

The Virgin Islands Consortium

32nd Legislature Commemorates 1-Year Anniversary Of Hurricane Irma

Disaster Recovery / **Published On September 06, 2018 10:02 AM /**

Staff **September 06, 2018**



??

ST. THOMAS -- Members of the 32nd Legislature led by Senate President Myron Jackson, hosted the Anniversary Observance of Hurricane Irma at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, according to a release the Legislature issued yesterday.

"We are so blessed as a community that despite Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, two Category 5 hurricanes, we have survived and that is unprecedented," Mr. Jackson said. "Today we stand in observance [of] one year of [Irma's] passing. It is fitting that the

Legislature as the first branch of government takes the lead in this observance.”

Sen. Dwayne DeGraff shared his remarks: “An observance brings back the harsh memories of Hurricane Irma. Those days of those two hurricanes made us all equal. There weren’t senators, doctors and lawyers – we were all equal as Virgin Islanders.”

Sen. Janelle Sarauw stated that post traumatic syndrome disorder is real. “The Bible says that our body is our temple. It is important to seek mental health as we are here in prayer today.”

Co-Host of Wellness Wednesdays on WSTA 1340 AM, psychologist and motivational speaker Dr. Marilyn Brathwaite-Hall, stated that it is natural, normal and healthy for people to respond adversely to the anniversary of Hurricane Irma.

“This Anniversary is held around traumatic events. It is natural that our mood and thoughts change around this experience. However, this is a natural, normal cost of the healing journey. Arousal is when we feel on edge,” she said. “Arousal is a natural and normal response to traumatic events and anniversaries. You may find anxiety, fears, worries or be afraid to go places related to the traumatic events. Your body is holding the Irma experience. It may not be you, but it may be your loved ones so cut them some slack.”

On September 6, 2017, Hurricane Irma struck the St. Thomas-St. John District. Two weeks later, on September 20, 2018, Hurricane Maria ravaged the St. Croix District. As part of the hurricane recovery process, in June members of the 32nd Legislature voted to approve Resolution No. 1845 to observe July 22, 2018, as a day of remembrance of the devastation and human suffering caused by the storms and for supplication for protection during the upcoming hurricane season.

Additional participants in the program: Sen. Janette Millin Young gave brief remarks; Pastor Gerald McDonald from Impacting Your World Christian Ministries gave an invocation; Pastor Lerone Hodge from the Living Hope Cathedral Church shared a prayer for first responders; Bishop Commet Chalwell from the Church of God and Prophecy shared a prayer for protection against hurricanes; Lorna Freeman and Gylchris Sprauve sang musical selections; Reverend Dr. Judith Hodge from Prayer Initiative for Natural Disasters in Territory of the V.I. gave remarks; Reverend Dr. Mikie Roberts from the Memorial Moravian Church led the benediction. A similar program is planned for Sept. 20th on St. Croix.