

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI to Confer 280 Degrees at 2026 Commencement as Adam O. and Rena Brodhurst Receive Honorary Doctorates

UVI's 2026 commencement ceremonies will be held May 14 on St. Thomas and May 15 on St. Croix, with 280 degrees to be conferred, Adam O. serving as keynote speaker, Rena Brodhurst honored for journalism, and student speakers selected for both campuses.

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A member of UVI's 2022 graduating class expresses excitement after receiving her degree during the commencement ceremony on St. Croix on Fri. May 13, 2022. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM.

The University of the Virgin Islands will confer 280 degrees during its 2026 Commencement Ceremonies, with events scheduled for May 14 on St. Thomas and May 15 on St. Croix, and honorary degrees to be awarded to musician and entrepreneur Adam O. and longtime journalist and publisher Rena Brodhurst.

The St. Thomas ceremony will take place on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at the Elridge W. Blake Sports and Fitness Center on the Orville E. Kean Campus. The St. Croix ceremony will be held on Friday, May 15, 2026, at the Island Center for the Performing Arts on the Albert A. Sheen Campus. Both ceremonies will begin at 1 p.m.

Degree candidates represent a broad range of academic programs across UVI's schools and colleges, including doctoral, graduate, bachelor's, and associate degrees.

"It is with great pride and joy that I congratulate the Class of 2026 on reaching this extraordinary milestone," said UVI President Dr. Safiya George. "Your journey reflects resilience, determination, and excellence. As you leave UVI, you carry forward the knowledge, skills, and spirit needed to lead, innovate, and make a lasting impact in your communities and beyond."

The Class of 2026 student speaker on the Orville E. Kean Campus in St. Thomas will be Zeidan Bass, who will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science.

On the Albert A. Sheen Campus in St. Croix, the student speaker will be SaVaughna John-Baptiste, who will graduate Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture.

The university will confer an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters upon Rena Brodhurst in recognition of her distinguished career and lasting impact on journalism and the Virgin Islands community. Ms. Brodhurst, longtime publisher and editor of The St. Croix Avis, helped shape public discourse in the territory and championed the importance of a free and independent press.

Adam O'Neal, known professionally as Adam O., will serve as keynote speaker for the 2026 commencement exercises. He will also receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of his contributions to music, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.

UVI said the ceremonies will be livestreamed through the university's YouTube page, Facebook page, Events Calendar, and website. The ceremonies will also be broadcast on the Government Access Channel.

For the St. Thomas ceremony, parking regulations on the Orville E. Kean Campus will be suspended from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, to accommodate guests.

Shuttle service will also be provided to transport attendees to the Elridge W. Blake Sports and Fitness Center from several campus locations, including the Classroom Administration Building, Humanities Building, Wellness Center, ACC Building, Upper Campus eastern-side roadway, and the Innovation Center parking lot.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early and use the shuttle service to ensure timely seating.

UVI is also encouraging guests to visit the official commencement website for full details, including ceremony logistics, graduate information, and updates.

The university also highlighted members of the Class of 2026, including Presidential Scholar Trevincia Browne, an accounting major from Saint Kitts and Nevis, who described UVI as a place that helped her grow beyond her comfort zone.

For Ms. Browne, attending UVI was more than an academic experience. The university said it allowed her to discover strengths she had not previously explored.

"I used to be more reserved and soft-spoken and often stayed within my comfort zone. But when I came to UVI, I found myself stepping into spaces I never imagined," said Browne, adding, "I had the opportunity to speak in front of large crowds, which is something I have never done before and that experience helped me grow in confidence. I was also selected as the invocation speaker for the class of 2026, which I'm truly honored by. I always say that UVI really showed me my true potential."

UVI said that despite once being more reserved, Ms. Browne has grown into a passionate leader within the university community.

The university also highlighted Mr. Bass, a computer science major from Saint Kitts and former Student Government Association president, who enrolled at UVI in 2023 and described the decision as a natural one after following in the footsteps of his brother and cousins.

For Mr. Bass, attending UVI was part of "following a family tradition."

As an international student, he said UVI provided a strong transition point before life on the U.S. mainland.

"If I came straight from Saint Kitts to the mainland, it's much more fast-paced. The adjustment here was easy. As much as it's a U.S. territory, the one thing you never lose is the Caribbean uniqueness," said Bass.

UVI said Mr. Bass had a "head start" after earning an associate degree at a community college, making the academic transition seamless. The social transition, however, took more time to adjust to.