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Virgin Islands Mourn Passing of Architect and Cultural Visionary Gerville R. Larsen

The community mourns architect and cultural preservationist Gerville R. Larsen, whose work at Taller Larjas blended Virgin Islands heritage with innovation, including designs of the Dr. Donna M. Christian-Christensen Public Health Facility.

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Architect and cultural preservationist Gerville R. Larsen, whose visionary work through Taller Larjas blended Virgin Islands heritage with modern design.

The Virgin Islands is mourning the loss of Gerville R. Larsen, a distinguished architect, artist, and cultural preservationist whose influence can be seen in the territory's architecture, public spaces, and sense of cultural identity. Larsen passed away on October 29, his family confirmed in a

statement expressing profound grief and gratitude for his life and legacy.

“With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Gerville Larsen who left us on October 29th,” the family said in a statement provided to the Consortium. “He was a beloved son, brother, uncle and friend to many. Gerville will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all who knew and loved him. We will advise at a later date of funeral arrangements to celebrate Gerville’s life and legacy.”

Larsen, a sixth-generation Crucian, was a registered architect, AIA member, and the founder of Taller Larjas, a Christiansted-based design practice renowned for integrating Virgin Islands history and culture into modern architectural design. His work combined preservation with innovation, helping shape public and private spaces that reflect both heritage and progress.

The Virgin Islands Department of Health (DOH) joined the community in mourning Larsen’s death, calling him “a visionary architect, cultural advocate, and true friend to the Department.” DOH highlighted his role as an integral member of the design team for the new Dr. Donna M. Christian-Christensen Public Health Facility, where he collaborated with FLAD Architects to bring forward a vision centered on healing, community, and cultural identity.

“Mr. Larsen, through his firm Taller Larjas, was an integral part of the design team for the new Dr. Donna M. Christian-Christensen Public Health Facility,” the department said. “His work reflected a rare ability to blend our culture and heritage with innovation — creating spaces that honor the past while serving the needs of the present and future.”

A DOH official recalled Larsen’s thoughtful and grounded approach to design, saying, “I remember often turning to him in those final moments of decision and asking, ‘Gerville, what are your thoughts? Are we in line with our cultural heritage?’ His guidance always felt grounded, inspired, and true. I smile at the memory of his wisdom and calm, even as a quiet sadness settles in — knowing that while he is no longer beside us, his spirit lives on in every wall, every color, every corner he helped bring to life.”

Through his partnership with FLAD Architects, Larsen helped shape spaces that embody the concepts of wellness and connection. “Working in collaboration with FLAD Architects, Mr. Larsen’s design vision helped bring to life the concepts of healing and community that define this new facility — from bringing the outdoors inside to creating open, restorative spaces that nurture both body and spirit,” the department said.

The Department of Health emphasized that Larsen’s legacy goes beyond architecture. “Mr. Larsen’s contribution to public health in the Virgin Islands goes beyond architecture — it is a legacy of compassion, culture, and care,” the statement continued. “His work stands as a lasting reminder that healing can be found not only in medicine, but in the spaces we share and the culture we embrace. We are deeply grateful for his partnership and his vision.”

Steve Jackson, a principal with FLAD Architects who worked closely with Larsen, described his late colleague’s influence as both professional and deeply personal. “Mr. Larsen will be greatly missed,” Jackson said. “His unwavering commitment to the preservation of Virgin Islands culture through art and architecture reflected his deep love for the community. As a leader, he played a pivotal role in advancing a state-of-the-art healthcare environment in the territory, leaving an enduring legacy of innovation, cultural pride and service.”

The Department of Health extended its “heartfelt condolences to his family, colleagues, and the entire Virgin Islands architectural community,” noting that Larsen’s impact “will continue to be felt through the many spaces he shaped and the lives they will serve.”

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. also issued a statement honoring Larsen's life and work, calling him "a revered architect, historic preservation champion and artist."

"Gerville loved the Virgin Islands in deed, not just in word," Governor Bryan said. "He guarded our past with a craftsman's care and designed our future with an artist's eye. His work ranged from safeguarding historic streetscapes to mentoring the next generation of designers. He stitched culture, history and community into places we all recognize and cherish."

The governor reflected on walking through Christiansted Town with Larsen in recent months, discussing preservation and revitalization. "I had the privilege of working with Gerville recently as we walked through Christiansted Town, talking through the stories held in those historic buildings and trading ideas for revitalization that respects their soul," Bryan said. "Watching him move from facade to facade, naming details most of us overlook and connecting them to our larger cultural narrative, was inspiring. His knowledge was deep, his passion contagious and his commitment unwavering. I am grateful for that time together and for the clarity he brought to how we honor our past while building a stronger future."

He concluded, "On behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands, I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and the many students and artisans he inspired. We will honor his memory by continuing the work he believed in, preserving what is uniquely ours while building with dignity and purpose."