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Untimely Death of V.I. Cultural Icon Dr. Eugene Petersen Shocks Community. 'Words Cannot Describe The Immense Sadness I Felt.'

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Dr. Eugene Petersen. By. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

The sudden death of Virgin Islands cultural icon Eugene “Doc” Petersen, who passed on Saturday at the age of 73, has shocked the community, with residents and leaders alike expressing grief.

The news caught many by surprise, including Governor Albert Bryan. “Yolanda and I join a grief-stricken Virgin Islands community today in expressing our shock and sadness on the the passing of Dr. Eugene ‘Doc’ Petersen,” Mr. Bryan said.

He added, "Doc was many things, but above all he was a true friend and ambassador for our rich Virgin Islands culture. Like many, I was blessed to have his friendship and to receive his wise counsel on politics, horse racing and other policy issues as it relates to the arts and our Virgin Islands culture.

"He was always positive and enthusiastic about the progress of our community and unselfishly gave his time and wisdom to that progress. He was truly one of a kind and will be sorely missed. I ask that all Virgin Islanders join Yolanda and I in extending condolences to his loved ones during this most difficult time."

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett said she felt immense sadness after hearing the news.

"Words cannot describe the immense sadness I felt when I heard of Mr. Doc Petersen's passing. I recently saw him at an event on St. Croix and was glad to see he was doing well and in good spirits.

"Doc, as he was affectionately known by so many, was a very dear and friend to me and my family for many years. One of the first Virgin Islanders to earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (DVM), he was a beloved veterinarian on St. Croix and owned and operated the Princesse Veterinary Hospital for over 20 years. He influenced many young Virgin Islanders to pursue veterinary science. Doc's love for animals was also evident in his devotion to horse racing on St. Croix. He served as the President and CEO of the Randall "Doc" James racetrack and was a true pioneer in the field, introducing simulcasting and account wagering to the Virgin Islands.

"A man of tremendous talent and various pursuits, Doc was also an excellent vocalist and musician, author and local radio talk show host. We have lost a true culture-bearer.

"I send my love and prayers for comfort and peace to his family, loved ones and friends during this time," Ms. Plaskett said.

Dr. Petersen was born on February 3, 1949, to James and Evadney Petersen in Frederiksted, St. Croix, according to the University of the Virgin Islands, which honored Petersen with a Doctor of Humane Letters degree during the university's 2020 commencement. "A pillar in the Virgin Islands community and cultural icon, Dr. Petersen is also a well-known popular talk/music show local host on St. Croix Virgin Islands, where his topics range from current events, culture preservation, to political discussions as well as featuring the classical calypso music of the 1930s thru the 1980s," UVI said as part of its honor to Dr. Petersen. The full document is [here](#).