H. Lavitt Stouff Community College.

As a result of her mentorship, I understand what it is to be a patriotic Virgin Islander – working for my community without counting the cost. My knowledge of Virgin Islands history, culture and especially traditions has grown immensely over the years as she passed her vast knowledge of these areas on to others (I was privileged to be one of them).

She will be missed. May she lie in peace and rise in glory.

Bernadine Walters Louis (Ms. P's "Bernie").
Former Director, Virgin Islands Studies Institute, HLSCC

TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF MS. EILEENE L. PARSONS, OBE

The Board of Directors and Staff of the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission join the wider Virgin Islands community in mourning the passing of a cultural icon, the incomparable Ms. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE. A distinguished figure celebrated for her remarkable contributions to politics, education, tourism and especially culture, Ms. Parsons was a visionary—an indomitable force of community spirit, wisdom, and trailblazing leadership. She was truly a matriarch of empowerment and transformation.

To catalogue all of Ms. Parsons' accolades and accomplishments would require volumes, but in this tribute, we focus on honouring her enduring contributions as a pioneer of tourism and a tireless ambassador of Virgin Islands culture. When one speaks of the British Virgin Islands' cultural identity and its relationship with tourism, it is impossible not to think of Ms. Parsons—she embodied that union with passion and purpose.

Though she faithfully promoted the British Virgin Islands while residing in the United States Virgin Islands, her impact was most keenly felt when she returned home to take up the role of Executive Secretary at the BVI Tourist Board. In those formative years of the Territory's tourism industry, she was instrumental in shaping its reputation. Through her dynamic engagement with media, travel agents, and tour operators, she laid the foundation for positioning the BVI as a premier destination. Later, as one of the Territory's foremost authorities on history and culture, she continued to champion the Virgin Islands on the global stage, generously sharing her insights in numerous international interviews. Her voice became synonymous with authenticity, pride, and excellence.

Ms. Parsons' impact extended far beyond the Tourist Board. As the Cultural Officer for the Government of the Virgin Islands, she recognized early the importance of preserving our cultural identity. She championed the idea that culture was not merely heritage, it was a powerful tourism product. Her efforts to elevate cultural experiences, including the Emancipation Festival, as part of our tourism offerings, were transformative. Her advocacy for traditional art forms, including horse racing, plait pole performances, calypso, and storytelling—was both passionate and unyielding.

Perhaps one of her most enduring contributions came in 1979, when she founded the BVI Heritage Dancers. This cultural dance troupe stood as a vibrant tribute to ancestral traditions, showcasing Virgin Islands dance across the globe. Under her leadership, in collaboration with the BVI Tourist Board, the group performed in New York, San Francisco, Germany, Austria, and regional venues—always carrying the heart of the Virgin Islands with them. With

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each performance, Ms. Parsons brought history to life, enchanting audiences with her powerful storytelling and deep cultural knowledge.

Ms. Parsons' contributions to culture and tourism will continue to resonate for generations to come. She offered us a blueprint for how to honour our past while boldly shaping our future. Her legacy is a great source of inspiration—encouraging all Virgin Islanders to embrace our heritage and express ourselves through music, dance, and storytelling.

The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission is proud to have counted Ms. Parsons among our most valued colleagues and cultural champions. We honour her extraordinary life and her indelible impact on our community, our culture, and our industry.

To her family, loved ones, and all who were touched by her remarkable life, we extend our heartfelt condolences. May you find comfort in knowing that she lived a life of profound purpose, shaping not only the cultural and tourism landscape but the very soul of our Territory.

May her legacy shine forever, and may her soul rest in eternal peace.

Delma Maduro (Mrs.)
Chair, BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission

TO THE FAMILY OF MRS. EILEEN LUCIA PARSONS, OBE

"When an elder dies, a library burns to the ground."
(African Proverb)

This African proverb signifies the invaluable loss of knowledge, wisdom and history that occurs with the death of an elder, especially in regard to tradition, culture and shared experiences.

The passing of Mrs. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE, epitomises this African proverb with respect to Virgin Islands culture, tradition and politics.

Hers was a purpose-driven, passionate life focused on bettering her homeland. She was affable, compassionate, God-fearing and committed to helping others.

On behalf of the League of British Virgin Islanders, I extend sympathies to her family and a grieving community; she was beloved by all of us. May her soul rest in Almighty God's eternal peace.

