

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Carnival Food, Arts & Crafts Fair 2017: Winnie's Garden Of Delights & Delicacies

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ST. THOMAS -- Thousands gathered in Charlotte Amalie Wednesday to enjoy the sights, tastes and sounds of the 2017 Carnival Food, Arts & Crafts Fair.

Governor Kenneth Mapp welcomed all to the 65th annual fair and urged the public to support the vendors. He congratulated this year's honorees and fair winners in various categories from produce to pastry.

This year's special event was named Winnie's Garden of Delights & Delicacies in honor of Winifred Hilarine Rabsatt Francis, above, who has participated in the fair for more than two decades and has worked to pass on traditional recipes and cooking techniques to the

younger generation.

Born on St. Thomas to Helen and Louis Rabsatt, Mrs. Francis grew up on Seventh Day Street in Hospital Ground. She worked side by side with her mother, the proprietor of the island's most popular bakery, and this became the training ground that would serve as the foundation for her exceptional culinary and baking skills.

After Hurricane Marilyn demolished her home, Mrs. Francis used the opportunity to expand her kitchen and she quickly became the go-to person to prepare meals for family gatherings and celebrations.

Mrs. Francis also takes great pride in the cooking lessons she offers to children and each year conducts free culinary seminars for the Carnival princess and queen contestants. Mrs. Francis, who retired last year after a long career on Main Street, is a member of the Wesley Methodist Church and serves in the soup kitchen monthly. Married to married Raymond "Double" Francis since 1975, she is the proud mother of four and has four grandchildren.

We'll have a video feature of today's food fair soon.

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