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# 'He Led With Humanity': Former Governor Charles W. Turnbull Laid to Rest During Stately Farewell in St. Thomas

Government / **Published On August 14, 2022 05:49 AM /**

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**Former Governor Charles W. Turnbull was laid to rest on Aug. 13, 2022 during a state funeral whose service took place at the Christchurch Methodist Church in St. Thomas, followed by his burial at the Smith Bay Eastern Cemetary. By. GOV'T HOUSE**

After viewing events that spanned the entire territory, Charles Wesley Turnbull, the sixth elected governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, was laid to rest on Saturday by means of a state funeral attended by USVI leaders and community members.

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. He died [on Sunday, July 3 in Washington, D.C. at the](#)

[age of 87.](#)

The state funeral took place at Christchurch Methodist Church in St. Thomas at 10:00 a.m., and the former governor was buried at the Smith Bay Eastern Cemetery followed by a repast at Fort Christian.

Community members and leaders alike remembered Mr. Turnbull for his contributions to the territory not only as a governor, but long before he was sworn into office, as an educator and historian.

Prior to holding the top office in government, 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 said on Saturday that Mr. Turnbull led with a pure heart. "Charles Turnbull came to the leadership position with no specific agenda but just to do right by the people. He set the Virgin Islands on a beautiful course; we were able to get so much done with the finances."

During his speech at Christchurch, Mr. Bryan said the former governor "led with his humanity all the time." Mr. Bryan also shared that Mr. Turnbull was a man of humor and that the former governor may have well planned his final act. "I mean, think about this now... So it's the height of the election season and wherever Charles Turnbull is, he is laughing saying, 'all of you are fighting and cussing against each other, saying bad things on the radio and the internet, look at all of you sitting down in church together,'" Mr. Bryan joked as the crowd laughed and clapped. "And all of you have to clap and sing and praise the Lord together."

The governor, however, was driving home a point: "He's reminding us that here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, we are one people, that's how we govern."

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach recalled a leader with humility whose impact was on display at the funeral service. "I will take from him a legacy of humble service. He was really a compassionate and wonderful and loving person to the people of the Virgin Islands. And as you see all over this outpouring as we wish him goodbye and as we pray for his eternal rest, peaceful rest, because he served well," Mr. Roach said.

During her remarks, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett said Mr. Turnbull served the territory for over 60 years by dedicating his life to USVI students as an educator and commissioner, professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, as well as being head of government for two terms.

"A consummate gentleman, an intellectual. Governor Turnbull and I shared a common love for history," she said. "My fondest memory of him was my deep appreciation when he accepted my invitation to be my guest at the opening of the Smithsonian's African American History Museum."

As the procession left the service and to the burial grounds, the territory's stately protocols were on magnificent display as the former governor was laid to rest. The territory's flags on public buildings and grounds also flew at half-staff until sundown Saturday.