

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Meet The 32nd Legislature Of The Virgin Islands

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ST. THOMAS -- The democratic process in the U.S. Virgin Islands was on full display today here, which saw senators new and old taking the oath of office following the November 8, 2016 election cycle that took [power away from some](#), and [gave power to others](#).

Held at the Emancipation Garden's David Monsanto Bandstand this morning -- a historic site that has come to host many of the territory's inaugural events -- the ceremony saw attendance by a small crowd, among them Governor Kenneth Mapp and Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter. Introductions were made by master of ceremony Timothy Lake, followed by the posting of colors, the national anthem, the Virgin Islands march and a musical selection.

The oath of office was administered by Supreme Court Justice Rhys S. Hodge, who called the newly elected senators by name as they affirmed their position for the 2017-2019 term.

Governor Kenneth Mapp, in prepared remarks, said he looked forward to taking advantage of opportunities with the new body to advance the interests of the territory.

"It is with great faith in the principles by which we are governed that I offer my congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected members of the 32nd Legislature of the Virgin Islands. As governor, I look forward to exploiting every opportunity to advance our collective interests through cooperation among the branches of government, mutual respect for the roles assigned by our system of government, and candid public exchange. I pledge my cooperation in all efforts to promote progress and prosperity for all Virgin Islanders," he said.

Sworn into office today were the following senators:

- Senator Marvin A. Blyden
- Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff
- Senator Jean A. Forde
- Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
- Senator Alicia "Chucky" Hansen
- Senator Myron D. Jackson
- Senator Neville A. James
- Senator Positive T.A. Nelson
- Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly
- Senator Tregenza A. Roach
- Senator Sammuel Sanes
- Senator At Large Brian A. Smith
- Senator Kurt A. Violet
- Senator Janette Millin Young

Notably, would-be senator Kevin Rodriguez, who was the 6th place winner during the November 8 general election, [was not allowed to take the oath of office](#), as a last-minute ruling on Sunday by the territory's Supreme Court overturned a Superior Court judgement that ruled in his favor. Citing [judicial estoppel](#), the high court opined that the Superior Court could not take a position contrary to the position it had taken in the past in a legal proceeding. The Superior Court had previously barred Mr. Rodriguez from taking the oath of office, only to overturn its own ruling following testimony from witnesses, including Mr. Rodriguez's wife, confirming Mr. Rodriguez's residency in the territory since 2013.

Feature Image: Myron Jackson, the new Senate president, leads the way during a swearing-in ceremony of the 32nd Legislature. (Credit: Government House)

Correction: January 11, 2017

A previous version of this story stated that Kevin Rodriguez came in seventh during the November 8 general election. Mr. Rodriguez placed sixth. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.

Correction: Jan. 10, 2016

A previous version of this story said the 2016 general election took place on November 9, when it actually took place on November 8. We've updated the story to reflect the correct information.

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