

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
2017 CENTENNIAL YEAR

Swearing in Ceremony

Thursday, March 9th, 2017 ~ 10:00 AM
Government House, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands







The Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands
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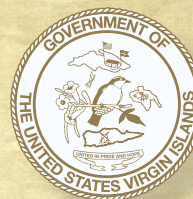
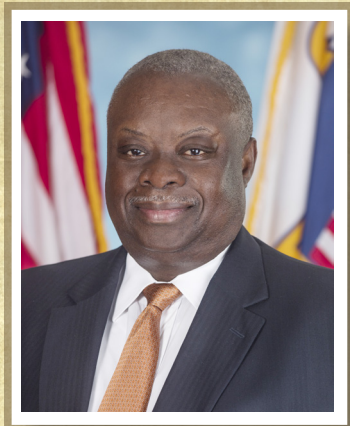
Thursday, March 9th, 2017~10:00 AM
Government House
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands



Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands VISION STATEMENT

The Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands strives to be a model of judicial excellence to serve the public, and to earn its trust and confidence through innovative leadership; professional, efficient, accountable, and accessible services; and the impartial, prompt disposition of appeals in accordance with the rule of law.

STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ~ June 2010



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802

340-774-0001

March 9, 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

It is my privilege to be among those who will continue to benefit from the excellent service in the cause of justice administered by the three members of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands of the United States. The people of this Territory may rest assured that we have achieved a remarkable level of progress with the establishment of this Court, the members of which have demonstrated the highest standards for competence in jurisprudence, judicial temperament and integrity.

I congratulate these esteemed citizens on behalf of a proud and grateful citizenry as they begin their well-deserved new terms of office. The Honorable Rhys S. Hodge, Chief Justice; the Honorable Maria M. Cabret, Associate Justice; and the Honorable Ive Arlington Swan, Associate Justice, are among our most outstanding examples of competence and good citizenship. I am confident that each will continue to inspire us all to pursue our objectives, whether individual or collective, with a dedication to excellence of character, good judgment, hard work and fairness. This year I am challenged to identify and nominate two additional candidates to join the court. For me, this will be no easy task.

The Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands has earned the respect of our community. The current Justices have established a stellar reputation of the Court. I wish each member of the Court a rewarding new term of service to our community, and continued good health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "K. Mapp". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Kenneth E. Mapp
Governor



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS 00802

March 9, 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Today I join the entire territory in extending congratulations to our distinguished Supreme Court Justices who were fittingly re-appointed by the Honorable Governor Kenneth E. Mapp to serve in the highest court of the United States Virgin Islands, and as such are being celebrated at today's Swearing in Ceremony. It is with extreme pride and honor that we salute the following Justices:

Honorable Rhys S. Hodge

Chief Justice

Honorable Maria M. Cabret

Associate Justice

Honorable Ive Arlington Swan

Associate Justice

All three Justices, who have made history by serving as the first appointees of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, have served this territory well, and with an impeccable record. They represent exemplary leadership, humility, integrity, and are highly respected within and outside the court. Throughout the past 10 years, I have personally observed our Justices and have admired their high level of experience and understanding of the law, that have guided them in making fair and consistent rulings in all matters that have been placed before the court. Their exceptional qualities ought to be emulated by all in the legal arena, as well as throughout the community.

Justices, thank you for your willingness to continue to serve the People of the Virgin Islands. You are all trailblazers in your own right, and we are proud to celebrate this momentous occasion with you.

Osbert E. Potter



STACEY E. PLASKETT
VIRGIN ISLANDS

509 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1790



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington DC 205-5501

A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT

It is an honor and a special privilege to welcome you to the official Swearing-In Ceremony for the Honorable Justices Rhys S. Hodge, Maria M. Cabret and Ive A. Swan.

