

# PRESENTERS MINI-BIOS

## **Royal Caribbean Group**

**Jayne Holcomb** | Director of Business Development, Destination Development: Caribbean & Americas

Jayne Halcomb is the Director of business development across the Caribbean and Americas for the Royal Caribbean Group destination development team. She explores and pursues growth opportunities for both port expansion and destination community partnerships.

**Elisha Shen** | AVP Onboard Revenue & Hotel Operations

Elisa Shen is the AVP of onboard revenue for Royal Caribbean International overseeing the guest experience and onboard revenue operations for gaming, shore excursions and more.

## **USVI Hotel and Tourism Association**

**Lisa Hamilton** | President

Lisa has been President of the Association since 2008 and previous to that she was the Director of Sales & Marketing for Marriott International at Frenchman's Reef for 13 years. She is also the President of My Brothers Workshop. Born in the Finger Lakes region of NY she is a proud 29-year resident of the Virgin Islands.

## **St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce**

**Adriane Dudley** | Partner

Attorney, resident in the VI since 1975. Practice: administrative law, business transactions, economic incentives under EDC and compliance, and labor and employment law. Active in many civic organizations including the St Thomas-St John Chamber of Commerce and professional organizations including the Virgin Islands and American Bar Association.

## **St. Croix Chamber of Commerce**

**Ryan Nelthropp** | Chairman

A seventh generation Crucian attended the Country Day School and received an undergraduate degree from Rider university. Mr. Nelthropp was a member of the USVI National Swim Team for 10 years representing the territory at several international competitions. He is currently a sales executive with Marshall & Sterling Insurance and in his second year as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the STX Chamber of Commerce.

## **Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA)**

**Oriel Blake** | Executive Director

Oriel Blake is the Executive Director of VIPCA, the marine advocacy non-profit of the U.S. Virgin Islands. VIPCA provides one voice to promote continued growth and strength of the marine charter industry in the Virgin Islands. It is the owner and organizer of the annual USVI Charter Yacht Show, runs an annual Marine Apprenticeship training to train young Virgin Islanders to become captains, and has facilitated freedom of passage between the USVI, Puerto Rico and its neighboring islands for charter.

## **Virgin Islands Game Fishing Club**

**Kelvin Bailey, Jr.** | President

Kelvin Bailey Jr. is the President of the Virgin Islands Game Fishing Club. He is also Vice-Chair of the St. Thomas Fishing Advisory Counsel, and the Operations Manager of Magic Moments Charters.

## **UpperClass OG LLC**

**Tywreh Nelson** | Vision Coordinator

Tywreh Nelson is a member of the graduate Class of 2020 from the University of the Virgin Islands with a Bachelor's in Hospitality and Tourism Management. He is a founding member of UCOG, a St. Croix-based lifestyle brand company, which initiated in 2017. Mr. Nelson hopes to continue to grow in the business world and expand his networks in order to truly make an impact in his community.

## **USVI Economic Reopening and Restructuring Task Force**

**Peter Chapman** | CEO/President

Peter Chapman is an accomplished economic and community (re)development strategist and practitioner. Peter holds over 20 years of executive leadership experience in several U.S. markets. During the course of his career, he has conceptualized and implemented a diverse array of award-winning and nationally recognized projects and initiatives promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, global commerce and the comprehensive revitalization of economically distressed regions. Currently, Peter serves as the CEO/President of the USVI Research and Technology Park.

**Yihan Wang** | President, Business Development Advisor Sustainability & FDI

Yihan leads sustainability and foreign direct investment programs and initiatives at the RTPark. She has over seven years of experience leading environmental conservation and economic development initiatives in several developing countries. She also has extensive experience working with the state and city governments on business attraction and foreign direct investments, especially in the field of sustainable enterprise attraction and sustainability policy development.

## **Virgin Islands Department of Health**

### **The Honorable Justa Encarnación: Commissioner**

Justa “Tita” Encarnacion, is a native Virgin Islander and University of the Virgin Islands Alumni who began her career in the Healthcare arena as a Nurse. Over the course of her career, she has held various leadership roles before assuming the role of Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Health. When the COVID-19 pandemic arose, she assumed the Incident Commander position where she continues to work tirelessly for the people of the Virgin Islands and their safety.

### **Dr. Janis Valmond** | Deputy Commissioner of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Dr. Janis M. Valmond, MS, DrPH, CHES® joined the leadership team at the Virgin Islands Department of Health in 2019 as the Deputy Commissioner for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. In addition to providing oversight for several departmental programs and services, Dr. Valmond is currently leading efforts to complete a Community Health Improvement Plan for the territory, Healthy Virgin Islands 2030, a project that will require broad collaboration across all sectors and active engagement of the broader USVI community. Dr. Valmond is a proud graduate of the College of the Virgin Islands ('82), the University of Michigan ('85) and the University of Texas School of Public Health ('89 & 2015).

### **Wanson S. Harris Jr., CIH, COHC** | Director of Environmental Health

Director Wanson Harris is the Director of Environmental Health at the Virgin Islands Department of Health, St. Croix USVI. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and is a Certified Industrial Hygienist. Director Harris leads a team of 12 personnel and live with the motto “Prevention is The Key to Public Health.”

## **University of the Virgin Islands**

### **Dr. Kendra Harris** | Dean, School of Business

Dr. Kendra L. Harris is the Dean of the School of Business and Professor of Marketing at the University of the Virgin Islands. Dr. Harris has over 25 years of professional and higher education experience which includes having been in private industry and formerly teaching at other universities including Howard University and Cornell University to name a couple. One of her goals for the School of Business at UVI is that it is a great partner to all its stakeholders, especially the business and government communities of the US Virgin Islands.

