

Governor Albert Bryan Jr.



Albert Bryan Jr. is the eldest son born to Albert and Genevieve (Pilgrim) Bryan. Born on February 21, 1968 on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, he and his four brothers, Troy, Robert, Andre, and Alrick, lived with their parents in the historic St. Thomas neighborhood of Savan. When Governor Bryan was a teenager, Mr. Bryan, Sr. moved the family to St. Croix where he was offered a better career opportunity. After living in several neighborhoods including Sugar Beach and Estate Whim, the Bryan family settled in Estate Diamond. After graduating from St. Dunstan's Episcopal High School in 1985, Governor Bryan matriculated at Wittenberg University in Ohio and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics in 1989.

Immediately after college, Governor Bryan returned home to the Virgin Islands where he began a lengthy and successful career in both the private and public sectors holding positions of responsibility at HESS Oil Corporation, the V.I. Housing Authority, and Innovative Communications. Due to his drive, work ethic, and ingenuity, he quickly climbed the ranks and earned more responsibilities and promotions at these jobs. The managerial experience gleaned at these private sector jobs and from working closely with and on behalf of a labor union would, in fact, be portentous for his future entry into public service. Not one to shy away from opportunities for education and learning enhancement, Governor Bryan earned a Master of Arts degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of the Virgin Islands in 2003.

Governor Bryan has always exhibited a lifelong passion for politics and dedication to community service. His passion and dedication in these arenas were strengthened in 2002, when he co-founded Generation Now! Inc., a non-profit organization which filled a critical role in educating the public on key political and social issues, offering mentorship, performing community service, and providing leadership seminars and platforms for the younger professionals of the Virgin Islands. He also served on the Executive Board of the Young Democrats and other organizations where he was a tireless lobbyist for the improvement of life in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In 2007, Governor Bryan was appointed as the Commissioner of Labor by then Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. During his eight-year tenure, he implemented the Jobs for America's Graduates Initiative for at-risk youth, secured over \$14 million in additional funding for training and improvement of services at the Department of Labor, and \$150 million in federal unemployment benefits after the closing of the Hovensa Refinery. He also consolidated seven labor offices in St. Croix saving the government \$300,000 annually and offering advanced access to client services. His approach of doing more through technology allowed the department to implement several new web-based tools for career preparation and job search including the Virgin Islands Electronic Workforce System (VIEWS) and Youthnet.

During his tenure as Commissioner of Labor, Governor Bryan also served as Chairman of the Government Development Bank and, in his concurrent and parallel role as Chairman of the Economic Development Authority Board, ushered in new programs for the economic growth of the territory, including the first Tax Increment Financing project, the Small Contractors Bonding Program, and new levels of lending to catalyze the growth of small businesses.

In 2015, with the change in administrations, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. returned to the private sector as an entrepreneur and not-for-profit executive. He was the President/CEO of Aabra Group, a consultancy which focused on fostering and supporting innovative entrepreneurship opportunities and businesses in the territory. He was also the CEO of Master Strategies, a locally-based human resources recruiting firm. And, in keeping with his passion for young people, education, and entrepreneurship, he also served as the Executive Director of Junior Achievement of the Virgin Islands.

Governor Bryan has contributed generously towards the improvement of the quality of life for his fellow citizens and has been awarded for so doing. In 2010, he received the “Bill La Motta Community Service Award” for distinguished service from the St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce. He was also recognized by the Rotary Club of St. Croix as the “Person of the Year” and by the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority for his community service. In 2017, he was awarded the University of the Virgin Islands Golden Key Honor Society Pillar Award. Later that year, after the devastation wrought on the territory by the passing of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, he led Operation Rebuild USVI’s effort to coordinate the distribution of recovery and relief supplies to thousands of residents.

In the August 2018 Virgin Islands Democratic Primary, Governor Bryan was on the ballot for a public office for his first time. He and his running mate, Senator Tregenza A. Roach, Esq. defeated two other Democratic teams and went on to defeat six other formidable teams in the General Election in November 2018. At the final tally of the General Election, Governor Bryan’s first foray into politics was deemed an unheralded success as he garnered the most votes of all candidates in the gubernatorial race. Despite being the top vote-getter, with such a crowded field, he was unable to capture the fifty percent plus one votes necessary to win outright. Proving the third time was the charm, Governor Bryan succeeded in becoming the ninth elected Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands winning the majority of votes in a hotly contested run-off election against the incumbent Governor Kenneth E. Mapp.

In what he describes as his greatest joy and accomplishment, Governor Bryan married Yolanda Cabodevilla of St. Croix in 1998 and they have two daughters, Aliyah and Sumayah.

Aliyah, an alumna of Good Hope Country Day School and Agnes Scott College, moved on to establish her own tech startup servicing a host of Caribbean Islands and countries. Sumayah, after graduating from Free Will Baptist Christian School in May of 2020, elected to become a proud Osprey as she now attends the University of North Florida, where she majors in Marine Biology. Utilizing her passion for sea life, she hopes to return to the Virgin Islands to serve the community that raised her.