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UVI to Host Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson at Student Convocation

Justice Jackson, the first Black woman on the U.S. Supreme Court, will speak at the February 7 event on the St. Thomas campus, where she will also receive an honorary degree.

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The Honorable Ketanji Brown Jackson, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. By. UVI

The University of the Virgin Islands announced Friday that Honorable Ketanji Brown Jackson, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, will be the featured speaker at a Student Convocation at 3 p.m. on Feb. 7, in the Elridge W. Blake Sports and Fitness Center on its Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas and streamed live in a closed link to members of the UVI Community.

Her presence at UVI is part of Justice Jackson's broader visit to the territory, following [an invitation](#) from Chief Judge Robert A. Molloy and District Judge Wilma A. Lewis.

“We are honored to host the Honorable Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson at the University of the Virgin Islands in a historic event that is sure to inspire us all,” said UVI President Dr. Safiya George. “I am excited that our students will be able to hear first-hand from Justice Jackson, who has had an inspirational career, with many achievements, as she makes monumental legal decisions serving on the highest court in the land.”

Justice Jackson, born in Washington, D.C., has a distinguished background in law and public service. She grew up in Miami, Florida, where her parents were public school educators. Her academic journey began at Harvard University, where she enrolled in 1988 and graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Government from Harvard-Radcliffe. She continued her education at Harvard Law School, earning her Juris Doctorate (J.D.) in 1996.

Following law school, Justice Jackson's career has been marked by a commitment to both private practice and public service. She has held three federal clerkships, with Judge Patti B. Saris of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, Judge Bruce M. Selya of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and Justice Stephen G. Breyer of the U. S. Supreme Court. Her public service includes two years with the United States Sentencing Commission from 2003 to 2005 and a role as a federal public defender from 2005 to 2007.

According to UVI, in 2010, she returned to the U.S. Sentencing Commission as a commissioner. Justice Jackson served on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia from 2013 to 2021. She was also appointed to the Defender Services Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States in 2017, and the Supreme Court Fellows Commission in 2019. In 2021, President Joe Biden appointed her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. On Feb. 25, 2022, President Biden announced he was nominating Jackson to fill the Supreme Court seat left open by the retirement of Justice Stephen Breyer. The U.S. Senate voted to confirm her on April 7, 2022.

Justice Jackson has the distinction of being the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, the first federal public defender to sit on the Court and the first Justice since Thurgood Marshall to represent criminal defendants. She took the oath of office on June 30, 2022.

Justice Jackson is married to Dr. Patrick Jackson, and they are the proud parents of two daughters.

During the convocation, Justice Jackson will be awarded an honorary degree from UVI, recognizing her significant contributions to the legal field and her role as a trailblazer for women and people of color in the judiciary.

“We invite the University Community to attend this special event, which offers UVI students a unique opportunity to hear directly from one of the most influential and celebrated justices serving on the U.S. Supreme Court,” said Dr. George. “This event promises to be an inspiring occasion, highlighting Justice Jackson's remarkable journey and her commitment to justice and equality.”

“The presence of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson at this convocation is a profound moment for UVI and the Virgin Islands,” said Dr. Una Dyer, vice president of Strategic Affairs, who has been working closely with President George on managing the event’s logistics. “Justice Jackson’s story will resonate deeply with our students, reminding them that excellence, perseverance and dedication can lead to extraordinary accomplishments.” UVI encourages all members of the

University Community to participate in this historic event. Registration will be required for UVI students and employees to attend the event.

In 2017, the University had the distinction of hosting the Honorable Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayer at a student convocation.

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