## **VI Small Business Development Center**

**Ted Gutierrez** | State Director

Ted J. Gutierrez, MBA is the State Director for the Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center. Mr. Gutierrez has several years of experience working with entrepreneurs and small businesses. His background includes Economic Development, Community Development, finance/banking, public and private sector success, and non-profit work and volunteerism.

## **VI Economic Development Authority**

**Wayne Biggs, Jr.** | Chief Executive Officer

Wayne Biggs, Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer of the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (“VIEDA”). Formerly appointed Assistant Chief Executive Officer (ACEO)/Chief Operating Officer (CEO) of the VIEDA in February 2015 by the Governor Kenneth E. Mapp, he was hired as the VIEDA’s CEO by its Governing Board in September 2020. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Operation Management/Information Systems from Bradley University, Peoria, IL and a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of the Virgin Islands, Saint Croix, United States Virgin Islands.

## **Office of the Lieutenant Governor**

**Denise Johannes** | Director – Corporations and Trademarks

Denise Johannes has served as the Director of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor since 2007. In this capacity, she is the custodian of the records maintained in three registries – the Business Entity, Uniform Commercial Code and Trademarks registries, as set forth by Titles 11, 11A, 13, 14, and 26 of the Virgin Islands Code. She recently facilitated the implementation of the division’s 24-hour, 7-days a week online system, Catalyst, in 2018 to meet the needs of persons wanting to do business in the Territory with electronic filings, payments, searches, and email notifications.

## **Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs**

**The Honorable Richard Evangelista, Esq.: Commissioner**

Attorney Richard T. Evangelista was born and raised on St. Croix Virgin islands where he graduated from the former Good Hope School. He has served as Legal Counsel for Virgin Islands Public Employees Relations Board, Assistant Commissioner/Legal Counsel of the Department of Labor, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor John P. DeJongh, Jr., Acting Chief Executive Officer and Legal Counsel of the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center and Assistant Attorney General with the Department of Justice. Currently, Attorney Evangelista serves as the Commissioner of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs after Governor Albert Bryan Jr. nominated him on April 5, 2019.

## **SEAT Caribbean**

**Dr. Jennifer Sequeira** | Executive Director

Dr. Jennifer Sequeira is the co-founder and co-owner of SEAT Caribbean coworking space and the nonprofit organization SEAT Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center. Prior to starting SEAT, she was a tenured Associate Professor of Management who taught a variety of Entrepreneurship courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In her academic career, Dr. Sequeira conducted research on women and minority entrepreneurs and presented her research at national and international conferences. Her research is published in prominent Entrepreneurship and Management Journals.

## **SEEDSPOT US Virgin Islands**

**Trevonne Homer** | Community Organizer

Trevonne Homer is a Community Organizer & Facilitator for the SEED SPOT New Business Launch Camp in the US Virgin Islands. She is a change agent with a passion for social justice issues. She holds a B.A. in Sociology from Emory University and a MPA from American University.

## **VI Department of Human Services**

**The Honorable Kimberley Causey-Gomez: Commissioner**

Kimberley Causey-Gomez rejoined the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (DHS) as the Commissioner in April 2019. She is a Licensed Certified Social Worker and is brings over thirty (30) years of volunteer and specialized professional expertise to the department. Ms. Causey-Gomez has served in a variety of leadership roles in non-profit agencies, government, private businesses, and higher education which have equipped her with deep operational knowledge and capabilities, as well as the compassion and relatable experience sometime lacking at the decision-making table for our most vulnerable populations.

## **CHANT (Crucian Heritage & Nature Tourism Inc.)**

**Franelle Gerard** | Executive Director

Franelle Gerard serves as the Executive Director of CHANT, Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism, Inc., a Virgin Islands non-profit dedicated to promoting heritage and nature tourism as the lead tourism product for St. Croix. Prior to joining CHANT in 2009, Ms. Gerard was a Business Counselor with the University of the Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center on St. Croix. Ms. Gerard has an extensive business background and has served on numerous Boards and Commissions in the public and civic sectors.

## **National Park Service**

**Elba Richardson** | Commercial Services Manager

Virgin Islands National Park presentation will be done by Elba Richardson. Mrs. Richardson serves as the Commercial Services Manager for Virgin Islands National Park and Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument in St. John. Her office is responsible for issuing commercial permits and concessions contracts to the private sector which authorizes them to provide recreational and other visitor services and activities within the Park and its submerged lands.

## **VI Taxicab Commission**

**Shane Benjamin** | Executive Director

As the executive director, Mr. Benjamin is responsible for the administration and management of the Taxicab Commission. He also oversees its mandates in compliance with Virgin Islands laws, rules and regulations approved by the Commission, and sound business practice. Mr. Benjamin has been in his position since March 5, 2020.

## **Office of the Governor's ADA Office**

**Julien E. Henley, Sr.** | Territorial ADA Coordinator

Julien E. Henley Sr. Currently serves as the Territorial American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for the Government of the Virgin Islands. A voice of empowerment for the disabled community, one of his main goals has been to make the USVI Government accessible to all individuals with disabilities, whether by physical, or digital access. Mr. Henley serves as the Chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Council and the Virgin Islands University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disability (VIUCEDD), and also volunteers with AARP.