

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Music Legend Honored At 65th Carnival Village Opening

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands 65th Carnival celebration continued Friday with the official opening of Carnival Village activities free of charge, as the Carnival Committee's plan for an admission fee of \$5 was abandoned at the last minute. The opening stayed within its traditional path, with a ribbon-cutting event about 6:30 p.m., followed by remarks from local officials, among them Governor Kenneth Mapp.

This year's Village is named after Juan G. Harrigan, a local music pioneer and major contributor to the art's growth in the territory. In an interview with The Consortium, Mr. Harrigan said it was a good feeling to have the Village named in his honor this year, expressing gratefulness to be alive, not deceased, to receive it.

"It's nice. It's a special feeling. Most of the time most people pass before they get their honor, so I'm glad and thankful that I got it while I'm alive and have my family with me. It was a nice experience," he said. Mr. Harrigan, who said that he's also part of the community band on St. Thomas, created his own group a few years ago with the aim of helping some American Legion men who suffered with cancer get through that difficult season of their lives. The men were first hesitant, but they wound up joining the group -- some even went into remission and became completely free of cancer, Mr. Harrigan said.

"God gave me a gift and I want to share it," he said. Mr. Harrigan and his band got his chance to do just that in front of the Village crowd last night, serving up a variety of songs to the audience.

Mr. Harrigan told The Consortium that he realized his passion for music as a youngster, when he was in 12th grade. He joined the military in 1976, received a masters degree in music education, and taught in the public school system on St. Thomas for 28 years. He was part of the V.I. Carnival Committee for almost 25 years -- from 1988 to 2012. While part of the committee, he was in charge of the Calypso show from 2009 to 2012. "I'm the longest reigning local conductors in the Village," she said.

The Village crowd was soft for most of the night, but it grew bigger as Krosfyah out of Barbados made their way onto the stage to perform. See full Carnival activities [here](#).