

Safiyah Wharton Crowned 2026 St. Thomas Carnival Queen After Six-Hour Pageant

Competing on a platform of youth mental health literacy, Safiyah Wharton emerged victorious after four contestants faced off in five judged segments, with Jahniya Williams named first runner-up and winning several special awards.

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Janeke Simon **April 19, 2026**

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Safiyah Wharton captured the 2026 STT Carnival Queen crown after competing on a platform of youth mental health literacy, delivering a vocal talent performance, and winning Ms. Intellect and best ambassadorial presentation. By. USVI FESTIVALS| RUDY LA PLACE.

Safiyah Wharton was crowned the 2026 St. Thomas Carnival Queen on Saturday night after a six-hour Ambassadorial Pageant at the Eldridge Wilburn Blake Sports & Fitness Center, where four

contestants competed in five judged segments designed to test poise, intelligence, style, and creativity. By the end of the evening, Wharton emerged with the crown after a competition that included introductory speeches, swimwear, ambassadorial presentations and interviews, cultural historical dress, talent, and evening wear.

Wharton, Contestant #1, entered the pageant on a platform centered on mental health literacy, particularly among young people. Contestant #2, D'Quañá Lewis, focused on increasing civic engagement. Contestant #3, Ajeuné Willett-Tyson, campaigned on preserving cultural heritage, while Contestant #4, Jahniya Williams, promoted sports tourism as a driver of economic growth in the Virgin Islands.

The pageant opened with introductory speeches and then moved into the swimwear segment. For that portion of the competition, Wharton wore a fuchsia and gold ensemble in a sporty one-shoulder cut. Lewis chose a turquoise and green swimsuit with a simpler cut enhanced by gem embellishments. Willett-Tyson appeared in a blue-dominant monokini combining mesh and animal print, while Williams accessorized her blue monokini with glittering gems, shells, and beads.

The contestants then presented their platform topics during the ambassadorial segment before going directly into the interview portion of the competition. One question asked what resources were needed to improve educational opportunities for young women, and the contestants answered through the lens of their individual platforms. Wharton called for mental health literacy workshops. Lewis advocated for more civic classes in high schools. Willett-Tyson said she wanted to see more leadership opportunities for young women, while Williams said workshops and cultural activities were needed.

After the interviews, the contestants returned in cultural historical dress. Wharton presented a representation of St. Peter's great house and botanical garden. Lewis drew inspiration from Rothschild Francis Market Square. Willett-Tyson's design paid tribute to the art of palm weaving, while Williams honored the legacy of Zora of St. Thomas, known for cultural artistry and custom leather sandals.

The talent segment followed. Wharton delivered a vocal performance. Willett-Tyson staged a revue of Virgin Islands music, adding her own melody line to popular songs while using various instruments. Williams paid tribute to Carnival Queens who came before her, blending song and acrobatic poses in her presentation. Lewis closed the segment with a flute performance honoring various cultural icons.

In the evening wear competition, the contestants appeared in gowns in green, champagne, yellow, and red, all accented to varying degrees with glitter, shine, and sparkle through gem-encrusted fabric and intricate jewelry.

Before the final announcement, several segment winners and special award recipients were named. Wharton won Ms. Intellect and best ambassadorial presentation. Williams, who was named first runner-up, received the People's Choice Award, Ms. Photogenic, best swimwear, and best cultural dress. Willett-Tyson captured best talent and best evening wear.

The evening ended with tears of joy as Safiyah Wharton accepted her bouquet, scepter, and crown after being named the 2026 St. Thomas Carnival Queen.

