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Legendary Broadcaster Dr. Athneil 'Addie' Ottley Has Died

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Dr. Athneil “Addie” Ottley By. **University of the Virgin Islands.**

Veteran broadcaster Dr. Athneil “Addie” Ottley died on Thursday, and immediately after his passing was announced, people from all walks on life started sharing memories and condolences, an effect that speaks to his influence and impact on the USVI.

Government House issued the following statement: "Governor Albert Bryan Jr., First Lady Yolanda Bryan and everyone at Government House is deeply saddened by the passing of Addie Ottley, who was a cultural icon and a dedicated Virgin Islander who used his radio program to promote and uplift the people, traditions and community for decades on 'The Addie Ottley Morning Show' on WSTA.

"Through his warmth, generosity and kindness, Addie became the voice of the Virgin Islands, and in so doing, he gave voice to thousands of Virgin Islanders through the decades by sharing his broadcasts with the many residents who called his program. Addie treated all people with respect and dignity, and he wielded an influence in the community that crossed the boundaries of politics, culture and humanity.

"While Addie's voice may be silenced, his unquestionable impact helped shape the Territory as we know it today, and the mark he left on the people and the islands that he loved will live on in perpetuity."

Born on November 19, 1941 to Iris and Aubrey Ottley, the first of 11 siblings began his public life in 1959, when he was elected class president during his senior year at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School. Bitten by the broadcasting bug from early, Ottley went on to become the first teenager on St. Thomas to be granted a Ham Radio License.

Ottley began spending time at WVWI radio station, learning the ins and outs of the trade. There, he met radio personality Lee Carle, who began mentoring the young Ottley, eventually allowing him his very own show - "Addie at Night".

Ottley went on to study electronics at the RCA Institute of Technology, and then majored in electronics and engineering at the Indiana Institute of Technology.

His long-running and arguably best-known program, the Morning Show on WSTA began 50 years ago. Up until he announced his semi-retirement last year, Addie's Morning Show was the most listened-to radio program in the USVI. Not just an on-air personality, Ottley moved up the ranks at WSTA from assistant manager, to manager, until in 1984, he and a small group of investors purchased the station.

Ottley was a fixture on the Virgin Islands airwaves, hosting his Morning Show on WSTA as well as the weekly TV show "Face to Face" on PBS WTJX Channel 12. He'd taken a brief hiatus from broadcasting in the early 1970s, running unsuccessfully for a seat in the Legislature in 1970 and 1972 before being elected in 1973. He was also appointed to the position of Lieutenant Governor in the Melvin Evans administration.

When Ottley's sojourn in politics came to an end, he went right back to his first love - broadcasting. Ottley, and WSTA, were widely acclaimed for their dedication to keeping Virgin Islanders informed - his was the only station that continued its 24-hour broadcast schedule throughout hurricanes Hugo, Marilyn and Lenny, and again through Irma and Maria.

In 2018, Ottley received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the University of the Virgin Islands, for his long and distinguished record of public service. In 2021, the territory's 34th Legislature recognized Ottley's commitment to inform and educate the public by naming a roadway in his honor.

Ottley would continue his life in radio up until late last year, when he resigned as President and Chief Executive Officer of Ottley Communications Corp.

Dr. Athneil "Addie" Ottley was 80 years old at the time of his passing.