

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hundreds Turn Out To Bid Final Respects To Jason Julius, WAPA Lineman Who Died By Electrocution On September 12

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp, Lt. Governor Osbert Potter, members of the Governor's Cabinet, senators, WAPA Executive Director Julio Rhymer, WAPA Board Chairwoman Elizabeth Armstrong and former WAPA Director Hugo Hodge, Jr. were among those in attendance for the near 90-minute funeral service of deceased WAPA lineman Jason Julius at Wesley Methodist Church in Market Square. Also present were members of some off island crews that are in the territory aiding in power restoration as well as employees of another VI utility, Viya.

The casket bearing Mr. Julius's remains was transported to the church and to the Smith Bay cemetery for interment on top of a WAPA transport vehicle which was transformed into a makeshift hearse. At both the church and cemetery, two WAPA bucket trucks formed an arch under which Julius's body was carried by up to eight pallbearers.

Throughout the service and in messages placed in a commemorative booklet, Mr. Julius was recalled as someone who epitomized the spirit of hard work and dedication, someone who put service before self. Many recalled his final moments spent energizing a community without power following Hurricane Irma last month. Mr. Julius was working on First Street in Sugar Estate behind the KMart store on the evening of September 12 when he was electrocuted. He died of his injuries later that night at Schneider Hospital.

Mr. Julius began employment with WAPA in 2005 and rose through the ranks in the authority's Line Department. He held positions that ranged from apprentice lineman to certified lineman first class.

"As we come together to pay our final respects to a man who made the ultimate sacrifice, let us never forget the dangers that confront our linemen each day as they set out to satisfy the needs of our community," Mr. Rhymer said in his booklet tribute. The fond memories of happier times spent with Jason should be a source of consolation during these days of bereavement, he added.

Mr. Julius leaves to mourn a life partner, two children, a granddaughter, siblings and other family members.

WAPA also faces a funeral service for another of its employees. Ivor Noel, a plant operator on St. Thomas, died in a plane crash at Puerto Rico's Isla Grande Airport last week Monday. Mr. Noel, a recreational pilot, was one of two persons on board a single engine aircraft which flipped and crash-landed on final approach to the airport. An FAA / NTSB investigation is continuing into the cause of the crash. Mr. Noel died hours later at a Puerto Rico hospital, the surviving passenger is reported to have suffered extensive injuries and remains hospitalized.