



Statement to be Read on Behalf of Dr. Lawrence C. Wanlass, UVI President Emeritus,
for
UVI's 50th Anniversary Video Vignettes to be unveiled during Golden Jubilee Receptions
on St. John, St. Thomas and St. Croix, January 25th, 26, & 27th, 2012 Respectively

Greetings to all in attendance at this very historic event. Having dedicated my middle years to building the foundation for the College of the Virgin Islands, no one is more pleased than I am to participate in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the University of the Virgin Islands.

During this 50th year celebration, I think it is very important to dwell on the University's theme of dealing in futures. The new goal should be to use the current foundation to continue strengthening the University over the next 50 years, and I am sure this will be true of the Virgin Islands as well.

During the early years, I received invaluable support from a number of key people deserving of my thanks. Three people first come to mind, the most important being Governor Ralph M. Paiewonsky whose understanding of the importance of higher education for the Virgin Islands was of great importance. The second is Jack Wallace who, as interim administrator, preceded me and served as a continuing advisor to me for many years. The third is Louis Shulterbrandt, Governor Paiewonsky's chief assistant.

Other names come to mind. Dr. Melvin Evans was a very important member of the Board of Trustees, later serving as Governor, and for whom the main building on the St. Croix Campus is named. I recall very warmly the contributions of Malcolm Kirwan, Vitalia Wallace, Paul Leary and Aimery Caron. There are other pillars of strength too numerous to list here, but I would like especially to include Arthur A. Richards, then Provost and later President, and Jane. E. Tuitt.

From the list of very strong Board of Overseers which we put together during the early years, I am thinking of the contributions of people like Wayne Aspinall, Chairman of the United States House of Representatives' Interior Committee; Harry Etelman for whom the house and observatory on St. Thomas is named; Herbert Sugden who donated "Sugden House" on St. Croix and, of course, Henry Reichhold who gave us the Reichhold Center for the Arts. They were all very supportive in many ways other than financial because they understood our mission to support the development of a middle class in the Virgin Islands through the attainment of higher education.

I can also speak with warmest appreciation of the presidents who followed me, including the current president, Dr. David Hall.

This recognition of the vital support that was received must also include Senator Earle B. Ottley, Ariel Melchoir, Sr., as well as many others, but the most important support of all came from my wife, Anita, who served as the “wife of the president” with great success.

With these recognitions of contributions in mind, I would finally like to mention what I consider to be my own principal achievement----that was the establishment of the University of the Virgin Islands as a prestigious Land-Grant University which required an Act of Congress. . As a small and relatively unknown institution without senators or voting congressmen, we faced major challenges. Our Land-Grant provisions were made a section of the Higher Education Act of 1972 which also included Title IX which granted equal standing to women in comparison with men within universities accepting federal funding. This committed us even more so to its passage but the higher education community was divided with Yale, Princeton and others trying to defeat the bill. Understanding this, we created an Ad hoc Committee for the Passage of the Higher Education Act and we then, systematically, contacted the presidents of virtually all of the major universities in the country. We sent more than 2000 cablegrams from the St. Croix Office of the cable company. They, in turn lobbied their representatives in the House and Senate and the bill finally passed the House with a small majority and the Senate with a larger majority. The counsel to the sub-committee on higher education, Bill Gaul, later credited the College/University of the Virgin Islands with having played a vital role in passing the Higher education of Act of 1972.

Interior Committee Chair, Congressman Wayne Aspinall, senators Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, Henry “Scoop” Jackson of the state of Washington , and Wayne Morris of Oregon, were , from the very beginning, supportive our becoming a land-grant institution as well as many others too numerous to name. **This six year effort resulted in the establishment of UVI as a Land Grant institution and the infusion, on an annual basis, of many millions of dollars to support our research, public service and agricultural programs. Therefore, while we celebrate our 50th anniversary, let us also celebrate the 40th anniversary of our designation as a Land Grant institution, reflect on what an amazing accomplishment this was, and acknowledge those local and national leaders who made it happen.**

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to participate in this momentous occasion . Happy 50th Anniversary UVI.

Lawrence C. Wanlass