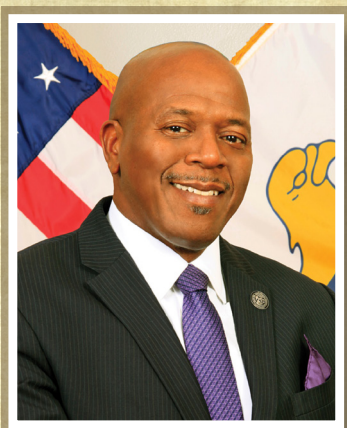
The establishment of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands dates back more than 30 years to 1984 when the United States Congress authorized the establishment of an appellate court for the Virgin Islands. In 2004, it became the highest court in the Virgin Islands and assumed its appellate jurisdiction in 2007.

Justices Hodge, Swan and Cabret carry the distinct honor of being the first three justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands after their nomination and subsequent investiture in 2006. Together, they have more than 100 years of combined legal service and experience in the Virgin Islands Community. They are without a doubt legal stalwarts and the best to preside over our territory's highest court.

On behalf of the members of the 115th Congress, my family and staff, I extend my congratulations to the Honorable Justices Rhys S. Hodge, Maria M. Cabret and Ive A. Swan on their swearing-in to the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE PRESIDENT

It is a pleasure, on behalf of the 32nd Legislature of the Virgin Islands, to welcome you to the official swearing-in ceremony for the Justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Honorable Justices Rhys Hodge, Maria Cabret and Ive Swan were reconfirmed to their positions of leadership to our highest court in the Virgin Islands. Their illustrious and distinguished careers individually and collectively continue to ground our Territory's fairly new appellate court in a path of excellence.

The court makes its ten-year anniversary on the monumental 100th year anniversary of the 1917 Transfer of the former Danish West Indies to the United States of America. As we reflect on this Centennial milestone, we recall how far the people of the Territory have come in deciding our own matters in the judicial system. Our highest Court has evolved from three Police Courts that were established in 1921 in the historic towns of Charlotte Amalie, Frederiksted, and Christiansted that mainly favored the plantocracy and mercantile class. Many of our leaders fought bitterly for the reforms we enjoy today, and the basic right of due and fair process.

The Legislature in 2004, through Bill No. 2 1-025, Act. No. 6687, established the Supreme Court in the Virgin Islands, which was authorized by Congress twenty years before. Through it all, final orders and judgments of the Superior Court can be appealed, reviewed, and decided. In 2016, the Legislature's passing of Bill No. 31-0255, Act. No. 7888, led to the administrative unification of our judicial system under the auspices of the Supreme Court, a reform that brings us up to date with the rest of the nation.

Congratulations to the Justices and to their extended families, friends, and to all who have come to witness history in the making. Let us continue the progress we have made in our judiciary, other branches of government, and elsewhere in our society.

Senator Myron D. Jackson
President of the 32nd Legislature of the Virgin Islands

DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
OF THE UNITED STATES



CHAMBERS OF
WILMA A. LEWIS
CHIEF JUDGE

Almeric L. Christian Federal Building
and United States Courthouse
301 S Estate Golden Rock, Lot 13,
Christiansted, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820-4355
Telephone: (340) 718-5021
Fax: (340) 712-7181

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Rhys S. Hodge, Chief Justice
The Honorable Maria M. Cabret, Associate Justice
The Honorable Ive Arlington Swan, Associate Justice
Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands
P.O. Box 590
St. Thomas, VI 00804

Dear Justices Hodge, Cabret, and Swan:

On behalf of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, it is my great pleasure to add my voice to the chorus of well -wishers celebrating and offering words of congratulations on this auspicious occasion of your official swearing-in- for the second time-as Justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands.

In 2007, your appointment as Justices of the then newly-created Supreme Court ushered in a new and exciting chapter in the history of the Territory's judicial system. Since that time, you have worked tirelessly-individually and collectively- in pioneering the development of Virgin Islands jurisprudence. The tremendous progress that has been made in this regard in the past ten years as a result of your efforts is a source of pride within the Virgin Islands legal community as well as in the community at large. We look forward to your continued leadership as you embark on this next phase in your tenures as Justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands.

