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St. Croix Native Launches Sustainable Fine-Jewelry Brand Celebrating Caribbean Heritage, Heroes and Heroines

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Ephra Graham, visionary founder of Udall Caribbean, a fine-jewelry brand that celebrates Caribbean heroes, heroines and heritage. By. CT EDITORIAL

Udall Caribbean, a fine-jewelry brand whose products connect consumers to Caribbean heroes and heroines of the past while celebrating the region's rich culture and heritage, launched its eBoutique September 9 at www.udallcaribbean.com.

According to a release issued today, the company was founded by 38-year-old St. Croix native Ephra Graham in December 2019 and derives its name from St. Croix's Point Udall—the easternmost point by travel in the United States. Udall Caribbean offers fine, heirloom jewelry

designed to be passed from one generation to the next. Its flagship collection includes a signet pendant and a pendant inspired by the life of Mary “Queen Mary” Thomas, the former slave famous for leading a successful labor riot in 1878 against St. Croix’s Danish ruling class that resulted in the burning of the town of Frederiksted, locally hailed as ‘the Fireburn’. Udall’s items are made in the United States using recycled precious metals of 14 karat gold and 925 sterling silver. The pieces can be purchased separately or as a set with a 16-inch or 18-inch chain.

According to Graham, who resides in the DC/Maryland/Virginia (DMV) area and who earned a Master’s in Business Executive Management/International Entrepreneurship from BAU University in Washington, D.C. in 2015, Udall’s story began in June 2012—more than eight years ago—while visiting family on St. Croix for her 30th birthday, the release said.



Part of Udall Caribbean's flagship line, the "Queen Mary" pendant and set in 14-karat gold celebrates Mary "Queen Mary" Thomas's courage in the 1878 "Fireburn" on St. Croix.

"I didn't know then as I gazed over the waist-high boundary wall of the Point Udall monument, watching the sun rise in the early morning hours of my birthday, that my trip home would be the beginning of something that would change my life forever," she said.

Graham explained that the day before her return to Maryland that year, she participated in a field trip to Sandy Point National Refuge with her niece and witnessed a leatherback turtle hatchling "struggling to make its way to the water's edge." The moving experience prompted her to learn more about the endangered animals and coral reefs living in St. Croix's waters. She became alarmed at the possibility that "future generations might not get to experience my home's spectacular coral reefs and vast marine life."

This was a key turning point in her life and career aspirations.

Of her Master's program, Graham said, "I can still remember sitting in my Sustainable Business class and learning about a new and fascinating way of doing business as I dove deep into case studies about companies like Veja shoes and 10tree—companies determined to do business differently."

She continued, "It got me thinking about what would happen to families, communities, and the world if companies stopped focusing only on the 'bottom line,' but paid as much attention to their social and environmental impact—the 'triple bottom line'."

"It has been my dream to create a highly profitable, socially just and environmentally mindful company that supports the important causes of marine conservation and craftsmanship education in the Caribbean and abroad," she said.

Graham said it made sense for her to launch Udall Caribbean during the current global pandemic because the brand's pieces "provide a reminder of who people of Caribbean heritage are – we are resilient, strong, creative problem-solvers. This reminder is needed now more than ever before as we continue to serve on the frontlines during this time," she said. "Our goal, through our pieces, is to communicate this simple but profound truth to people of Caribbean heritage living at home or abroad—remember who you are."

Udall Caribbean will introduce the "When We Were Young" podcast later this month, offering in-depth interviews with Caribbean people from all walks of life. The first episode will feature renowned St. Thomas calypsonian, Luis Ible Jr.