

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ivanna Eudora Kean Class Of 2019 Students Earn More Than \$2.8 Million In Scholarships

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ST. THOMAS -- If one thing was clear following the graduation ceremony of the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Class of 2019 on Saturday, is that the students -- 138 strong -- dominated their counterparts in territorial athletic, academic, entertainment and even beauty pageants that they competed in.

Not only that, but for a class of just 138, the haul of more \$2.8 million in scholarships is no small feat, and the students, many of whom expressed readiness to embark on the new journey of higher education, savored the three-hour ceremony, some crying, others excited -- all thankful that they were able to secure such an important achievement, earning one's high school diploma as they enter the world of adulthood, where self-

reliance takes precedence and the extent of one's education, many times, determines their level of success.

For the I.E.K.H.S. 2019 graduates, however, winning has been the norm: The class was the first to complete the school's on-campus College Board SAT, with 80 percent of the class meeting college acceptance scores; the class secured the school's first Quiz Bowl championship; it repeated the school's Moot Court success, [an annual competition](#) organized by the Virgin Islands Bar Association; the class's football team dominated the district and territorial leagues to become USVI champions; the Varsity Male Basketball Team won three of four invitational tournaments and physically outlasted all teams to become the district champions and thereafter proclaiming themselves territorial champions; the school delivered the JROTC championship by outperforming, drilling, and out-exhibiting the competition to result in four top finishes and is now the number 1 JROTC team in the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Class Salutatorian, Jahavhheed George, spoke highly of the school and the education he and his classmates received. "Unfortunately our time here has come to an end. Our days of strolling through the halls and going class to class are now a thing of the past. We are about to embark on a new journey, so I ask you to please savor this moment."

He added, "On this journey there will be some roadblocks, potholes [and] detours, but we have no need to fear; we are products of the best high school on the planet, and we know we can always rely on the life lessons we were taught here."

Class Valedictorian, Ellaine Wyllis, spoke to her classmates about making reality dreams sometimes thought to be impossible. "Whether you define your impossible as becoming the CEO of a multi-million dollar company, the next principal of Ivanna Eudora Kean, or the manager of your very own beauty salon."



She added, "To be honest, what we envision our future selves accomplishing may never happen the way we want it to. Yet we must still meditate on these impossibles because they are what fuel our growth and ensure that each member of the Versatile, Vivacious and Visionary Class of 2019 is able to unlock the individuals we are destined to become."

Commencement speaker, Dr. Kathleen S. Johnson, spoke of the importance of integrity in one's pursuit to success. "Make sure your successes do not depend on tearing others down. Instead, be the person that's known for helping others, having kind words [and] being generous. Remember success is not just about making money."

Dept. of Education Commissioner-Designee, Racquel Berry-Benjamin, reminded the students that roadblocks were bound to hinder their paths, but she encouraged them "to be bold and breakdown the walls that you will face." The commissioner-designee also told the students to consider teaching as they contemplate possible careers. "Teaching today looks very different from when your parents went to school, from when your teachers went to school...You know what you wanted in your school experience, so who better than to teach and bring the life and the energy and add to all that you've experienced, other than you."



Governor Albert Bryan thanked teachers, staff, counselors and faculty for the passion they share for the territory's students. "Every school that I've been to -- the hugging, the tears, the well-wishing, that they have showed -- shows their commitment not only to this community, but to all the young people and their success," the governor said.

All images shot by Cruselda Roberts for VI Consortium.

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