Again, our warmest congratulations on this momentous occasion. My colleagues and I on the federal bench look forward to continuing to join forces with you as we perform our respective roles in the administration of justice in our beloved Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,

Wilma A. Lewis
Chief Judge



The Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands
2017 CENTENNIAL YEAR

Swearing in Ceremony Program

Mistress of Ceremony Ms. Veronica J. Handy, Esquire
*Clerk of the Court
Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands*

Posting of Colors Ivanna Eudora Kean JROTC Color Guard

National Anthem and Virgin Islands March Superior Court Rising Stars Youth Steel Orchestra

Invocation The Rev. Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr.
*Bishop's Sub-Dean for St. Thomas and St. John
Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands*

Opening Remarks Anthony Ciolli, Esquire
Virgin Islands Bar Association

Remarks Honorable Charles W. Turnbull, PhD
Former Governor of the United States Virgin Islands

Remarks Honorable Myron D. Jackson
*Senate President
32nd Legislature of the Virgin Islands*

Musical Selection CAHS Swans on the Lake

Commission of Office..... Ms. Regina deChabert Petersen
Administrator of Courts
Judicial Branch Administrative Office

Administration of the Oath of Office..... Honorable Verne A. Hodge
Designated Justice
Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands

Presentation of the Gown..... Mrs. Jean Hodge and Mrs. Shirley Christian
Mrs. Graciela Cabret Lee
Mrs. Gertrude Swan

Remarks Ms. Elizabeth Centeno
District Director
Office of the Delegate to Congress

Remarks Honorable Michael C. Dunston
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of the United States Virgin Islands

Musical Selection..... CAHS Swans on the Lake

***** Response *****

Honorable Ive Arlington Swan
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands

Honorable Maria M. Cabret
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands

Honorable Rhys S. Hodge
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands

Closing Remarks Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp
Governor of the United States Virgin Islands

Benediction..... The Rev. Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr.
Bishop's Sub-Dean for St. Thomas and St. John
Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands



Chief Justice

Honorable Rhys S. Hodge



Rhys Shelley Hodge is the current Chief Justice of the Virgin Islands. He was originally sworn into office on December 18, 2006, having been nominated by Governor Charles W. Turnbull to the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands, and recently reappointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp.

Chief Justice Hodge was born on the British island of Anguilla. He attended the East End Elementary School and received his high school education at the Valley Secondary School, from which he graduated in 1965.

Following his graduation from high school, he migrated to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where he attended the College of the Virgin Islands. In 1968, he transferred to Kansas State University, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1971. Upon his graduation from Kansas State University, he returned to St. Thomas where he later met Jean Dalmida, a native of St. John. They were married in 1973 and have raised four children: Regine, Joseph, Jerome and Larise.

Chief Justice Hodge obtained his legal education at the Rutgers University School of Law - Camden, New Jersey, where he graduated with a Juris Doctor degree in 1977. There, he excelled in his law studies, receiving the American Jurisprudence Award for obtaining the highest grade of his class in constitutional law. He was elected by the student body to be the sole student representative on the school's Scholastic Standing Committee, which adjudicated appeals of students dismissed or placed on academic probation.

After graduating law school, Chief Justice Hodge returned to St. Thomas, where he served as a law clerk to the Chief Judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands, the late Honorable Almeric L. Christian, from 1977 to 1979. Afterwards, he opened his own law firm, "The Law Offices of Rhys S. Hodge" in 1979, with which he maintained an active private law practice for the next twenty-one years. During his time in private practice, Chief Justice Hodge remained active in the Virgin Islands Bar Association, where he served as President, Secretary, a member of the Board of Governors, Chair of the Continuing Legal Education Committee, and Chair of the Ethics & Grievance Committee. He also served as a member of the Virgin Islands Committee of Bar Examiners, and a member of the Lawyers Advisory Committee of the District Court of the Virgin Islands.

In addition to being admitted to the practice of law in the Virgin Islands, Chief Justice Hodge has been admitted to the bars of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. He is an active member of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the American Bar Foundation, the American Judges Association, the American Law Institute and the Conference of Chief Justices.

