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Lee Carle, a Media Icon in the U.S. Virgin Islands With an Influence that Spanned Decades, Has Died

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Ernice Gilbert **May 09, 2023**

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A radio icon in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Lee Carle helped shape the political and cultural landscape in the U.S. Virgin Islands. By. LEE CARLE/FACEBOOK

Lee Carle, radio personality extraordinaire whose career spans the entire local governmental system of the U.S. Virgin Islands — from his arrival in the territory in 1954 until he left radio for good in 2017 — died Monday afternoon, according to a family spokesman. Mr. Carle lived long, dying at age 92.

"We announce the death of Virgin Islands Radio Icon Retired WSTA-AM 1340 News Director Lee Carle, who died late this afternoon on Monday, May 8, 2023. Carle was being cared for at his St. Thomas residents when he died. Carle, a United States Veteran, impacted the lives of Virgin

Islanders for decades by his radio news reporting, and covering numerous live events from carnivals to politics," Mr. Carle's family said.

The legendary newsman is survived by his only child, daughter Athena Carlo Mercado, who wrote on her Facebook page, "With the heaviest of hearts to inform you my father Leo Carlo aka Lee Carle passed on to heaven. He lived a long life of 92 years with many adventure."

Mr. Carle's sterling career propelled him to the forefront of important topics and matters of the day in the U.S. Virgin Islands, helping shape the territory's political and cultural landscape. He worked at WTSA for over six decades, with his signature programming being the "News Day" radio broadcasts at 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

But the media legend was more than just a newsman. He also emceed many events — from pageantry hosting to major concerts, including Stevie Wonder's and James Brown's performances in the territory. In 2005, he was honored after serving the U.S. Virgin Islands in media for 50 years.

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett issued a statement Monday night, describing Mr. Carle as a staple in USVI media. "Lee Carle was the voice of Virgin Islands news for many years. A staple within many homes in our territory, Mr. Carle made his mark working in both television and radio news reporting of current events in the VI. Although I was saddened to hear of his passing, I remember the tremendous impact he made on our community through his skilled reporting and coverage of Virgin Islands news over so many decades. I send my prayers for comfort and peace to his loved ones, family and friends," she said.

Mr. Carle arrived in the USVI from his native Albany, New York in 1954 at age 23 when his audition for control tower operator was chosen by WSTA founder William Greer. He would soon after be given an opportunity to read the nightly news, which started in earnest Mr. Carle's influential and long-lasting career in the media business.