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Virgin Islander Establishes \$25,000 Endowment to Support UVI Computer Science Majors

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University of the Virgin Islands' students with an avid interest in computer science and related fields will be afforded the opportunity to advance their interest, thanks to an endowed scholarship fund of \$25,000, established by the charitable foundation AROC, in October 2019, UVI made known Tuesday afternoon.

Through this endowment, two deserving students will be selected to receive a book scholarship in the amount of \$750 through the UVI Bookstore, the university said. Through other similar campaigns and initiatives, AROC hopes to lend additional support not only to UVI students, but residents of the Virgin Islands in general.

Cora Richardson, founder of AROC and native Virgin Islander residing in California, identified UVI as the charitable beneficiary of the funds, which are intended to support students majoring in computer science.

“Cora spoke compassionately about her home (St. Thomas) and sincerely desired to make a significant investment in the lives of young Virgin Islanders,” said Mitchell Neaves, vice president of Institutional Advancement.

“Her life experiences in the tech industry allowed our discussions to develop a clear vision of the impact she wanted to share with this gift,” Neaves said. “Cora’s commitment to the UVI Cyber Security Program provides a perpetual resource for other Virgin Islanders to follow in her footsteps,” he said reflecting on the impact of this remarkable gift.

“Computer Science was a path to my career and there are not enough people in the field that look like me,” Richardson said. “I believe that there is untapped potential and there is more room for other career paths other than being a computer developer,” she added.

Highlighting the fact that there are several other domains that surround the computer science industry, Richardson said it is her mission to garner the interest of students.

“I want to pique students’ interest. Basic scripting can help your job even if you are not directly in a computer science related field,” she said. “I want to draw that out from people that computer skills are necessary to compliment the fields that they are already in.”

As Richardson puts it, computer science is “near and dear to her heart,” it is little wonder then that her future goals are focused on encouraging individuals to pursue computer science. To date, she has in the pipeline plans to implement an iPad lending library to teach entry level and advance computer skills in the Virgin Islands.

Beyond her foundation, Richardson is an accomplished professional. Currently, she is employed as the engineering project manager at Apple Inc.

AROC is a charitable foundation that provides resources to those interested in computer science and related technologies. Their future goal is “to be a reliable resource for education in computer science in the Caribbean.”