He has been active in community affairs serving from 1981-2000 as a member of the Executive Board of the V.I. Council of the Boy Scouts of America and as its President in 1991. He has also served in the past as a member of the Board of Directors of the V.I. Council of the Girls Scouts of the U.S.A. and Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Virgin Islands Montessori School.

Chief Justice Hodge was first sworn in as a judge of the Superior Court on June 23, 2000. On July 1, 2006, Chief Justice Hodge became the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, a position he held until his appointment to the Supreme Court. As Presiding Judge, and later as Chief Justice, he served as a member of the Conference of the Chief Justices. Chief Justice Hodge is the

seventh most senior member of the fifty-six member Conference, and chairs its Court Management Committee.

On July 19, 2006, Chief Justice Hodge, together with Justices Maria M. Cabret and Ive A. Swan, were nominated by Governor Turnbull as the three initial justices of the new Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands. The Governor designated him to be the first Chief Justice for a four year term. On October 27, 2006, Chief Justice Hodge and Justices Cabret and Swan were unanimously confirmed by the Twenty-Sixth Legislature as justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands for terms of ten years each. All three justices were sworn into office as justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands on December 18, 2006. Chief Justice Hodge was re-elected to subsequent terms as Chief Justice of the Virgin Islands commencing December 18, 2010, December 18, 2013, and December 18, 2016.

On November 2, 2016, Governor Mapp announced his intent to renominate Chief Justice Hodge, as well as Justice Cabret and Justice Swan, to a second ten-year term on the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Hodge and his colleagues were unanimously confirmed by the 31st Legislature on December 20, 2016.



Associate Justice

Honorable Maria M. Cabret



Associate Justice Maria M. Cabret was born in Frederiksted, St. Croix. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Marymount Manhattan College in 1971 and a Juris Doctor degree from Howard University School of Law in 1978. She began her legal career as a law clerk for Judge Raymond L. Finch at the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands. She later worked for Legal Services of the Virgin Islands and the Office of the Territorial Public Defender, before moving on to private

practice, where she first engaged in insurance defense litigation and later concentrated in personal injury and commercial litigation.

In 1987, she was nominated by Governor Alexander A. Farrelly to serve as Judge of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands and unanimously confirmed by the Seventeenth Legislature. She was sworn into office on July 7, 1987, becoming the second woman and first person of Puerto Rican descent to serve on the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands. She was nominated to a second term by Governor Farrelly in 1993 and unanimously confirmed by the Twentieth Legislature.

In 1994, Presiding Judge Verne A. Hodge designated her as Administrative Judge of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix Division. On October 29, 1999, Governor Charles W. Turnbull designated her as Presiding Judge of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands and nominated her to a third term. The Twenty-Third Legislature unanimously confirmed her nomination on March 1, 2000. She again made history by becoming the first woman, the first Crucian, and the first person of Puerto Rican descent to be elevated to the position of Presiding Judge of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands.

On June 30, 2006, Judge Cabret retired and immediately assumed Senior Judge status on July 1, 2006, continuing to work tirelessly to improve the administration of justice. During her nineteen years on the trial bench, she authored numerous important opinions addressing a vast range of complex legal and factual issues. Aside from her administrative duties and regular caseload, she also presided over the complex, multi-party, mass asbestos litigation on St. Croix. In addition, she was also designated many times to serve as an appellate court judge on the Appellate Division of the District Court of the United States Virgin Islands.

On July 19, 2006, Governor Turnbull nominated Judge Cabret to serve as an Associate Justice of the newly created Supreme

Court of the Virgin Islands. She was unanimously, confirmed by the Twenty-Sixth Legislature and on December 18, 2006, she was sworn in as an Associate Justice. She was renominated to serve for an additional ten years by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp on November 14, 2016 and unanimously confirmed by the Thirty-First Legislature on December 20, 2016.

