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Magistrate Judge Ernest Morris Jr. Reappointed for 4-Year Term in St. Croix District

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Ernest E. Morris, Magistrate Judge, St. Croix District. By. SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, Debra S. Watlington on Friday announced the reappointment of the Ernest E. Morris Jr. for a second 4-year term as magistrate judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.

This decision comes after a [mandated 60-day notice of term expiration](#) was provided, during which public input regarding Judge Morris Jr.'s reappointment was sought. Following the period of public commentary, the reappointment was officially affirmed by the Judges of the Superior Court and confirmed by an order on October 17, 2023, signed by Judge Watlington, according to a

release from the Judicial Branch of the Virgin Islands.

The Judicial Branch release says Judge Morris has deep roots in the territory, having been born and raised on the island of St. Croix. Demonstrating academic prowess early on, he was the valedictorian of St. Joseph High School's class of 1996. Morris Jr. then pursued higher education, obtaining two bachelor of arts degrees in political science and Spanish from Yale University. In 2005, he earned his juris doctor from the Howard University School of Law.

After his studies, Morris returned to the Virgin Islands, dedicating himself to public service and the legal profession. He worked as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Edgar D. Ross and the Honorable Julio A. Brady. Subsequently, he served as appellate law clerk to Associate Justice of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, the Honorable Maria M. Cabret. His extensive career also includes roles as territorial public defender, assistant legal counsel of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, chief legal counsel of the Legislature, and corporate counsel for Viya, according to the release. Moreover, he ventured into private practice, establishing the Morris Legal Group. On November 10, 2019, he was appointed as magistrate judge of the Superior Court in the District of St. Croix. His renewed term will begin on November 11, 2023.

Magistrate judges in the Virgin Islands have a broad range of responsibilities. They administer oaths, issue various legal orders and warrants, conduct marriages, hear multiple types of cases, and can be designated by a Superior Court judge to oversee pretrial matters and other proceedings.

The Judicial Branch family has expressed their congratulations to Judge Morris on his reappointment. Presiding Judge Watlington commended his dedication, stating, "All of us at the Superior Court look forward to his continued hard work and dedication as he undertakes the enormous responsibility of administering justice on behalf of the People of the Virgin Islands."