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Ann Abramson, a St. Croix Iron Lady, Has Died. She Was 95.

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Ann Elizabeth Abramson at her 95th birthday celebration By. DR. CORA CHRISTIAN

ST. CROIX — Ann E. Abramson, a ubiquitous figure on St. Croix whose status was burnished in the territory for her many businesses — the school bus operation being the most standout — and influence among all classes in the community, but most pointedly the governors of the USVI, died on Saturday. She was 95 and would have turned 96 on April 7.

Governor Albert Bryan expressed condolences. "Our community has lost an icon and a prominent historical figure. Mrs. Abramson was a trailblazer for Crucian women in business and politics and was indeed a pillar of the Frederiksted community," he said.

Mr. Bryan added, "Her life and her many contributions to our cultural and political fabric are a true-telling of achievement and perseverance. Her remarkable work ethic and 95 years of life prove that hard work and commitment are the keys to a long and successful life.

"Yolanda and I extend our most heartfelt condolences to her family, especially her son Rudy and all in our community who mourn her loss."

Senate President Novelle Francis referred to Mrs. Abramson as a trailblazer. "My condolences to the family of Mrs. Ann E. Abramson. In life, Ann was a trailblazer- an entrepreneur who broke barriers for other women to follow. She was a staunch and proud advocate for her beloved Frederiksted and always for St. Croix. A real BOSS LADY! May she Rest in Peace," he said.

Even as she stood 5 feet, 2 inches in height, her presence was towering. In her heyday, Mrs. Abramson was a female standout of power that paved the way for other women in the territory to follow. You will know her name because the Frederiksted Pier was renamed in her honor in 2013: The Ann E. Abramson Pier and Marine Facility.

She was born Ann Elizabeth Christian, and married into the Abramson family. She has one son, Rudy Abramson, who runs the school bus business and other operations, and her grand daughter, Rhea Abramson, is her trustee.

Dr. Cora Christian, wife of former University of the Virgin Islands Professor Simon Jones-Hendrickson, was the niece of the late Ann Abramson. (Dr. Christian's father, deceased Judge Alphonso Christian, was the older brother of Mrs. Abramson). Dr. Christian was regarded by Mrs. Abramson as the daughter she never had, and on Sunday morning, Dr. Christian spoke to the Consortium about Mrs. Abramson's life.

"Ann had many families. She had her church family, she had a political family, she had her recreational family — those people who would travel with her. She had her casino family. She had her work family — the people who helped her in many of her businesses, and then of course she had her caretakers. All of those families can probably give you a different perspective than I would, but I want to give it to you from the perspective of her biological family," Dr. Christian began.

"I would start by saying Ann was truly, truly a feminist, and the reason I say that is because she was maybe about 5-foot, 1 or 2 inches, not tall and attractive. But in her day, for her to have accomplished all that she did — and she was the youngest of 14 children — is just not only a trailblazer, but a person that is set apart from anyone else to come moving forward. And she overcame many, many obstacles. People don't understand the emotional obstacles that she went through. She had many pregnancies but she lost most, resulting in only her one child, her son Rudy, who she gave a stellar education and who followed in her steps — not in the political vein, but in the business vein by taking over the school bus company and making sure that it operated successfully on behalf of the people and the children of St. Croix particularly. Ann had many businesses but that's what stood out because it really was one that represented her values," Dr. Christian added.

(Below, Rhea Abramson, Ann Abramson and Rudy Abramson during Ms. Abramson's 95th birthday celebration.)



Dr. Christian went on to describe Mrs. Abramson as someone who worked with the homeless as well as the governors of the territory. "I would see her talk to a young man on the street who was just sitting around and say, 'come on, I'm going to give you some work to do. I want you to get a sense about yourself to understand that you can make it.' And then she was also respected by the governors, so she wasn't a person that discriminated based on who you were. So in addition of being a feminist, she was truly a person of this community who understood that if we wanted to succeed, we all had to stand up — the least of us as well as the strongest of us."

Mrs. Abramson was said to have three loves: Her son being her first love and only naturally born child; her second and most important love was her grandchild, Rhea Abramson, who she confided in. "If you ever saw how Ann talked about Rhea, it was just a true joy how she felt about this young lady, who then ended up becoming her trustee. And when Rhea finally came home, I believe Ann felt like, okay, now I can rest. She had somebody who could takeover the reigns and do the things that she wanted to see accomplished in the ebbing days of her life," Dr. Christian said.

Mrs. Abramson's third love, Dr. Christian said, was Marcus Christian-Hendrickson, the son of Dr. Christian. "How that came about was pretty interesting. At that time then-citizen Mapp, who later became governor — and he was like an adopted son to Ann — was taking care of her businesses. Ann called me down and said come to Polly's for breakfast. I said Marcus is with me and she says, 'yeah, bring Marcus.' They hit it off right away. She and Mapp decided that Marcus would work with Mapp in the business, and then when Mapp left, Marcus ended up being the person being there in charge and they would eat breakfast and lunch together; they'd eat from the same plate," Dr. Christian said.

(Below, Ann Abramson and Dr. Cora Christian)



She then recalled when Marcus was shot in December 2015 on his birthday, and the reaction that came from Mrs. Abramson. "I had known Ann all my life and that time in 2015 I had never seen my aunt cry. She buried her face in my chest and she cried, and she said, 'not my Marcus, not my Marcus.' Now this lady is so powerful, who could bash you in a second, but here she was so touched and so devastated by the possible loss (of Marcus) because at that time he was fighting for his life, and that's her third love," Dr. Christian said.

Dr. Christian said she had the best privilege of them all because she was not only the niece of Ms. Abramson, but also her doctor and confidante. "She made sure that all of her grandchildren through her son got medical care through me, so I had a very rich and wonderful relationship with Ann.

"So I would end by saying not only did I love her, I liked her. A lot of times you love your family members but don't like them, but I really liked her and I really saw the feminist and the struggle that she went through to show people that both girls and boys can do whatever they want. They've got to just work hard and put their minds to it, and not let the obstacles overcome them; see the wall but understand that you can knock that wall down in front of you," she said.

Mrs. Abramson, Dr. Christian said, lived a very full life. "Of course we all will miss her, but she had celebrated every single day of her life for the Virgin Islands, and particularly for St. Croix."

The 2013 Act that renamed the Frederiksted Pier in Ms. Abramson's honor is replete with decades of accomplishments and honors bestowed upon the Iron Lady. Read them all [here](#).