In November 2005, Justice Cabret was one of the first thirteen women inducted into the Virgin Islands Women's Hall of Fame by the Commission on the Status of Women, who established the Women's Hall of Fame in 2005 to recognize the outstanding contributions of women in the Virgin Islands.

Justice Cabret is a 2008 recipient of the Howard University Alumni Achievement Award. In 2009, she became a Science

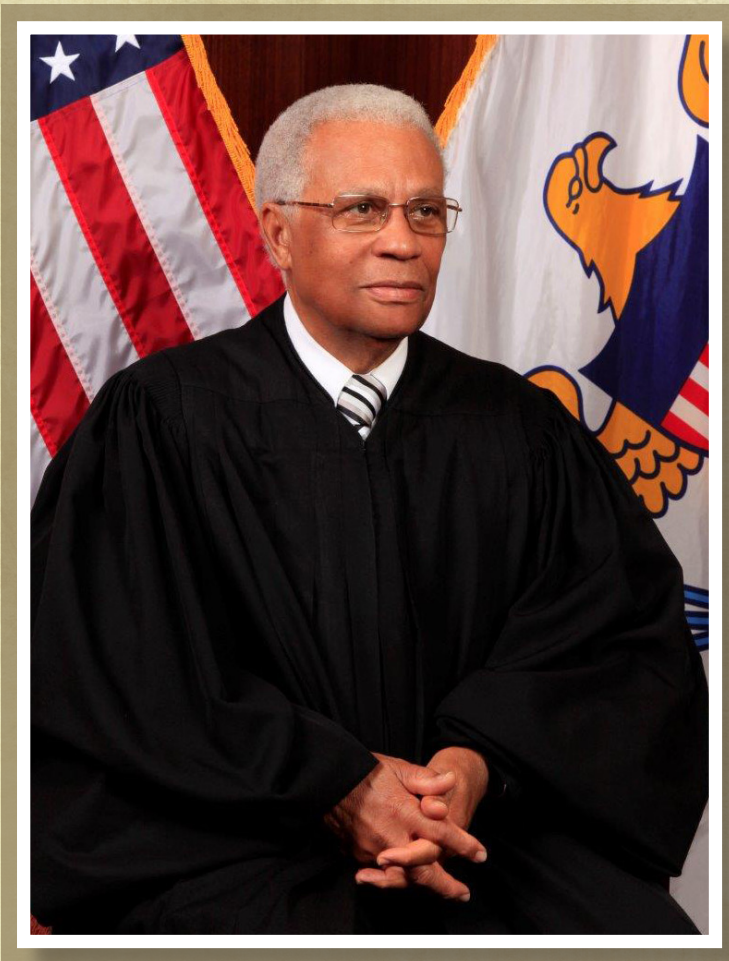
and Technology Fellow of The Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource Center (ASTAR) and in 2010, she became a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. Justice Cabret is a graduate of the American Academy of Judicial Education and the National Judicial College. She is a member of the Virgin Islands Bar. She is also a member of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the American Judges Association, the American Judicature Society, the National Association of Women Judges, and the Virgin Islands Judicial Council. From 1989 to 2000, she served as a member of the Law Revision Commission.

During her tenure as Presiding Judge, she was a member of the Conference of Chief Justices, the American Law Institute, and the National Association of court Managers.



Associate Justice

Honorable Ire Arlington Swan



Ire Arlington Swan was born on St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. Justice Swan is married to Gertrude Nile Drue Swan. All of his formative years were spent on St. Thomas where he attended public schools at the Leonard Dober Elementary School, the Commandant Gade School and the Charlotte Amalie High School, from which he graduated in 1963.

Swan continued his education by matriculating in Morgan State University from which he graduated in 1967 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and History. He entered Howard University's School of Law in 1967, from which he graduated in 1970 with a Juris Doctorate Degree. His legal education also includes the completion of numerous courses for judges during 1987 to 2006 with the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada in Reno.

Additionally, he has taken several judicial courses with the American Academy of Judicial Education.

