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Holland Redfield, Former Senator Whose Voice Never Left the Public, Has Died

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HOLLAND REDFIELD

Holland Redfield, a former senator and ubiquitous radio personality in the U.S. Virgin Islands whose impact on politics and policy spans generations, died on Saturday at the age of 78.

Mr. Redfield's influence in the USVI cannot be understated. He spent six terms in the Senate representing the St. Croix District, beginning in 1984, where he helped shape policy that would become part of the bedrock of legislation to mold what was still a nascent democracy.

Mr. Redfield spent five consecutive terms as a Republican in the Senate before running as lieutenant governor with then-Territorial Court Judge Julio Brady, who was seeking the governorship in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The duo lost their bid, which led Mr. Redfield to eventual

run for a sixth term in the V.I. Legislature, which he won.

After his exit from the Senate, Mr. Redfield continued to influence the territory on radio where his voice became omnipresent. His show, the well-known "Straight Talk With Holland Redfield", will be remembered as one of the most recognized talk radio platforms in the USVI. It has hosted nearly every candidate seeking office throughout the years. It also regularly hosted officials from government departments and agencies. Mr. Redfield was adamant on taking photos with his guests, and his Facebook page [gives a glimpse](#) into his daily service of providing information and opinions to the public.

We interviewed Mr. Redfield in 2016 regarding matters affecting the local Republican Party at the time. See it [here](#).

From Governor Albert Bryan: "Holland was a dear friend, mentor and pillar of this community. His comforting words through countless storms and recovery periods always gave us the information we needed to get through the day and the wisdom to get through the years. Yolanda and I offer our sincere condolences to his family, especially his daughter Amanda and his grandchildren. He was a true Virgin Islander and will be sorely missed by our entire community."

Said Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory: "The Virgin Islands community will long remember former Senator Holland Redfield for his contribution to the people of the Virgin Islands and for his voice, especially during hurricane events. It is for his service to the Virgin Islands community, that in May 2018, the University of the Virgin Islands conferred an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters unto Holland Redfield.

Senator Novelle Francis echoed a consensus: "Holland was the steady, compassionate and reassuring presence during and after hurricanes and other times of crisis. His radio program also allowed for thoughtful discussion of current events and community issues. We did not always agree, but I admired and respected his perspective that was shaped not only through his many years in politics and various roles in the private sector, but through his own experiences as a Virgin Islander. The Virgin Islands has lost a fierce advocate for our community. Holland was a dear friend, sounding board and mentor to many and he will be greatly missed."

Senator Javan James said, "I am thankful for the many words of encouragement and advice that I have received from Mr. Redfield since being acquainted with him. My first radio interview was on May 18, 2017, on Straight Talk with Holland Redfield on Caribbean Country 93.5 FM. I always felt welcomed and appreciated while he was in my presence. His voice will surely be missed by many U.S. Virgin Islanders on the radio," said Senator James."

Mr. Redfield in May 2018 was recognized by the University of the Virgin Islands, which bestowed upon him an honorary degree in Humane Letters. In honoring the USVI icon, UVI wrote:

"Holland Redfield, humanitarian, radio show personality, former senator and statesman, has played an active role in the destiny of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands for close to 50 years. As an elected official, Redfield consistently said, "The difference between a statesman and a politician is that a politician works for the next election and a statesman works for the next generation." This philosophy has guided him throughout his political career, and formulated his public policy decisions in the Territory.

"Redfield's first passion in life was flying having served as a licensed commercial pilot since 1966. His ultimate passion however has been the U.S. Virgin Islands where he has been an active

part of the community since his arrival on St. Croix in 1969. Redfield first launched his public career as a campaign aide to Governor Cyril E. King in 1974. His interest in consumer issues led to Governor King's recognition and soon after an appointment as a member, and later as Chairman of the Public Services Commission. In this position, he distinguished himself by decreasing long distance telephone and portable water rates in the Virgin Islands. Redfield also served as a senator in the VI Legislature. It was his greatest honor to serve six terms on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands during the period 1984 to 1998. During his service in the Legislature, he worked to positively affect public policy matters and remained a staunch consumer advocate dedicated to keeping money in the pockets of Virgin Islanders and supporting economic development throughout the community. Redfield also served as the National Committeeman of the Republican Party of the Territory and was elected chair of the Island Caucus. He also spearheaded, and received national recognition for the election of the first African American National Chairman of the Republican Party.

"Redfield's civic involvement includes a term as president of the St. Croix Board of Realtors, membership in the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce, fundraising for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and as board member of Camp Arawak, a vocational program for deprived youth. In addition, Redfield was knighted as part of The Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, and Commander of The West Indies in 2006.

"Redfield has never slowed down in his efforts, whether a public official or private citizen, he continues to be a champion for the consumer and diligently working to keep large companies and government accountable and transparent. He also hosts a daily radio talk show, "Straight Talk with Redfield." The magazine style format for the show covers lifestyle, political, and social issues. Frequent guests include political leaders, community activists, and local residents who participate and call-in to share their views, knowing he will be an active listener to their concerns.

"Most recently, many Virgin Islanders remember Redfield in the wake and aftermath of the two devastating category five hurricanes, Irma and Maria. Redfield's voice on the radio helped to calm, reassure and encourage citizens. During Hurricane Maria, Redfield continued broadcasting on 93.5FM at great risk to his personal safety. In the middle of the storm, when the studio roof was breached, Redfield had to be rescued. Undeterred by this setback, Redfield immersed himself in the recovery process and continued his daily broadcast. He gave local and federal authorities a platform to coordinate their efforts. Redfield also served as a focal point for sharing critical information with the community and providing an outlet for citizens to address or share concerns. At a time when communication was challenged in the Territory, his radio program was a vital source of information for residents and throughout the Caribbean. As he likes to say, "This hurricane was not my first rodeo." He previously broadcasted during many storms, most notably also during Hurricane Marilyn in 1995.

"It has been said that we can do no great things, only small things with great love. Redfield's love for St. Croix and the Virgin Islands is well known in the community. His passion and drive for a better Virgin Islands for all is grounded in the belief that together we must learn from the past, live in the present and prepare for the future."

Mr. Redfield was born on April 10, 1943, in Syracuse, New York.

