

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Native Wins Full Ride Scholarship To George Washington University; Story Carried By Washington Post

Education / **Published On March 24, 2017 10:33 AM /**

Staff **March 24, 2017**



A Virgin Islander named Adonte Yearwood is making his family and the USVI proud after earning a full ride scholarship to George Washington University (G.W.U.).

The story was carried by The Washington Post and other Washington-based news outlets, and news of the scholarship was relayed to The Consortium early Thursday by former Senator Kenneth Gittens, who was a classmate of Mr. Yearwood's mother, Dorene Browne-Louis.

The news came during a gathering in the library of the the Eastern Senior High School on Wednesday, where it appeared that students were gathered for a college-prep discussion -- albeit with multiple media outlets in the room, according to The Post.

Mr. Yearwood was last in line, according to The Post; the 17-year-old was wearing a blazer and khakis, and twisted a bit in his chair as he spoke, revealing his dream school



Adonte Yearwood, center left, receives

scholarship from GWU with his mother standing to his right.

Suddenly, the school's principal, Sah Brown, appeared in the room, along with Costas Solomou, G.W.U.'s dean of admissions, and Steven Knapp, the university's president.

G.W.U.'s mascot was there, too, dressed in his finest Colonial wear, according to The Post.

Mr. Solomou said the group was at the school to award a Stephen Joel Trachtenberg Scholarship, a full ride to the private university that is given annually to students in the city.

Mr. Knapp then said it was his privilege to announce the recipient at the school.

"Who is Adonte Yearwood," he said.

In his seat, Mr. Yearwood held his hand to his mouth, covering a bright grin. In the crowd, there were cheers and applause. Mr. Yearwood shook Mr. Knapp's hand. The mascot patted the teen on the shoulder, and Mr. Yearwood brought him in for a hug. He embraced his mother, Ms. Browne-Louis, who was beaming, according to The Post.

While in St. Thomas, Mr. Yearwood attended the Seventh-Day Adventist School and one year of high school at Eudora Kean, before moving to Washington D.C. with his mother, who works with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington. Ms. Browne-Louis is the widow of the St. Thomas firefighter who was [shot to death](#) outside the fire station near the V.I. Legislature building in August. In an interview with The Post, Ms. Louis-Browne said Mr. Yearwood wanted to make his deceased stepfather proud.

"He always says that 'I'm going to make y'all proud,' " Ms. Browne-Louis said before the presentation, [according to The Post](#). "This moment definitely exemplifies that."

"I was lost," Mr. Yearwood said afterward. "Honestly, I didn't expect it today. It caught me by surprise. I didn't know what to think. I was just shocked."

According to The Post, G.W.U. officials on Wednesday hand-delivered Trachtenberg scholarships and acceptance letters to nine students, prompting surprises at schools across Washington.

G.W.U. is the largest university in Washington, D.C. with 26,000 students. It has offered the D.C.-focused scholarship since 1989. The scholarships cover tuition, room and board, books and fees. In terms of dollars, the estimated value of the award is more than \$60,000 a year, according to The Post. More than 160 Trachtenberg scholars have enrolled at GWU since the program started, and their graduation rate is about 92 percent.

Ms. Browne-Louis said the the past few years had not been necessarily easy for Mr. Yearwood, and deemed the scholarship a blessing.

“We were very concerned about what we would be able to afford,” she said. “And so an opportunity like this just speaks to his perseverance and his motivation to do well and to always strive for excellence.”

Feature Image: Adonte Yearwood is hugged by his mother, Dorene Browne-Louis.