He holds bar membership in the Washington, D.C. Bar Association (November 23, 1970) and the Virgin Islands Bar Association (February 8, 1971). He has been an active member of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association and the American Judges Association.

Swan has been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the United States District Court of the District of Columbia and all the Courts of the United States Virgin Islands.

Swan commenced his legal career in August, 1970 with the Virgin Islands Department of Law, (now the Department of Justice). During his ten-year tenure at the Department of Law, he held the positions of Legal Intern, Deputy Assistant Attorney General and Assistant Attorney General in both the Criminal and Family Law Divisions and the Civil and Administrative Law Divisions.

In January, 1978, Swan was nominated by Governor Juan Luis for the position of Attorney General of the Virgin Islands, and on March 3, 1978, he became the Attorney General of the Virgin Islands, a position he held for approximately three (3) years. As Attorney General, he managed and supervised the operations of the Department of Law, the legal branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands. He similarly directed the legal business and legal affairs of the Government of the Virgin

Islands, including litigation in which the Government, its departments and its agencies appeared as parties. He likewise served on several government boards and commissions. Swan also published several attorney generals' opinions on a myriad of legal issues.

In 1981, Swan entered the private practice of law and operated my law offices until July, 1987. His private practice included matters and litigation on Corporation Law, Family Law, Probate Law, Real Estate Law, Labor Law, and Criminal and Civil Jury cases and Non-Jury cases.

Additionally, Swan served as a labor arbitrator, adjudicating labor disputes and grievances, while conducting his legal practice.

In 1987, Swan was nominated and re-nominated in 1993 by the late Governor Alexander A. Farrelly to be a judge of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands. In 2000, Swan was nominated by Governor Charles W. Turnbull to be a judge of the Territorial Court and re-nominated in 2006 to be a judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. During his more

than nineteen (19) years on the Superior Court and Territorial Court, he has presided over all types of cases cognizable by a court of general jurisdiction. During his judicial career, he has served a total of three and one-half years in the Family Court.

In July 2006, Governor Charles W. Turnbull nominated Swan for the position of Associate Justice of the newly created Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands. His nomination was confirmed by the twenty-sixth (26th) Legislature of the Virgin Islands on October 27, 2006. Swan was nominated by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp for a second term on the Supreme Court in November, 2016. He was unanimously confirmed by the thirty-first Legislature of the Virgin Islands. It was the seventh time he won legislative confirmation; namely: 1978 Attorney General of the Virgin Islands; 1987, 1993, 2000, Judge of the Territorial Court; 2006 Judge of the Superior Court, and a few months later in 2006 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; 2016 Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

Swan was bestowed the Alumni Achievement Award in the field of Law by Howard University in 2008.



History of the Court

Supreme Court OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Congress in 1984 authorized the establishment of an appellate court for the Virgin Islands to be created by the Legislature in its discretion. In 2004 the Legislature, acting on such Congressional authority, established the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands as the highest court of the Virgin Islands. The Court assumed its appellate jurisdiction on January 29, 2007. The court presently consists of a chief justice and two associate justices. The court is assisted by the service of active judges of the Superior Court and of retired judges of courts of record of the Virgin Islands who serve as Designated Justices to fill vacancies on the court caused by disqualifications or other absences.

The Virgin Islands Supreme Court is the equivalent of a state supreme court. As the highest court for the Virgin Islands, the Supreme Court is authorized to review all final orders, judgments and specified interlocutory orders of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. Cases before the court are determined by three justices and a decision by two justices is required for a decision of the court.

The Supreme Court has exclusive jurisdiction over members of the legal profession and of admissions to the bar. The Court oversees the established organized integrated Virgin Islands Bar Association and has the power to approve the rules regarding attorney discipline. The Court

also approves the rules regarding attorney conduct and has established rules governing the admission of members of the Virgin Islands Bar Virgin Islands Bar; and the discipline of attorneys and the practice of law in the Virgin Islands.



