

The Virgin Islands Consortium

The Virgin Islands Teacher Of The Year Is St. Croix's Monique Mari Motta

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ST. CROIX -- On Wednesday, the Virgin Islands Department of Education announced Monique Mari Motta of John H. Woodson Jr. High School here as the 2016 State Teacher of the Year. Ms. Motta was previously named St. Croix District Teacher of the Year at a Government House ceremony, after being selected out of six finalists following an extensive evaluation process, which included interviews and classroom observations, [according to DOE](#).

Motta, a 27-year employee of DOE, is a special education teacher and the modified instruction department chairperson at Woodson. A 1979 graduate of St. Croix Central High School, Ms. Motta received a B.A. degree in social work from Morgan State

University. Her career was advanced in the Department of Education special services division when she sought specialized educational services for her daughter.

Former Woodson Assistant Principal Natasha O'Halloran-Smith said Ms. Motta instructs students who are severely cognitively delayed and would often ensure that her students are included in campus social events.

Taking to the podium after being named St. Croix District 2015 Teacher of the Year in late October, Ms. Motta revealed that a colleague texted her earlier, saying, "Monique, it had been a long time coming. Prepare some notes; I don't think anybody else will be getting this because it's from the heart."

Ms. Motta went on to tell the audience, "So often the students that I teach are not the ones that you are going to read about their academic accomplishments – you are not going to read about their successes in life. But for many of my students, we have to teach more than communication. We teach them life skills and independence."