

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Greek-Lettered And Masonic Organizations Descend On Government House For First 'Greek Night' Event Hosted By A USVI Governor

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ST. CROIX -- The Ball Room of Government House here was transformed to host a historic event Friday evening. Governor Albert Bryan and his wife, First Lady Yolanda Bryan, hosted a cocktail reception in honor of Kappa Alpha Psi's Grand Polemarch, Thomas L. Battles Jr. and his wife Geraldine Woods Battles.

Guest in attendance came from all African-American International Greek-lettered and Masonic organizations with members hailing from chapters in the territory. The event was historic in that it was the first time a U.S. Virgin Islands governor had hosted

members from these organizations. And the restricted guest list, which was only open to members of Greek-lettered and Masonic organizations, added to its uniqueness.



The Divine Nine makes up the collective group of the first nine original fraternities and sororities created in the United States for African Americans. Since their inception, they have worked to help make a professional platform for supporting men and women pursuing baccalaureate degrees and in need of professional networking opportunities after graduating from college. Service to the community is the core mission for all organizations, as all of them require programs to be carried out internationally by all its chapters promoting ideas of good will. The Divine Nine network as a collective is referred to as the National Pan-Hellenic Council. They include the following:

- [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity](#), Founded 1906, Cornell University
- [Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority](#), Founded 1908, Howard University

- [Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity](#), Founded 1911, Indiana University
- [Omega Psi Phi Fraternity](#), Founded 1911, Howard University
- [Delta Sigma Theta Sorority](#), Founded 1913, Howard University
- [Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity](#), Founded 1914, Howard University
- [Zeta Phi Beta Sorority](#), Founded 1920, Howard University
- [Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority](#), Founded 1922, Butler University
- [Iota Phi Theta Fraternity](#), Founded 1963, Morgan State University

The purpose of the event according to Mr. Bryan was to help usher in a new wave of support for the territory from these organizations, which he said have influence beyond his reach. "The fact that we are honoring a man on the list of the 100 most powerful people in the country is reason enough for this event," the governor said. "Its important that we make this connection to such greatness."



Mr. Bryan is currently the only African American governor in the United States, and he expressed Friday night that he needs to be among a strong networking power that can help the Virgin Islands and its people. Mr. Bryan is a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated and is the first from the fraternity to be elected as governor. First Lady Yolanda Bryan is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

The Bryans are not the only governorship to hold membership in these organizations, and past governors such as Charles Turnbull and Roy Lester Schneider were members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, which is the first African American International Greek-lettered organization to be established in the Devine Nine. Although not in attendance, Delegate to Congress Stacy Plaskett was recently inducted into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated -- becoming a member of the St. Croix Alumnae Chapter.



Speaking on his reason for coming to the territory, the Grand Polemarch for Kappa Alpha Psi, Mr. Battles, talked about the need to revitalize all existing chapters in the territory and to help in the rebuilding of the Virgin Islands after the storms that hit in 2017. Mr. Battles traveled with other executives from the organization, all of whom echoed similar statements on helping the territory with an influence of more than 300,000 members.

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