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Governors Bryan and de Jongh, Lt. Gov. Roach Express Condolences on Passing of Former Governor Turnbull

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Former Governor Charles W. Turnbull died this morning on the U.S. mainland.

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Former Governor Charles W. Turnbull died Sunday morning while on the U.S. mainland, the Consortium can confirm. He was 87 years old.

Mr. Turnbull, who was elected governor in 1998 as a Democrat, went on to serve two four-year terms, beginning his tenure in Jan. 1999.

Prior to holding the top office in the territory, he was a professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, commissioner and assistant commissioner V.I. Department of Education, principal and assistant principal of Charlotte Amalie High School, and a teacher in elementary and secondary schools, according to information provided by the [National Association of Governors](#).

Governor Albert Bryan expressed condolences on behalf of his family, including First Lady Yolanda Bryan. He described Mr. Turnbull as a giant of his time who was full of compassion. "The Virgin Islands has lost a giant, a son of the soil, someone who was loved and who always reminds us that power without compassion leads to anarchy," Mr. Bryan said in a statement to the Consortium. "God bless him and may his soul rest in peace."

Former Governor John P. de Jongh Jr., served as governor for eight years, has shared remarks on the former governor's passing. "Cecile and I extend our condolences to the family of Governor Turnbull on his passing and to the wider Virgin Islands community for our collective loss of an educator who led us as the Chief Executive for eight years. What I most admired in Governor Turnbull was his embrace and appreciation of history. As the sixth elected Governor of our Territory, he understood and appreciated his role, and he accepted those responsibilities in a respectful manner.

"Governor Turnbull put himself forth as a candidate for Governor at a time he thought the community needed him, and he was accepted twice for the role. There is a tradition that when the sitting Governor leaves office, they leave a hand-written note for their successor; Governor Turnbull's note to me was clear in stating that we were both fortunate to have the privilege of the governorship and our decisions, popular and unpopular, must be for the betterment of all in our community. Governor Turnbull will be missed but remembered for his role as an educator in the Democratic Party and Governor of the United States Virgin Islands," Mr. de Jongh said in a statement provided to the Consortium.

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach shared the following remarks: "It is with a sense of profound and personal loss that I extend condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Former Governor Charles W. Turnbull. I offer to them a prayer for comfort, strength, and for the gift of God's grace during this difficult time.

"The embodiment of an outstanding Virgin Islander, Governor Turnbull distinguished himself as a leader, consummate professional, and public servant. Throughout his career he demonstrated a standard of excellence and commitment to serving others. His unwavering dedication and achievements will leave a lasting impact on the Territory.

"I can personally recall my time working in his administration as Legal Counsel to the Virgin Islands Department of Education. He was a staunch advocate for education, having been a teacher, a principal, and Commissioner of the Department, always providing guidance even in the most turbulent of times.

"Dr. Turnbull was a critical thinker, and I found him most engaging and insightful when I worked with the educational project of the University of the Virgin Islands while he was a delegate to the Fifth Constitutional Convention. He was no stranger to these conversations and brought both breadth and depth to the deliberations of the body as he had done in previous conventions organized around the same purpose.

"Governor Turnbull's presence was always felt, as he was a stalwart of Virgin Islands pride. He was our historian Governor who could anchor any event or decision in its proper historical and cultural context. I will miss his wise counsel, his considered intellect, his wit, and good humor.

"His passion for making a difference was evident in all his endeavors. He has left a mark on this landscape and leaves a legacy of distinguished public service towards the people of this Territory. We are grateful for his contributions and will honor his memory.

"May he rest in eternal peace."

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett called Mr. Turnbull "a consummate gentleman" who made "several impactful strides in establishing a cultural education division and promoting deeper appreciation of Virgin Islands history and culture" while he was an educator.

"Governor Turnbull was tremendously dedicated to the field of education and the preservation of our Caribbean history and to the people of the Virgin Islands. His commitment to public service, including 2 terms as governor of our territory, is exemplary," she added.

"Historian, public servant and educator, Governor Turnbull had a deep love for these Virgin Islands that was reflected in his commitment to each of the roles he held.

"I send my prayers for comfort and peace to his loved ones."

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