

The Virgin Islands Consortium

MSNBC Host, Political Analyst & Author Joy-Ann Reid To Speak At UVI 2019 Commencement; Distinguished UVI Alumni to Receive Honorary Degrees (Update)

Education / **Published On March 13, 2019 03:06 PM /**

Staff **March 13, 2019**



Update: UVI on Monday, April 22 [announced a new person](#) for its 2019 commencement keynote: CNN political commentator, lawyer and former state legislator, Bakari Sellers. UVI had selected MSNBC Television Host Joy-Anne Reid to give the keynote address, however, Ms. Reid discovered that she had a personal conflict and would be unable to participate in this year's ceremonies, according to the institution of higher learning.

Original Story: MSNBC national television host, political analyst, journalist, columnist and author Joy-Ann Reid will be the keynote speaker at the University of the Virgin Islands'

2019 commencement ceremonies, UVI announced today. Starting at 1:00 p.m., these ceremonies will take place on Thursday, May 16, on the campus grounds of the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix and on Friday, May 17, at the Sports and Fitness Center on St. Thomas.

“As always we strive to bring outstanding individuals to our commencement so that they can inspire and stand as a model for what we want our students to become,” UVI President David Hall said. “She is an outstanding author, journalist, television personality and an overall outstanding individual who has helped MSNBC become more diverse in its appeal.”

Reid hosts “AM Joy,” which airs Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to noon. She is the author of the book, “Fracture: Barack Obama, the Clintons and the Racial Divide” and the co-editor, with Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne, of “We Are the Change We Seek: The Speeches of Barack Obama.” Her columns and articles have appeared in The New York Times, The Guardian, the Miami Herald, New York Magazine, The Daily Beast and other publications.

Reid is the former managing editor of “TheGrio.com,” a site exploring issues of importance to African-Americans, and the former host of “The Reid Report,” a daily news program on MSNBC. She has previously worked in local TV news, as a talk radio producer and host. She was a Florida press secretary for “America Coming Together,” a political action group in 2004 and a Florida press aide for the Barack Obama campaign in 2008.

Reid graduated from Harvard University with a concentration in film in 1991. She is a former Knight Journalism fellow and previously taught a course in “race, gender and media” at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Communications' New York City annex from 2017-2018.

Honorary Degrees

UVI will bestow honorary degrees upon two prominent alumni - Cornel Williams and Dr. Simon Jones-Hendrickson.

Cornel Williams



Cornel Williams, who will receive an honorary doctorate at the St. Thomas commencement ceremony, served as the President of International Capital Management Company (ICMC), which is a business management services company in St. Thomas, from 2003 to 2018.

He joined ICMC in December 2003 as Chief Financial Officer before being promoted to President in 2007. Williams, a 1982 UVI alumnus, takes pride in having expanded the company's community outreach efforts, with a primary focus on education and youth development as well as cancer support and outreach.

His prior experience includes several key roles such as Deputy Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Port Authority, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of The Lockhart Companies, Finance Manager for the Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation, and Financial Analyst for Ford Motor Company. He has also served as a part-time instructor in the Business Division at the University of the Virgin Islands.

Williams also takes time to serve on a number of boards. He is currently Chairman of the St. Thomas and St. John District Board of Directors of the VI Government Hospitals and Health Facilities Corporation. He also currently serves on the boards of The Lockhart Companies, VI Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy, Virgin Islands Capital Resources and UVI's Foundation for the Reichhold Center for the Arts Foundation.

In the past, he has served on the board of the United Way of St. Thomas and St. John, serving as the board's 2003/2004 President. He is also a past board member of United Way International, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, and also served as Chair of the organization's Caribbean Regional Council.

Williams graduated summa cum laude from the University of the Virgin Islands with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting, and later completed a Masters in Business Administration degree with a concentration in Finance at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Simon Jones-Hendrickson



The recipient of the honorary doctorate on St. Croix is Dr. Simon Jones-Hendrickson, a former dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. He was born in Sandy Point, St. Kitts. He is an alumnus of the College of the Virgin Islands, now the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI). He graduated with an Associates of Arts degree in Business Administration in 1967. In 1969 and 1970, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from Illinois State University, and in 1976, he earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Exeter, Devon, England.

Dr. Jones-Hendrickson was a lecturer in Economics at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Kingston, Jamaica. He joined the faculty of UVI in 1976 as an Assistant Professor of Economics and, in 1990, he attained the rank of full Professor of Economics. He has held a number of administrative positions at UVI and has gained several honors. He was a two-term chairman of the Faculty of UVI, 1986-1988; Chairman of the Division of Social Sciences, 1993-1996, the first UVI graduate to be so honored; a three-time student-awarded Faculty of the Year (once on St. Thomas campus and twice on St. Croix); and is a former member of UVI Board of Trustees.

Professor Jones-Hendrickson has served as External Examiner for the University of the West Indies on the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad. He has also served as External Examiner in Public Finance for the University of the West Indies' Cave Hill Campus in Barbados and Mona Campus in Jamaica. Since 1985 he has been involved with the Caribbean Examinations Council and served as a consultant to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, to UNESCO, to the Office of Management and Budget Office of the USVI, to UN, to the Government of Montserrat. He served as Commissioner on the Task Force to resolve the economic and political issues between St. Kitts and Nevis.

Currently he serves on the Board of the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) of St. Kitts, the St. Croix Foundation Board; he is Chairman of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis; is a member of the Executive Committee of the Public Planning Development Unit (PPDU) of St. Kitts and Nevis and is a member of the Competitiveness Council of St. Kitts.

Professor Jones-Hendrickson is a prolific writer/scholar having written and or published more than 100 articles. He has authored publications and articles in the areas of

economics, higher education and leadership, especially pertaining to the Caribbean. He has also produced many commissioned reports on matters relating to the Virgin Islands and the Eastern Caribbean.

© Viconsortium 2026