

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Rotary Club Mid-Isle Honors Locals For Vocational Service Excellence

VIC News / **Published On October 30, 2014 07:43 PM /**

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The Rotary Club of St. Croix Mid-Isle honored four St. Croix residents for excellence in their respective professions at the club's Vocational Service Recognition Awards Ceremony, held Wednesday night at Gertrude's Restaurant.

The event was organized in conjunction with Vocational Service Month, which is celebrated in October, and calls every Rotarian to "aspire to high ethical standards in their occupation, recognize the worthiness of all useful occupations, and contribute their vocational talents to the problems and needs of society."

Club members were given the opportunity to nominate persons in the local community who they believed embodied the spirit of vocational service.

While St. Croix residents and visitors may not necessarily recognize the name Susanna Santana Ocasio right away, they certainly have seen her handiwork. Ms. Ocasio is responsible for the beautification and maintenance of the Altoona Lagoon Park near Gallows Bay. As a result of her watchful eye and green thumb--a labor of love she has performed for over 20 years as a volunteer--the area has transformed into a preferred destination for exercise or relaxation for many locals.

Venerable newsman Alvin "Alvin Gee" Southwell was also recognized for his long and respected career in broadcast journalism, something he has been doing for more than 28 years. Locals often flock to Gee's *VI News Now* morning and afternoon newscasts on WLDV 107.9 FM, the station where he is news director, for his comprehensive reporting on local, national and regional news.

Julie Printy, hotelier, was recognized for her work as general manager at The Palms at Pelican Cove, a position she has held for more than a decade. A profile description on The Palms website describes Ms. Printy as "a competent business person," who is "also admired for her philanthropic work." In addition, Ms. Printy is said to love the hospitality industry and is "very much a people person."

The final nominee was longtime president of the St. Croix Foundation, Roger Dewey, whose expertise is in fundraising and community development. Mr. Dewey was heralded for his close to 23 years at the helm of the Foundation and it was also revealed he would be retiring on November 1.

The *VI Consortium* caught up with Mr. Dewey after the ceremony.

"I think that the most important thing to me is that I've been able to do something to help the community that I live in," he said. "It's an honor, I believe, to everyday to try to make the place we live a little bit better. And I think that's everybody's obligation, if it comes from doing something big or doing something small, like picking up a little bit of trash or helping to tutor someone. I feel really honored that I've had this opportunity."

When asked about his post-retirement plans, Mr. Dewey said he's not sure what they will be, but he looks forward to the experience.

"Life is complicated, none of us know how long we're going to be here. I'm used to working and I'll just cross that bridge when I come to it, but it's a break that's well-deserved," he said. "I may choose to go back to work after a shorter period of time, a longer period of time, or I may love retirement. I've never had the luxury of not working, so let me figure out what it feels like."

As part of the evening's festivities, Luther Edwards was announced as the winner of the Club's first online raffle fundraiser. According to President-Elect Kim DeLine, over 300 tickets were sold, amounting to \$7,500 that will go toward community services projects. Mr. Edwards' prize package included a 7-day stay at The Palms, 7-day car rental, \$1,000 cash prize and several excursions on St. Croix.

Of the Club's upcoming activities, Claudia Carrington said the group is gearing up for its 11th Annual Rotary Club Mid-Isle Treasure Hunt fundraiser on November 9. Teams are encouraged to sign up and prizes include vacations to neighboring islands. Proceeds will benefit student scholarships.

DeLine said the Club welcomes members of all ages and vocations.

"We're looking for people who want to give back to the community and be part of a club with like-minded community members who are very active, both in their business profession, they don't have to be business owners, but people who just want to give back to their community, as well as get together and have a good time with other like-minded people," she concluded.

For more information on the Rotary Club of St. Croix Mid-Isle and its upcoming events, visit the organization's Facebook page [here](#).