

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett: 'I Am An Elected Public Servant, Not A Politician'

Government / **Published On February 03, 2015 09:06 AM /**

Cynthia Graham **February 03, 2015**



A ceremonial swearing-in was held for Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett Monday at the District Court of the Virgin Islands on St. Croix.

Plaskett, who was already officially sworn into office on Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C., chose to conduct a local ceremony so residents could witness her take the Oath of Office, which was administered by District Court Chief Judge the Honorable Wilma A. Lewis.

At the ceremony, which was attended by a host of dignitaries, political leaders, and residents, Plaskett, a native of St. Croix, chronicled her "journey" as the territory's new

representative on Capitol Hill by explaining her family's relocation to New York City "many, many years ago," but adding that "New York was not our home."



ance, Washington, D.C. -- Plaskett said
o because "it was time to come home."

Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett

With that, Plaskett said she does not take lightly her role as the Virgin Islands' representative in Congress.

"I like to tell people that this is not a political career, this is a public service career that I have under taken and I see myself as an elected public servant, not as a politician," Plaskett said.

She continued, "I am keenly aware of the expectations that you all have. That you all have for me, as well as our other government officials. It is an enormous thought and presence that is always present on me. The reality of where we are as a people and the desire, indeed, the need, to pull ourselves out of this economic and truly social depression that we are in today."

Plaskett highlighted a number of statistics, which she called "shocking," that are facing the territory.

"Our gross domestic product has decreased, while it is increasing in the United States. Virgin Islands unemployment is hovering at 13 percent, and the United States is 5.8 percent. Our juvenile arrest rate has gone down, but 27 percent of the children in the Virgin Islands live in poverty, in the United States it's 10 percent," the congresswoman said.

But in an effort to remain optimistic, Plaskett said, "We know, however, these are just numbers, and they do not tell the real story of the people of our islands; our growth and our resilience, how much we all fight."

Plaskett said that in Washington, while she will sometimes tell the "rough stories, the rough things that are happening in this territory," she would also let her colleagues know of "the strength of the people of this territory."

She said often people in Washington are not aware of what Virgin Islanders have given to the United States, including "their banking system" and provided African Americans with "the resiliency to fight through people like Denmark Vesey, Hubert Harrison, and others. And that, we, everyday, through our service men, volunteer to fight when they

we have accounted for more than
and in the latest conflict in Iraq and



Delegate to Congress Stacey

Plaskett being sworn in at the District Court of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix on Monday morning

She said that she would use legal, diplomatic or even "the crudest form of Crucian" to let Washington know that Virgin Islanders "are here" and "we demand more than we have been given," adding, "we are not asking for handouts, we are asking for our fair share of the American dream."

Plaskett also pointed out that as the United States Virgin Islands representative in Washington, she represents the entire Caribbean, "not just small, little Virgin Islands. I represent them all, and in doing so, there is strength in that."

However, she said it is important for things to turn around quickly in the Virgin Islands.

"There must be an acceleration in the rate of change of economic, social and technological structure and development of the U.S. Virgin Islands because there is too much potential and there's far too much at stake at this time not to make that successful development a priority," Plaskett said.

In concluding her remarks, the congresswoman hearkened back to her not-too-distant past on the campaign trail.

"You may recall, my slogan was, 'For people, not politics'," Plaskett said. "I will continue to abide by that to serve you all."

Plaskett is the territory's fifth Delegate to Congress and the immediate successor of Donna Christensen, who held the post for 18 years.

© Viconsortium 2026