With sympathies,

Moletto A. Smith Jr., President
League of British Virgin Islanders

TRIBUTE TO EILEENE

The Charlotte Amalie High School Class of 1949 extends our deepest condolences to the family of our dear departed classmate, Eileene Lucia Parsons. We pray for comfort, peace and continued strength to the family during this time of sorrow. May her memory be a blessing and may you find comfort in knowing she lives though the lives that she touched.

Class of 1949 Charlotte Amalie High School Alumni

A BEAUTIFUL HEART STOPPED BEATING!!

On behalf of the Voices of Love, a community choir from St. Thomas USVI, we extend our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the family of our beloved friend and sister, Mrs. Eileene Lucia Parsons. Ms. Eileene as we called her, was a woman of great character who invited us into her home over 30 years ago as we traveled to the BVI to bring Christmas cheer to the island through song. As a legislator, she was a powerful voice for her people in the BVI and gained their love and respect. Her warm heart and gentle manner will be sorely missed in the entire US/BVI communities. As she rests from her earthly labours, may the heavenly host welcome her to glory. Farewell queen, mother Eileene til we meet again.

The Voices of Love

TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEEN LUCIA PARSONS

Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons has left an indelible mark on the people of the Virgin Islands in the area of culture and Virgin Islands pride.

As a group aiming to continue in her blueprints of Virgin Islands culture, we shall carry on and promote our culture, never failing to remember from whence we came, the struggles of our people, and the cultural threads that have woven us together as Virgin Islanders.

Our leader (Mr. Shabazz, now deceased), and the other members mirrored her stellar work in culture and the future members will continue to be bearers of the culture she knew.

The work that Mrs. Parsons has done for this Territory shall be remembered for times to come. She has now joined the ancestors who loved these Virgin Islands. May she be the next angel hovering over her beloved BVI.

Culture Bearers

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TRIBUTE TO THE LATE TEACHER, THE HONOURABLE EILEENE L. PARSONS, OBE. FROM THE ALUMNI OF 1964 AND 1965, IN THE BVI, USVI, AND ABROAD

The alumni of 1964 and 1965, of the Road Town Post Primary School and the University of the VI, and abroad, hereby extend our heartfelt Condolences to the family of our late teacher, the Honourable Eileene L. Parsons, OBE.

Hon. Eileene L. Parsons was a phenomenal woman who has achieved significant greatness in her lifetime. She achieved various skills, and talents, and made countless contributions to the people of the BVI and USVI. Honorable Eileene Parsons was also known as a woman of intellectual capacity.

We pray that you receive solace at this time of bereavement.

May the soul of our beloved teacher, the Honourable Minister, rest in eternal peace with God.

COORDINATORS / ALUMNI: Versilee (Versie) Dawson-George, Ryllis Norman-Hunt, Camelia Rawleigh-Campbell, Muriel Shulterbrandt-Williams. Beryl Martin-Smith.

Hulia Benjamin, Julian Benjamin, Bishop-Kenneth Benjamin, Julia Boynes-Callwood, Sezilee Dawson-Callwood, Lorine Fahie-Brooks, Prince Fahie, Albertha Flemming, Dorothy Flemming-Frett, Clothilde Forbes, Florina Forbes, Sharlene Forbes, Renaldo Frazer, Violet Freeman, Paul Georges, Gerda Hodge-Weeks. Erminie Mathavious, Loretta Maduro, McArthur Mercer, Junior Mercer, Ralph Mercer, Helen Ottley, Dr. Brian Penn, Lillian Phillips- Isaacs, Lee Pickering, Roy Pickering, Vernon (Easy) Pickering, Mario Smith, Myrthlyn Smith-Vanterpool, Jane Scatliffe-Fahie, Joyce Scatliffe- Sprauve, Leroy Scatliffe, Marva Scatliffe, Donald Skelton, Lydia Skelton-Smith, Murlene Skelton, Charlie Thompson, Bishop-Alpheus Todman, Eleanor Todman, Adalbert (Dolly) Turnbull, Junior Turnbull, Lydia Turnbull, Raymond (Ray) Turnbull, Ivenia Vanterpool, Delita-Williams-Turnbull.

THE CLASS OF 1964 and 1965 - BVI, USVI, and ABROAD.
The above-mentioned alumni and countless others, too numerous to mention.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEENE L. PARSONS

On behalf of the 26 writers in the anthology, the entire Virgin Islands fraternity of arts and letters, contributors to the development of culture and the arts, and the entire creative community - past and present of the Virgin Islands, I extend sincere consolation and deepest gratitude to the

family of Ms. P, now of blessed memory. Thank you for sharing this amazingly gifted and generous daughter of the Virgin Islands with us. May God unite her with her ancestors and may her lineage and love of her blessed homeland flourish forever.

