

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp's Latest D.H.S. Commissioner Was Once Charged With Embezzlement And Forgery, But She Was Found Not Guilty On All Counts

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ST. CROIX -- Anita Roberts, Governor Kenneth Mapp's [latest Department of Human Services acting commissioner](#), who will officially begin her tenure on Monday, was once charged by the Virgin Islands Police Department with five counts of embezzlement, four counts of obtaining money under false pretenses and two counts of forgery.

Upon learning of the 2009 charges that Mrs. Roberts faced, The Consortium reached out to Government House, whose staff then told Mrs. Roberts to get in touch with the publication to offer an explanation.

Police had alleged that Mrs. Roberts stole a total of \$12,716.92 between June and August 2006, while employed as a business manager with St. Croix Condominiums. Her bail was set at \$35,000 and she was later remanded to the Bureau of Corrections.

But once the case went to trial, Mrs. Roberts was completely exonerated by a jury, which collectively found her to be not guilty and the government's case without merit. The criminal charges were universally dropped and her record completely expunged.

"Yes, I was accused of embezzlement in St. Croix, but I maintained my innocence throughout that horrific ordeal," Mrs. Roberts said Friday afternoon. "I was found not guilty and my records expunged. I can say to you that I hope no one would ever have to go through what I went through."

The territory's old expungement law stated that the arrest record of someone -- including fingerprints, mugshots and DNA samples, and any other police or judicial proceeding records of a person -- should be sealed upon petition to the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, and when said person meets the criteria set forth in the law. Those rules, which were more stringent than the updated law and through which Mrs. Roberts was cleared, included the following: (See [updated law here](#).)

- A person successfully completes the Pretrial Intervention Program under title 5 V.I.C., Section 4611 et seq.;
- A person has received a statement of Nolle Prosequi, because the People are unable to meet their burden of proof;
- A person whose case has been dismissed with prejudice and the person has no other charges or arrest pending; or
- A person has been arrested, and no complaint or information has been filed and the statute of limitation has expired.

With her records expunged, the court -- and community -- are supposed to view Mrs. Roberts as if she had never been arrested, according to attorney Russell Plate, who helped Mrs. Roberts clear her record and move on with her life. He said expungement when someone is found not guilty on all charges, or when a case is dismissed with prejudice (when a plaintiff is barred from filing another case on the same claim) is critical to help people move on with their lives. Yet, he said, many continue to be haunted by the lack of interest that some courts take in such cases, although those impacted could see their lives stalled as many employers, for example, refuse to hire candidates with criminal records.

Mrs. Roberts, 60, who served at Office of Management and Budget with oversight of the Federal Grants Management Unit for a year before being appointed to her new role as commissioner of D.H.S., sought to highlight her team's accomplishments while there.

"I have been in my position at O.M.B. for a year and we've managed between \$186 million to \$200 million in federal grants distributed throughout territory. Because of my team, the Virgin Islands is better for it," she said.

As head of D.H.S., Mrs. Roberts sees her role as bringing to fruition Governor Kenneth Mapp's vision, which she said is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

"I'm a big proponent of that," she said. "Dealing with the deliverables and enhancing them -- especially for those who are not usually heard."

As for her past being back in the media because of the heightened scrutiny that comes with her new role, Mrs. Roberts said she was not bothered.

"If we could have more transparency and accountability, we would be better for it," she concluded.

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