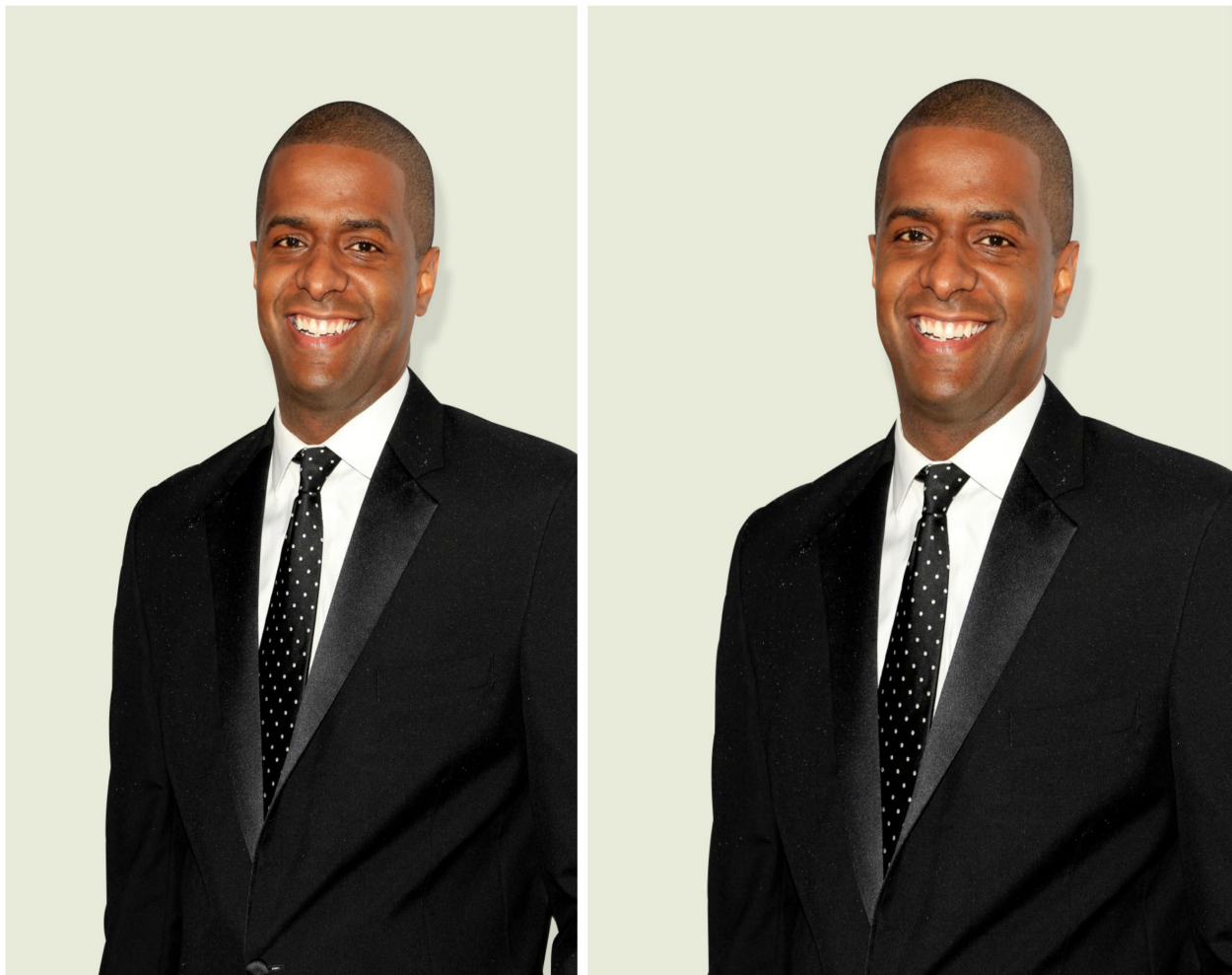


The Virgin Islands Consortium

CNN Political Analyst, Former State Legislator & Lawyer Bakari Sellers To Be UVI's 2019 Commencement Keynote Speaker

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CNN political commentator, lawyer and former state legislator, Bakari Sellers will be the keynote speaker at the University of the Virgin Islands 2019 Commencement Ceremony, UVI has announced. The university 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. Starting at 1 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.

“Ms. Reid has expressed deep regret,” said UVI President David Hall to graduates in the Class of 2019 when he informed them of the change. “In life, challenges emerge, and we have to adjust to the new circumstances that develop.”

He added, “Though we were disappointed that Ms. Reid has a personal challenge that makes it impossible for her to join us for commencement, the University has been blessed to secure another outstanding political commentator, lawyer and legislator to anchor our commencement ceremonies.

“Bakari Sellers is an ideal inspiration for UVI students, especially our graduates,” he said. “As a graduate of an HBCU who became one of the youngest state legislators in the nation and then became a national political commentator with CNN, he eloquently demonstrates that there are no limits for those who desire to serve and make a difference in the world.”

Mr. Sellers made history in 2006, when, at just 22-years-old, he defeated a 26-year incumbent state representative to become the youngest member of the South Carolina State Legislature and the youngest African American elected official in the nation.

In 2014, Mr. Sellers won the Democratic nomination for Lt. Governor. He also served on President Barack Obama's South Carolina steering committee during the 2008 election. He is noted for having an uncommon ability to reach across the aisle and get things done. “I have been consistently impressed by his thoughtful commentary, insightful political perspectives and his eloquent words,” said Mr. Hall.

Mr. Sellers has been named TIME Magazine's "40 Under 40" in 2010 as well as 2014's "The Root 100" list of the nation's most influential African Americans. He has been a much sought after public speaker and has provided political and social commentary and analysis on many major national news outlets.

Mr. Sellers earned his undergraduate degree from Morehouse College, where he served as student body president and, by virtue of his position, served on the College's Board of Trustees. He earned his juris doctorate from the University of South Carolina School of Law. Sellers has followed in the footsteps of his father, civil rights leader, Dr. Cleveland Sellers, in his tireless commitment to public service while championing progressive policies to address issues ranging from education and poverty to preventing domestic violence and childhood obesity.

Honorary Degrees

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

Cornel Williams



Cornel Williams will receive an honorary doctorate at the St. Thomas commencement ceremony. Williams, who recently retired, served for 11 years as the President of International Capital Management Company (ICMC), a private merchant banking firm on St. Thomas. He joined ICMC in December 2003 as Chief Financial Officer before being promoted to President in 2007. He managed the company through a period of significant growth in services to clients in the United States, with Cancer Treatment Centers of America as the principal client. Williams took pride in expanding the company's community outreach efforts, with a primary focus on education and youth development as well as cancer support and outreach. This outreach included ICMC's signature "Jazz in the Park" concert series and community efforts to revitalize downtown Charlotte Amalie.

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.

Williams graduated summa cum laude from the then College of the Virgin Islands in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting, and later earned a Masters in Business Administration degree with a concentration in Finance at the University of Illinois.

One constant for Williams has been a close working relationship with the University of the Virgin Islands. He once served as a full-time employee in the Business Office, a part-time instructor in the School of Business, and maintained a 13-year partnership with the School of Business in delivering a summer residency program for high school students.

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.

Dr. Simon Jones-Hendrickson



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 served on UVI's Board of Trustees as a faculty representative from 1989 to 1990.

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.

He also served on the Board of the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) of St. Kitts, the St. Croix Foundation Board. Jones-Hendrickson was Chairman of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis. He was member of the Executive Committee of the Public Planning Development Unit (PPDU) of St. Kitts and Nevis and 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.

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