

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Names Marise James As Senior Policy Advisor

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Ernice Gilbert **February 04, 2019**



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Former gubernatorial candidate Marise James has been tapped by Governor Albert Bryan as a senior policy advisor, three veritable sources with knowledge of the appointment have confirmed to The Consortium. The sources requested anonymity because they were not cleared to speak publicly about the appointment. Ms. James, who ran during the 2018 primary election as a lieutenant governor candidate with Angel Dawson, is a respected and well-known figure on St. Croix.

Her lineage is also ubiquitous on the island. Her father is the late Randall 'Doc' James, whose mark on the Virgin Islands recalls dedicated service to the people. It is Mr. James

that the horse-racing track near the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport is named after. And her brother is Neville James, the well-known former senator who has served in multiple legislatures in a variety of capacities, most recent being Senate president in the 31st Legislature, and majority leader in the 32nd. Ms. James is also well accomplished; an attorney, her last position was staff judge advocate of the Virgin Islands National Guard — one of the most revered positions in the National Guard.

Yet even with the credentials, she held the staff judge advocate position at the National Guard when it faced one of the most damaging scandals in its history. A [yearlong investigation by the National Guard Bureau](#) (N.G.B.) which was still ongoing as of August 2017, found rampant sexual assault, harassment, assault, sexual intercourse for employment (quid pro quo) and fraud to be commonplace at the Virgin Islands National Guard for years.

Former Governor Kenneth Mapp, without mincing words, said he was troubled by the findings of the investigators. "I have read the report in its entirety, and I am disturbed by what I read," Mr. Mapp said in August 2017. "To be candid, the climate at the Virgin Islands National Guard, particularly as it relates to nepotism and sexual assault has been so egregious that when young females have been recruited or attempted to be recruited into the National Guard, recruiters have passed them around as if they are properties before they would allow them into the system."

Following the publication of the story this morning, Ms. James confirmed her new role to The Consortium, which she said starts today. She is the new policy advisor for justice and public safety. As a member of the Bryan administration's transition team, Ms. James had served as co-chair of the Justice and Public Safety team.

Government House, which The Consortium contacted since Thursday, did not return request for comment.

Following Mr. Bryan's victory in the Democratic primary election, all three gubernatorial teams at the time -- Allison Petrus and Samuel Sanes (Mr. Sanes is now St. Croix administrator), Mr. Dawson and Ms. James, and then-candidates Bryan and Tregenza Roach, held an event that was billed as a demonstration of unity within the Democratic Party. There, they spoke of the importance of defeating Mr. Mapp as the primary goal of the party.

Mr. Bryan [last week announced](#) Jenifer O'Neal as the director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Daryl George as the director of the Virgin Islands Fire Service. Still yet to be named is a commissioner for the Virgin Islands Police Department, an attorney general for the Department of Justice, a commissioner for the Department of Human Services, a commissioner for Sports, Parks and Recreation, a director for the Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC), a commissioner for the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, which is tasked to enforce the recently approved medicinal marijuana bill, among other important government arms. Mr. Bryan gave himself 90 days to complete his cabinet.