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Plaskett's Pick For U.S. Attorney in USVI Nominated by Biden, Expected to Replace Shappert

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Aerial view of the District Court on St. Croix. By. VI CONSORTIUM

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett's pick for U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands, St. John native Delia Smith has been nominated by President Joe Biden, the delegate's office has announced. Ms. Smith is expected to replace current U.S. Attorney for the USVI Gretchen Shappert, who was appointed in January 2018.

Delegate Plaskett has called for the removal of Ms. Shappert, contending that the position should be filled by a local representative. A local nominee is "of critical importance to the Virgin Islands community," she said. Ms. Smith has served as an assistant U.S. attorney for several years.

"Her journey to this moment truly shows her tremendous strength and integrity that will serve our country and the people of the Virgin Islands well," Ms. Plaskett stated. "Ms. Smith attended the University of the Virgin Islands while working and taking care of a young child as a single mother. She then went on to graduate from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University and upon graduation from law school, clerked for Judge Ishmael Myers in the Virgin Islands. Interestingly, Ms. Smith worked at the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Virgin Islands as a secretary while she was an undergraduate student at UVI."

Ms. Plaskett thanked Mr. Biden and said the nomination keeps the president's promise that his administration "will look like America and recognizing that our diversity is our strength."

"Ms. Smith, her husband, and her family have my genuine and hearty congratulations on this honor. I look forward to supporting her through the confirmation process and to the work that she and her team will get done during her tenure," Ms. Plaskett said.

Ms. Shappert [received an interim appointment](#) from former Attorney General Jeff Session on January 4, 2018. On April 23rd, 2018, the Virgin Islands District Court appointed her as the U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands. Since then, she has overseen a flurry of cases in federal court: from drugs, to [public corruption](#) and gun violence.

"Gretchen Shappert has served this Department well for more than 25 years," said Mr. Sessions at the time of the appointment. "For five of those years, she led federal prosecutions in Western North Carolina as United States Attorney. I am confident that, with this extensive experience, she will be an excellent leader as Interim U.S. Attorney for the Virgin Islands."

According to a description on the U.S. Attorney's website, Ms. Shappert has served as the Assistant Director for the Indian, Violent and Cyber Crime Staff in the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA), since 2010. Prior to joining EOUSA, Ms. Shappert served as the United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina from 2004-2009 and as an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) from 1990-2004. As the United States Attorney and as an AUSA, Ms. Shappert prosecuted a wide range of criminal defendants including outlaw motorcycle gangs and violent drug organizations. Ms. Shappert also served as an Assistant District Attorney, an Assistant Public Defender, and in private practice prior to her federal service. She received her B.A. from Duke University in 1977 and her J.D. from Washington & Lee University School of Law in 1980.