Dr. Patricia G. Turnbull
Fellow Cultural Worker
Tortola, Virgin Islands



Photo of VI writers at the launch of the anthology, "Where I See The Sun: Contemporary Poetry in The Virgin Islands" published in 2016. Front and centre is Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, whose poem, "Smell of an Ole Time Christmas" features on page 56 of the anthology, edited by Lasana M. Sekou (extreme right) of House of Nehesi Publishers.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. EILEENE L. PARSONS

It was with deep sadness and shock when news was received of the passing of our beloved pioneer and stalwart in politics, dance and education. She loved the community and could be seen at most functions where traditional dance, songs and local festivals were being celebrated. She was a master at story-telling of the history of the BVI. I could remember after one of her parties, staying up with her listening to the history of the Territory until the wee hours of the morning. It was enlightening, dramatic and unforgettable.

Her health issues did not stop her from participating in all her commitments to the different Boards where she actively contributed in decision – making. She inspired many patients across the Territory by instilling hope and boosting their confidence. Her physical incapacity did not affect her razor-sharp mind, thanks to the assistance, support and loyalty of her family and care-givers.

She will be sorely missed. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Marjorie Yee-Sing
friend and doctor

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CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ARE GONE

Ms P, as we all affectionately call her, was someone like no other. We had a special relationship; she was like a second mom to me. When I moved from Virgin Gorda to Tortola, I joined the BVI Festival Committee. This was at a time before it was officially renamed Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee. One day, I was at the airport and ran into Ms. P, and she said, "Child, where have you been? I've been looking everywhere for you. I have reappointed you as a member of the new VI Festivals and Fairs Committee. I felt so proud.

When I joined the BVI Tourist Board, Ms. P and I would often chat about promoting the destination. I thought, what better way to help put the BVI on the Map and showcase our culture than include the Heritage Dancers, Mocko Jumbies, and Lashing Dogs.

We headed to Germany with our German Office at the Interbout Boat show - they were all so excited and stepped up to the plate. It was such a success that as soon as the time came for them to perform on stage, you could see the crowd heading to the stage to get their viewing point. At the show, all would perform several times a day. During one of the performances, we were approached to perform in Switzerland. Everyone was so excited, and one performance turned into two. Ms. P and the group represented the BVI overseas, leaving lasting memories and helping to promote our tourism product. Ms. P would often tell the stories over and over again with pride. It was a special time and a great team. The group respected Ms. P, and it was clear how much they loved her and were grateful for the opportunity she had given them.

Thursdays were special, the most relaxing and entertaining time that her special group of all ages looked forward to. Even though she knew we were coming, she would still call to make sure. Betty's delicious cooking and the various topics of conversation kept us entertained for hours, making for a soothing and stress-free experience every week. I think all of us are wondering what are we going to do now.

Upon hearing about my MBE recognition, I called her. She congratulated me and told me it was well deserved, and how proud she was of me. Soon after, she planned a congratulatory party, telling me she had some surprises in store for me as well. I arrived to find a large overhead congratulations banner at the entrance, with one of my photos and hers in the corner. I was so proud and honoured, but as I entered further, I saw a table and a large frame with another beautiful photo, where our friends were signing congratulatory messages. How can you not feel special and loved by such a magnificent lady?

They both hang in my home, and are the first things one sees when they enter. The memories would always be with me, as I see her photo every day. We discovered that we share the same middle name, which was special for us.

I recently lost my mom in January, and Ms. P was a pillar of strength for me. She even came to North Sound for the service, which surprised so many.

My last words to Ms. P the night before I traveled were "Make sure you eat and take care of yourself until I get back." I hugged her, and she held my hand. The devastating call came days after.

I genuinely loved and respected Ms. P. I will miss hearing her share our stories of travels and how much they brought awareness to Destination BVI.

To anyone who knew Ms. P, she left treasured memories and lasting contributions to so many of us and the broader community with her kindness and dedication.

Ms. P, there are no goodbyes for us. I am holding on to a lifetime of the wonderful times we shared.

A beautiful spirit has departed, but it will remain in our hearts.

Rest in eternal peace, my dear Ms. P. You were like no other.

