

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Term Of Four Superior Court Judges Expires, Giving Bryan Opportunity To Shape Judiciary

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The six-year term of four of the U.S. Virgin Islands' Superior Court judges has expired, giving Governor Albert Bryan the opportunity to help shape the territory's judicial branch.

The four judges whose six-year term has expired were appointed by former Governor John P. de Jongh in 2012, and confirmed by the Legislature on November 19, 2012. These judges are Denise Hinds Roach, who serves in the Family Division of the Superior Court on St. Croix; Debra S. Watlington, who serves in the Family Division of the Superior Court on St. Thomas; Douglas Brady, who replaced Judge Julio Brady, and Magistrate Judge Kathleen Mackay.

The opening will give Mr. Bryan a chance to help shape the course of the court moving forward, granting him the opportunity to look at potential new candidates as well as reviewing the current judges' tenure to determine whether they should be reappointed. The Consortium will be examining the judges' records in followup stories.

Because the aforementioned four judges were confirmed by the Senate in November 19, 2012, their term expired on November 19, 2018. According to revised Virgin Islands law, however, the judges can serve up to 180 days thereafter.

"The judges of the Superior Court shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Legislature. Judges so appointed shall continue in office until their successors are appointed and confirmed or until they are renominated and confirmed, but in no event shall judges remain in office more than 180 days after the expiration of their terms unless they have been renominated and confirmed," reads 4 V.I.C. § 72 (a).

Section (b) adds, "To be eligible for nomination for appointment as a judge of the Superior Court, a person must be a member in good standing of the Virgin Islands Bar and shall have been engaged in the active practice of law for not less than five years immediately prior to his nomination, of which not less than three years shall have been in the Virgin Islands and for appointment as a judge in the Family Court Division, the person must also meet the qualifications established in section 171(c)."