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USVI Student Wins UK Government's Prestigious Marshall Scholarship

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Leah Trotman was invited to speak to incoming first-year students at Agnes Scott College, which she graduated from.

For the first time in the history of the program, a U.S. Virgin Islands student won the UK Government's prestigious Marshall Scholarship.

According to a release issued by British Consulate General in Miami, FL, St. Thomas resident Leah Trotman was among the 46 recipients of the 2021 Marshall Scholarship announced by the British government this week. The winners, considered to be among the best and brightest university students in the United States, were chosen following a rigorous selection process.

Trotman, a graduate of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, will attend the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) during the first year of her scholarship, according to the release. While at LSE, she'll study international health development with a focus in disaster management, to identify how best to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters on health in the Caribbean and Latin America. In her second year, she'll pursue an MSc degree in Caribbean and Latin American Studies at University College London (UCL), to study the historical, political, and cultural conditions that affect health decisions in those regions.

"Some of my long-term professional goals include serving in an executive role in an international public health agency focused on Caribbean and Latin American health and disaster relief efforts," Leah expressed. "Ultimately, I hope someday to run for Governor of the Virgin Islands, where I would not only strengthen disaster relief, but also the territory's entire infrastructure."

The Marshall Scholarship program is principally funded by the British Government, but also by generous support through partnership arrangements with world-leading British academic institutions. This allows winners to pursue graduate degrees in almost any academic subject at any university in the UK.

The 2021 class will take up their studies at 14 different institutions across the UK beginning in September next year, ranging from the London School of Economics & Political Science to Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland.

For the first time in the program's 66-year history, the incoming class will be majority-minority, with 52% reflecting minority communities across the United States, including a record number of Black and Latino scholars. A majority of the class are female scholars and six are first-generation college students.

Dame Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to the United States, said:

"Marshall Scholarship classes traditionally represent a diverse mix of cultural, academic, institutional and socio-economic backgrounds, but the 2021 class is truly ground-breaking. This class, one of the most diverse and inclusive in the program's history, is a wonderful mirror of modern American society and demonstrates the vital role that the Marshall Scholarship continues to play in maintaining a vibrant US-UK relationship."

Christopher Fisher, chair of the Marshall Commission, said:

"Throughout the life of the program, Marshall Scholars have regularly pursued academic disciplines which reflect contemporary issues and priorities. With this new class, we see scholars continuing to search for a better understanding of today's world and how best to meet tomorrow's challenges. In the face of the most pressing current crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic – we see dozens of Marshall Scholars contributing to finding a solution to the associated health, social and economic challenges, whether in the laboratory, in the hospital or in the formulation of policy and practical responses."

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, the program received a record 1,190 applications from top undergraduate students representing academic institutions from across the United States.

More on the Marshall Scholarship program: <https://www.marshallscholarship.org/>

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