Lynette Lucia Harrigan, MBE

Photos

Investiture Ceremony for Mrs. Parsons at Government House



Mrs Eileen L. Parsons, OBE is presented with the Royal Warrant by Governor William B. McCleary



Mrs. Parsons with Mrs. Beverly Hodge Smith



Mrs. Parsons with Hon. Ronnie Skelton and wife, Mrs. Janice Skelton



Mrs. Parsons with Dr. Henry G Jarecki



Mrs. Parsons with Nephew, Reynold Corum

Photos

Investiture Ceremony for Mrs. Parsons at Governor's House Continued



*Mrs. Parsons with her adopted daughter
Meredith Fahie*



Mrs. Parsons giving a speech in office



*Mrs. Parsons, government officials and family members at the
26th H. Laverty Stout Wreath Laying Ceremony*



Mrs. Parsons with her inner circle



*Mrs. Parsons with Premier of the Virgin Islands,
Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley*

Photos

Mrs. Parsons in office as Minister for Education, Health and Welfare



Mrs. Parsons with Dr. Angel Smith

Photos

Mrs. Parsons in office as Minister for Education, Health and Welfare



*Mrs. Parsons with Honourable Ralph T. O'Neal, OBE
Member Emeritus*



Photos

Mrs. Parsons with BVI Heritage Dancers



Photos



Mrs. Eileene Parsons OBE with granddaughters (L-R) Michelle Parsons, Alexandra Parsons and Aribella Parsons-Amoah



Ms. Doreen Gumbs, Ms. Clarice Moore and Mrs. Parsons



Mrs. Parsons with granddaughters, Aribella Parsons-Amoah and Alexandra Parsons



Mrs. Eileene Parsons OBE with grandchildren (L-R) Alexandra Parsons, Nicholas Phillip and Aribella Parsons-Amoah



Captain of the ship with grandson Nicholas Phillip and Mrs. Parsons



Mrs. Parsons in London

Photos



Mrs. Parsons with Dr. Henry G. Jarecki



Mrs. Parsons with some of the members of the Fifth House of Assembly



Mrs. Parsons with caregiver and friend, Carmen "Betty" Ortiz Claxton



Mrs. Parsons with Ms. Clarice Moore



Ms. Betty, Ms. Moore and Mrs. Parsons



To my beloved Inner Circle of Friends

"When You Come To My Last Party"

When you come to my last party, don't come with faces long
But come with memories that are pleasant in your hearts
Let there be a song, the place will be full of flowers
And I will be "Dressed Grand", the only thing that I shall be sorry for,
I will not be able to shake your hand.

When you come to my last party
The daily papers will print the invitations that everyone might see
I am going to hold it in a church place and no one will be turned away
And the place where I hold my party, many of my friends will come to pray.

When you come to my last party, we won't play games
But there will be a register where you can sign your name
As you stand there and sing my praises in voices silently
Of what good things you know about me.

When you come to my last party, my Lord will be your host
Because it's He amongst all my friends who really loves me most
He bore the cross at Calvary, He bears my cross today
When you leave He will still be with me to comfort me on my way

When you come to my last party, in spirit I'll be there
And as you stare back at me through closed eyelids at you I will stare
And when you say I look natural, that is as it should be
Because at my LAST PARTY, who should look more natural than me?
I did the best that I knew how it's up to God to take care of me now

The morning sun warmed my heart when I was young
And the soft winds of noon cooled my passion in middle age
I was not afraid of the night, though death lurked there waiting
Because I was confident that although
I knew not where His islands lifted their fronded palms in air
I was truly confident that I could not drift
Beyond His love and care!

I loved life! I enjoyed my friends and the good times we shared
I now leave with no regrets
Because I truly had a fine time in my life and with my life
While I walked with the God in whom I truly believed,
Shed no tears for me, it has always been WELL WITH MY SOUL

Author unknown (but how appropriate for Ms. P, Lady P, Lady I, Ms. Eileene)



Thanks and Appreciation

The family and friends of the late Mrs. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE wish to express their gratitude to the Virgin Islands community for all your heartfelt condolences. It brings us joy to know that she touched so many lives in such positive ways. We find comfort in knowing that her legacy will live on through the love and memories we all share.

We also express gratitude to the following persons who have been instrumental in assisting her during her journey and illness:

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The Speaker and Members of the
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Ms. Carmen "Betty" Ortiz Claxton, Caretaker

You are deeply appreciated.

Family and Friends

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