

logo not found or type unknown

Gordon Rhea Sworn In as V.I. Attorney General, Vows to Modernize and Strengthen Justice Department

Rhea took the oath of office in a ceremony at Government House. He outlined plans to recruit local talent and implement modern case management systems, with a focus on rehabilitation programs for offenders

Government / **Published On October 25, 2024 06:02 PM /**

Staff Consortium **October 25, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



Gordon C. Rhea, Esq. was officially sworn in as the new Attorney General of the USVI by V.I. Supreme Court Justice Harold W.L. Willocks. By. GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Gordon C. Rhea, Esq. was officially sworn in as the new Attorney General of the Virgin Islands on Friday, in a ceremony held at Government House on St. Croix. The oath of office was administered by V.I. Supreme Court Justice Harold W.L. Willocks.

According to Government House, Rhea brings decades of legal experience to the position, having served in various roles, including as a federal and local prosecutor in the Virgin Islands, a defense attorney, a civil litigation expert, and an appellate lawyer. His contributions to the legal field in the territory have been recognized by the Virgin Islands Bar Association, which awarded him the Winston Hodge Award, its highest honor, in 2023. Rhea has been a member of the association for over 40 years.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach attended the ceremony, praising Rhea's deep understanding of the law and his balanced approach to justice. "I value having the blessing of a person who has experience on both the prosecution and defense sides," said Governor Bryan. "He brings the balance of mind necessary to run a fair Attorney General's Office and the intelligence that will contribute to our Department of Justice for years to come."

After taking the oath, Rhea expressed his gratitude to the governor, lieutenant governor, and other attendees, which included members of the governor's executive staff, cabinet, the Virgin Islands Legislature, and Department of Justice. He emphasized his commitment to strengthening the Department of Justice, pledging to recruit more attorneys, particularly from the Virgin Islands, to fill critical vacancies and to modernize the office with updated case management systems. "We're missing a lot of people that we need, and I'd like to bring more in," he said. "That's a big part of my agenda."

Rhea has had a long association with the Virgin Islands, starting from the time he underwent Peace Corps training on St. Croix in 1968, where he later married his wife, Catherine, Government House made known. Reflecting on his ties to the territory, he stated, "The Virgin Islands has been a big part of my life for more than half of my life."

Rhea's legal journey began after graduating with a bachelor's degree in history from Indiana University, followed by a master's degree from Harvard University as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. He then joined the Peace Corps before pursuing a law degree from Stanford University in 1974. His early legal career saw him defending complex criminal cases in Los Angeles and working in Washington, D.C., where he served as Special Assistant to the Chief Counsel of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities. He later became the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Washington, where he oversaw all felony prosecutions and Supreme Court operations for the District of Columbia.

In 1981, Rhea was appointed as the United States Attorney in the Virgin Islands. The following year, he co-founded the prominent plaintiffs' law firm Alkin and Rhea on St. Croix, establishing a lasting presence in the local legal community.

As Attorney General, Rhea intends to focus on initiatives that support rehabilitation and provide second chances for individuals facing criminal convictions. "One of the worst things I can imagine is to be a young person and have a felony conviction that you carry for life," Rhea said, emphasizing the need for programs addressing drug treatment, anger management, and counseling.

Rhea and his wife have two sons, Campbell and Carter, who continue to share their parents' deep ties to the Virgin Islands community.