

Image not found or type unknown

UVI Announces Keisha Lance Bottoms as 60th Commencement Speaker

Former Atlanta mayor and presidential advisor brings wealth of experience to UVI's milestone ceremonies

Education / **Published On April 10, 2024 08:00 PM /**

Staff Consortium **April 10, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



Keisha Lance Bottoms. By. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The University of the Virgin Islands on Wednesday Keisha Lance Bottoms, the former Mayor of Atlanta and erstwhile senior advisor and director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, as the keynote speaker for its 60th Commencement Ceremonies.

The ceremonies are scheduled for May 9 on the Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas, and May 10 on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix, both starting at 1:00 p.m.

Lance Bottoms holds the distinction of serving in all three branches of government, a testament to her extensive career in public service. Her tenure as mayor, which began on January 2, 2018, saw Atlanta navigate through significant challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the height of the racial justice movement, highlighting her role in addressing urban issues and opportunities in America, according to UVI.

UVI said under her leadership, Atlanta saw remarkable economic resilience and growth despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Lance Bottoms managed to deliver balanced budgets for four consecutive years without resorting to property tax increases, city employee layoffs, or furloughs, while maintaining city reserves at an impressive \$181 million. Her tenure was marked by significant contributions to the city's economic growth, including attracting nine Fortune 500 company headquarters and implementing initiatives aimed at systemic reforms and enhancing the quality of life for city residents.

Among her notable initiatives were the transformation of Atlanta's jail into a diversion center, the elimination of cash bail for non-violent offenders, and the addition of over 7,000 affordable housing units. Her commitment to diversity and inclusion led to the establishment of new police and fire stations and significant reforms in law enforcement practices.

UVI President Dr. David Hall, presiding over his final commencement after 15 years of service, expressed enthusiasm for Lance Bottoms' upcoming participation, highlighting her as a changemaker whose experiences and insights will inspire and empower the graduating class of 2024.

According to the release, Lance Bottoms' commitment to equitable and inclusive leadership has earned her numerous accolades, including the Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, recognition as one of Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year, and inclusion in Ebony Magazine's Power 100 List, among others.

The daughter of R&B icon Major Lance, Keisha Lance Bottoms is married to Derek Bottoms and is a proud parent of four children.