

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Education Officials Express Sorrow In Passing Of Education Family Members

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Commissioner of Education Sharon Ann McCollum, Ph.D., along with Assistant Commissioner Chermaine Hobson-Johnson, and Insular Superintendent of Schools Colleen Williams in the St. Croix District and Dionne Wells-Hedrington in the St. Thomas-St. John District today expressed sorrow over the passing of members of the Education family in recent weeks, DOE has made known through a press release.

Mr. Richard Branch—a longtime school monitor who began working at St. Croix's Elena Christian Jr. High School in 1978, volunteered at his former workplace for many years after retirement—passed away last week.

“On behalf of the Department of Education, I extend heartfelt condolences to the family and other loved ones of Mr. Branch,” Commissioner McCollum began. “Mr. Branch’s memory will remain a fixture in the hearts and minds of the parents, faculty and staff, and former and present students of the Elena Christian Junior High School.”

Commissioner McCollum is also sending tributes in the passing of paraprofessional Alma Brooks in the St. Thomas-St. John District. “Ms. Brooks was a friend to many and a dedicated paraprofessional. The contributions she made to the students and staff at Gomez Elementary School were countless and will be remembered fondly,” she said.

Education officials also extend sympathies to the family of Eugenie Fontaine who made contributions to the Department through her work as an educator at the Gladys Abraham Elementary School on St. Thomas.

“Ms. Fontaine was a dedicated educator. Her commitment to her profession is made evident through the happy, thriving students that have blossomed under her care,” Commissioner McCollum said.

Condolences are also extended to the family of Eurita Callwood, a former English teacher at the Bertha C. Boschulte Jr. High School on St. Thomas. “Her dedication to our students and to the profession of teaching will always be remembered,” Commissioner McCollum said.

Additionally, Education officials expressed sympathy to employees who have lost loved ones. In the St. Croix District, Special Education Supervisor Gail Harris-Perez is mourning the loss of her husband, Mr. Juan Perez. In the St. Thomas-St. John District, Regina Watson, teacher at Bertha C. Boschulte Jr. High and Colonel Eddie Charles of Ivanna Eudora Kean High School are mourning the loss of their father and brother-in-law, respectively, Mr. Reginald Watson.

“May you find comfort in the beautiful memories of your loved one and the life you shared together. With every sunrise, let those cherished remembrances fill your heart with warmth and let every sunset bring you peace and strength to face another day,” Commissioner McCollum said.

On June 28, retired educator in the St. Thomas-St. John District and former V.I. Board of Education Chairman Oswin ‘Zeke’ Sewer passed away while returning from a 50th anniversary cruise with fellow members of the Charlotte Amalie High School class of 1965.