

Image not found or type unknown

Overcoming Pandemic and Hurricanes: Central High's Unconquerable Class of 2023 Graduates

Education / **Published On May 17, 2023 04:59 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **May 17, 2023**

Image not found or type unknown



Governor Bryan pops confetti while a student celebrates the milestone of high school graduation at the St. Croix Central School on Tues. May 16, 2023. By. DEAR PRODUCTIONS

In a ceremony brimming with pride and potential, the St. Croix Central High School graduated 144 students of its "Irrefutable, Unconquerable Class of 2023" on Tuesday.

The ceremony, attended by Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Senate President Novelle E. Francis Jr., and Commissioner of Education Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington, highlighted the students' resilience and achievements during a challenging period marked by the pandemic and natural disasters.

The 55th commencement ceremony for Central High saw parents, school staff, and officials gather to honor the graduating class's determination and growth over the past four years. Principal Yves Abraham praised the students for their resilience and perseverance, saying, "Despite virtual learning challenges, you continue to excel and grow more poised and confident."

Abraham commended the students for representing the school in academic competitions, athletics, clubs, and organizations. He reminded them that while graduation signifies the start of adulthood and its responsibilities, they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives, whether that includes the military, trade school, the workforce, or college.

Governor Bryan also lauded the graduating class, noting their irrefutable achievements against considerable challenges, including the pandemic and two hurricanes. He encouraged the students to contribute back to the community that nurtured their success, urging some to "stay back and make sure we build St. Croix and the Virgin Islands."

This year's salutatorian, Lea Cornelius, has already showcased her bright future. Described as sharp-witted and smart, Cornelius has secured five full-ride scholarships and acceptance to 23 colleges and universities. However, she chose to stay close to home and pursue her degree at the University of the Virgin Islands.

In her address, Cornelius urged her peers to set goals and work towards them, sharing her own journey of aspiring to be a top student from a young age. She encouraged her classmates, assuring them, "We are ready to face this world that is full of opportunities."

Bry'Nice Berley, the valedictorian of the class, echoed this sentiment. She described their graduation as a triumphant day of realization and togetherness, urging her peers to remain cautious, aware, and focused as they work towards their dreams and goals.

The ceremony also featured a keynote speech from Central High School graduate Dr. Matricia Jones, a professor of data science at the University of Michigan. She advised the graduates to embrace failure as a part of growth, sharing personal anecdotes of her own setbacks and subsequent successes.

The graduation ceremony also honored Albert and Maria Schuster, educational stalwarts of Central High, and recognized alumni from classes of 2003, 1993, 1983, and 1973. These alumni joined the celebration by awarding prizes and scholarships to selected graduating seniors, commemorating their own graduation anniversaries.