



HONORING OUR PAST – CREATING OUR FUTURE

**REMARKS OF DR. DAVID HALL, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
GOLDEN JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY
KICK OFF RECEPTIONS

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2012
UVI ST. JOHN ACADEMIC CENTER
CRUZ BAY**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2012
UVI SPORTS AND FITNESS CENTER
ST. THOMAS CAMPUS**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2012
UVI GREAT HALL
ALBERT A. SHEEN CAMPUS
ST. CROIX**

It is with deep pride and immeasurable humility that I welcome each of you to this moment where we officially launch the Golden Jubilee Celebration for the University of the Virgin Islands.

The word jubilee has a sacred connotation. It was used to capture a major milestone in the life of a nation or institution. It was a time for celebration and joy, but it was also a time of cleansing and preparation for enormous growth in the future. In scripture, during the jubilee year, the land was required to remain idle so that it would rejuvenate and provide more for the people in the future. It was also a time of liberation, and those who were captives were set free.

I share this broader interpretation with you for I want us to understand that this year is more than a number on a calendar. This moment in the life of UVI is sacred and should have a deep meaning for all of us gathered and all those connected to this special university.

It is a time of celebration and joy because UVI has so much to celebrate. Despite the challenges that exist all around us, there are enormous blessings that have been bestowed upon this university. We are blessed to have had four previous presidents who were brilliant, dedicated, and visionary leaders. We have been blessed with board members who freely gave of their time to guide this institution through birth and growing pains, and it stands now at middle age, ready to be reborn. In this jubilee year, we must celebrate the countless students who have graced the halls of UVI, transformed it as it transformed them. Words cannot express how joyful we must be for the faculty, staff and administrators who have showered us with service, insights and so much hard work, that we cannot quantify the value of their contributions.

We shout for joy because this university exists in a community where the government and the private sector have supported this institution in very special ways. We celebrate the known and unknown community members who have given to and received so much from UVI.

We cannot begin this journey without first honoring our past. Those who do not know their history are condemned to repeat it. We must discover more this year about this special university so we can know more about where we are headed.

But this jubilee year is also a sacred moment of healing and cleansing. Like any institution, we have had our share of disappointments, crises, and frustrations. We have broken promises and not always lived up to our own ideals. But we collectively stand together to cleanse ourselves of the doubts, fears and resentments that our limitations and failures may have created within the soul of this institution and within the spirit of its people. We need not carry into the next half century the pain, trauma or resentment that may have been created in the last half century.

Jubilee represents a new day for a new people who are standing on the shoulders of those who laid a wonderful foundation.

A Golden Jubilee is a moment to rejuvenate the soul of the land so it can produce even greater things in the future. So throughout this year, we will be planting seeds in our imaginations that will be planted in the soul of this university to create a future for which we can be proud.

If we celebrate this 50th with the joy it deserves, and the deep reflection that it demands, then we will not only do justice to the past, but we will create an unimaginable future of greatness.

If we lay fallow the land of UVI, and plant no seeds of discontent in her this year then we will bring forth a bountiful harvest of progress and hope in the years to come.

If we work together as common soldiers on a battle field of excellence, and not as independent critics on a mission of destruction, then we will make history.

When the history books are written about the next 50 years of the University of the Virgin Islands, historians will say, and the people will confirm, that there lived a great people who fashioned a great institution that transformed the place where it resided. These were ordinary people who did extraordinary things with their hearts and minds.

So I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as the 5th president of UVI. I walk in the footsteps of special men and women who graced this stage before me. I am grateful for their contributions and that of so many others. It is my pledge to not forsake the sacred trust that you have bestowed upon me to lead this university to the next level of greatness.