Brief History OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS JUDICIARY

The judiciary of the Virgin Islands is now on the brink of becoming a twenty-first century court system, with a framework that was established almost a century ago. Having evolved from three Police Courts in the cities of Frederiksted, Christiansted, and Charlotte Amalie, the current system boasts the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands in each judicial district of St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix and now, a Supreme

Court of the U.S. Virgin Islands that will be tasked with hearing the appeals from the Superior Court territory-wide.

The beginnings of the Virgin Islands judiciary were rooted in the 1921 Codes of St. Thomas and St. John and St. Croix which established the police courts.

On July 22, 1954, the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands was amended and approved. Section 21 of that Act vested judicial power in a court of record called the District Court of the Virgin Islands and in any lower courts established by local law. The three Police Courts were then abolished and two municipal courts were established: one for St. Thomas and St. John and one for St. Croix.

After a decade of this judicial structure, the make-up of the local judiciary matured yet again. On March 1, 1965, the two municipal courts were combined into a single court called the Municipal Court of the Virgin Islands.

On September 9, 1976, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands established the forerunner of today's Superior Court of the Virgin Islands in accordance with Act. No. 3876 (§ 5, Sess. L. 1976, p. 17.) The Municipal Court of the Virgin Islands' name was changed to the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands. Almost three decades later, the Territorial Court gained a substantial amount of judicial autonomy. This was authorized by the 1984 amendments to the Revised Organic Act of 1954 and triggered by local enactments by the Legislature as well as the Governor of the Virgin Islands.

On October 1, 1991, the Territorial Court obtained jurisdiction over all local civil actions in accordance with 4 V.I. Code Ann. § 76(a). Effective January 1, 1994, pursuant to Act 5890, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands granted original jurisdiction in all criminal matters to the Territorial Court.

On October 29, 2004, Act No. 6687 established a Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands and officially changed the name of the Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands to the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.

On July 19, 2006, Governor Charles W. Turnbull, Ph.D nominated the Honorable Rhys S. Hodge, Honorable Maria M. Cabret and Honorable Ive Arlington Swan, as the first three justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands and designated the Honorable Rhys S. Hodge as the first Chief Justice. On October 27, 2006, the Twenty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands unanimously confirmed the three legal stalwarts, setting a monumental precedent in Virgin Islands history.

The investiture of the first Justices of the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands occurred on December 18, 2006, and not only made an indelible mark in the history of the Virgin Islands, but complements the progressive framework of the local judiciary that was established more than half a century ago.

The Virgin Islands' Judiciary has now joined the other states and territories of the union with a judicial structure that speaks to its own progressive autonomy. Its current status is due in no small measure to the tireless efforts of the governors, delegates, and law makers of this territory, and the dedicated persistence of the territory's esteemed jurists, both past and present, whose commitment to the administration of justice is only paralleled by their commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands.

One Hundred Twelfth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the third day of January, two thousand and twelve*

An Act

To amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands to provide for direct review by the United States Supreme Court of decisions of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. DIRECT REVIEW BY U.S. SUPREME COURT OF DECISIONS OF VIRGIN ISLANDS SUPREME COURT.

Section 23 of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands (48 U.S.C. 1613) is amended by striking “: *Provided, That*” and all that follows through the end and inserting a period.

SEC. 2. JURISDICTION OF THE SUPREME COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 81 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 1260. Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; certiorari

“Final judgments or decrees rendered by the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands may be reviewed by the Supreme Court by writ of certiorari where the validity of a treaty or statute of the United States is drawn in question or where the validity of a statute of the Virgin Islands is drawn in question on the ground of its being repugnant to the Constitution, treaties, or laws of the United States, or where any title, right, privilege, or immunity is specially set up or claimed under the Constitution or the treaties or statutes of, or any commission held or authority exercised under, the United States.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 81 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“1260. Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; certiorari.”.

On January 29, 2007, the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands officially assumed appellate jurisdiction over all appeals in the Virgin Islands. On December 28, 2012, President Barack Obama signed Public Law 112-226, which amended the Revised Organic Act to provide for direct review of its decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States.



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