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## Aviation Trailblazer And Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes Receives Honorary Degree from UVI

UVI commencement shines spotlight on Caroline Fawkes, a symbol of courage and commitment in the Virgin Islands

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Aviation trailblazer and Elections Supervisor, Caroline Fawkes. By. MEDIA ONE

ST. CROIX—The University of the Virgin Islands awarded an honorary degree to Caroline Fawkes, an aviation trailblazer and supervisor of elections, during its 60th Commencement Ceremony held at the Albert A. Sheen Campus on Friday.

Ms. Fawkes, who has a distinguished career as the first female Virgin Islander to become a pilot in 1985 and the first female state Army aviation officer within the National Guard, received a Doctor of Humane Letters. This honor marks her fourth degree from UVI, adding to her associate,

bachelor's, and master's degrees previously earned from the institution.

UVI President Dr. David Hall, presiding over his last commencement before retirement, praised Ms. Fawkes for her "excellence and unwavering dedication to public service," highlighting her significant role since 2013 as the supervisor of the VI's election system, where she has implemented numerous progressive and innovative upgrades. Her legacy, he noted, is a "testament to dedication and determination."

The ceremony also celebrated the achievements of the class of 2024, who Dr. Hall described as filling a critical void in local healthcare by stepping into roles vacated during the pandemic. Special mention was made of the nursing graduates and Doreen Davis, a returning student who paused her education years ago to ensure her three children graduated from UVI. Ms. Davis, along with her fellow graduates, received her degree, symbolizing the completion of her personal mission.

Class speaker Nadeje Barber, who has participated in several UVI initiatives, including an exchange semester in Denmark and internships in Washington D.C., addressed her classmates with a message of perseverance and ambition. "The world awaits your talents, your intentions, passion, and contributions," she stated, urging her peers to embrace challenges as growth opportunities while maintaining their health and well-being.

The ceremony not only marked a milestone for the graduates but also for UVI's leadership, with President Hall passing the torch after a successful tenure that saw the introduction of new programs and a focus on building a resilient academic community. As the university bids farewell to President Hall, it continues to celebrate the ongoing contributions of its alumni, exemplified by the distinguished career of Caroline Fawkes.