

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Receives Prestigious AME Quadrennial Service Award In Philadelphia

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The 50th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference and Bicentennial Celebration of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is being held in the church's birthplace, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from July 3, 2016 – July 13, 2016 at the Marriott Philadelphia.

Governor Kenneth Mapp was unanimously selected to receive the prestigious Bishops' Quadrennial Service Award in recognition of his election and leadership in the Virgin Islands, according to a press release Government House issued Monday.

The governor accepted the award on Monday during the Bishop Led Worship Service where over 10,000 were in attendance. The recipients of this award have demonstrated

distinguished and committed service to African, Caribbean and African-American communities and through these services have exemplified the teachings of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Governor Mapp joins the ranks of such distinguished persons as Mrs. Rosa Parks (the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement), the Reverend Oliver Brown (for his role in the landmark court decision of Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education), the Honorable James E. Clyburn (Majority Whip of the 110th Congress of the United States) and Mrs. Margaret Joan Cousin (for her pioneering role in HIV/AIDS awareness and ministry in the A.M.E. Church).

Among those honored at the services were President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle. They were recognized with the Richard Allen Community Service Award, according to the release.

Mr. Mapp, a lifelong member of the AME Church, was baptized in Bridge Street AME Church in Brooklyn and has been a member of Bethel AME Church on Queen St. in Christiansted, St. Croix since 1960. The governor's family, beginning with his maternal grandparents are life long members of the church, his parents being married there in 1950.

Richard Allen, who was also named its first bishop, founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church more commonly known as the A.M.E. Church, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1816. It is a predominantly African-American Church and it is the oldest Protestant denomination founded by black people in the world. What started as a church community of 5 churches and 8 clergy, has now grown to an estimated membership of approximately 7,500,000 worldwide with 81,000 pastors, 21 bishops and 12,000 congregations, according to the World Council of Churches. St. Croix is the home of three AME churches, Bethel AME in Christiansted, St. Luke's in Grove Place and Grady AME in Est. Glynn.

"I am humbled by this honor and accept it on behalf of the many members of the church who perform great and unselfish service to our community. Like many Virgin Islanders, the church played a pivotal role in our upbringing," Mr. Mapp said. "Besides our homes, it was a place where we learned to be honest, to accept responsibility, to respect others as we wished to be respected and to be generous and kind to others. I am a proud member of the AME church and I thank the Council of Bishops for bestowing this honor upon me."