

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Instant Boost, Albert Bryan Announces Tregenza Roach As His Lieutenant Governor Choice

Politics / **Published On April 20, 2018 12:41 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **April 20, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- In a conference room at Gertrude's Restaurant filled with supporters, Albert Bryan officially announced his candidacy for governor, vowing to change the territory's current course and place it on a path more prosperous, with a ten-year plan that sees the U.S. Virgin Islands regaining its once-held leadership position in the Caribbean.

But that announcement was par for the course. The territory already knew Mr. Bryan was running for governor; his movement was started in earnest two years ago. The importance of yesterday's event hinged on one important decision -- a decision that came with the power to sink or save Mr. Bryan's candidacy: his choice for lieutenant governor.

With an ebullient crowd boosted by Mr. Bryan's well crafted speech that touched on emotions, reality and optimism, there was only thing left to do, bring out the man he had chosen to be his second in command.

"The first person we talked to, was the last person we talked to," Mr. Bryan said, referring to Senator Tregenza Roach. Mr. Bryan referred to the senator as "a man of total integrity" and someone "who has served the Virgin Islands community."

"He has integrity when you're looking and when you ain't looking," Mr. Bryan went on. "He serves when he's getting paid and when he isn't getting paid. He cares when he knows you and when he doesn't know you. He is a proud son of Virgin Islands pride that we have imported from the Eastern Caribbean. Of fine vintage; a scholar; a poet; an author; an attorney -- my friend and your next lieutenant governor, Tregenza Roach." The crowd erupted with cheers as everyone stood up to their feet to give Mr. Roach a welcome befitting an admired leader.

The moment represented a full-circle experience for the Bryan campaign, and in the rush of excitement, there was a sense of relief that followed a fear of failure after two turbulent weeks rocked the team. It was as if time paused for a moment as Mr. Bryan and Mr. Roach embraced on stage, while political observers watched a campaign regain its stamina.



DEMOCRATIC PA

Voters S

CHAN



DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Voters Say

CHANGE



DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Voters Say

CHANGE





DEMOCRATIC PARTY



DEMOCRATIC PART



DEMOCRATIC PART



DEMOCRATIC PART

Voters S

CHAN

COURSE





DEMOCRATIC PART

Voters S

CHAN

COURSE





CRATIC PARTY

ters Say

HANGE



WASHING
DRY A
MAINTENANCE



Mr. Bryan's campaign had recently suffered a blow when Angel Dawson announced Marise James as his choice for lieutenant governor. Mr. Bryan was blindsided by Mr. Dawson, as Mr. Dawson had already agreed to be Mr. Bryan's running mate, but changed his mind under pressure from supporters, according to three people with intimate knowledge of the meetings. The flip-flop sent the Bryan team scrambling to get back on track, even as the Dawson team [basked in the excitement](#) of finding a venerable woman as its pick for lieutenant governor.

Yet on Thursday, Mr. Bryan emerged with one of the most respected lawmakers in the territory, whose leadership is well documented to be thoughtful and without the compromising of one's integrity. Mr. Roach, aside from introducing important legislation throughout his years as senator, is also of a calm yet powerful spirit. A moment with him will give away his pensive person while exposing his deep care for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The man is respectable and believes that one should do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

It was upon this belief that Mr. Roach finally told Mr. Bryan yes after being asked multiple times to join the team. Mr. Roach was bothered by Governor Kenneth Mapp's persona following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, more pointedly in the way he said Mr. Mapp addressed some Virgin Islanders during his press briefings.

Mr. Roach spoke intimately about life-changing interruptions he endured as a result of the 2017 storms, including the death of his office manager's husband, who died after being evacuated from the territory for medical care; the evacuation of his mother on a mercy ship to the U.S. mainland because of her health and to safeguard her mental well-being; the mother of a former colleague who was on the same mercy ship as Mr. Roach's mother, who suffered a heart attack after arriving on the mainland and eventually passed; along with a cousin who left on the same ship and died a few months later.

"So I found myself in a dark place, and I found these precious islands in a dark place as well; a darkness which has not yet been lifted," he said. Mr. Roach then spoke of his comfortable political position, having won three elections and each time winning stronger support from the community. "But there was still the darkness," he said, "and Albert really pricked my conscience, causing me to reflect continually upon the darkness."

Mr. Roach spoke of witnessing people in despair, people struggling to survive with no certainty that they would be able to pull their lives back together. "And in response to their frustrations, I could hear the voice of our chief executive urging them to leave if all they were going to do is complain. How do you tell people that they must leave the island of their birth, or the island that they had chosen as their home of heart," Mr. Roach said. "So I had to dig down deep and ask myself, do you stay in a place of comfort at a time like this? And this is the state of contemplation that I was in the last time Albert came to trouble my spirit."

The men embraced on the stage and appeared to genuinely like each other. During an interview with The Consortium following the announcement, the candidates deemed the current state of their relationship as being in the acquaintance stage, because friendship, they said, must be tested during failure and triumph.

During his talk, Mr. Bryan laid out the foundation of his platform, the most critical of which were his plans for education and training that would result in good-paying jobs as well as entrepreneurship opportunities. In the interview, he spoke of how he intends to salvage the Government Employees' Retirement System, and how a Bryan/Roach administration would be different from the territory's current leadership.

Among his priorities if elected governor, would be stabilizing the government and restoring trust; promoting investment in the territory; ascertaining that dollars earned in the territory are spent in the local economy, utilizing tax revenues generated through these investments into the people, and resolving the question of the U.S.V.I.'s political status.