

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Allen Burke Foundation's 4th Annual Basketball Tournament Kicks Off With Excitement

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ST. CROIX -- The Central High School gymnasium was almost at capacity on Friday night where basketball teams from across the territory gathered for the first day of the 4th Annual Alan D. Burke Basketball Tournament, an event organized by Alvin Burke along with his mother and other foundation supporters, whose brother was gunned down years ago here.

Burke said the Foundation was the brainchild of his sister, now attending college, who wanted to remember their brother -- a lover of the sport who also dreamed of becoming a pro player -- in a positive light and to also help keep the territory's youths out of trouble.

Aside from the local teams, the weekend-long event sees pro athletes making their way from the mainland to the territory in a show of support. It also stands as a testament to how much the foundation has grown.

At the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on Thursday, former and current stars in various sporting disciplines gathered at the Port Authority's conference room for a press conference, where they spoke excitedly about the event, and the potential impact the foundation could have on the islands in relation to economic development, and as a deterrent to youth violence (more on that in a separate story).

At last night's tournament, Governor Kenneth Mapp could be seen shaking participants' hands and watching the youths play. Sen. Sammuel Sanes, always present at local events, watched an entire game sitting on the north side of the gymnasium.

The crowds were engaged as well, aided along by an excellent commentator and basketball teams bringing their best efforts. The tournament got off to an engrossing start, indeed, with much more to come on Saturday and Sunday at the same gym.

Correction: Sept. 19, 2015

A previous version of this story misspelled Allen D. Burke's name as Allan Burke. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.