



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Office of the Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR ANNOUNCES 2026 “I AM DAVID HAMILTON JACKSON” STUDENT ART FOR ACTIVISM CHALLENGE

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) is pleased to announce the launch of the annual 2026 **“I AM DAVID HAMILTON JACKSON”** Challenge, hosted by the Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in collaboration with the Department of Education – Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education. This year’s Art for Activism initiative invites students in grades 7–12 throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands to explore the enduring legacy of David Hamilton Jackson and the use of art and journalism to examine issues affecting the Virgin Islands today.

Through political cartoons, editorials, satire, and other creative forms, students will consider how Jackson and other Virgin Islanders used journalism and public expression to advocate for freedom of the press, workers’ rights, human rights, and self-governance, and how young people can use their own voices to participate in the civic life of their communities.

“This project invites young Virgin Islanders to step into their own power, to look critically at the past, confront the issues shaping their communities today, and use their voices and creative expression to imagine a more just future. At the heart of the challenge is a question that brings David Hamilton Jackson’s legacy into the present: If David Hamilton Jackson were here today, what would he be taking a stand for?” stated Monica Marin, DLAM’s Chief Curator.

ART FOR ACTIVISM: “I AM DAVID HAMILTON JACKSON”

Students will learn about Jackson’s activism, including his role in labor organizing and the 1916 labor movement in the Danish West Indies, his founding of *The Herald*, and his advocacy for freedom of the press.

They will also explore the broader tradition of Black-led newspapers in the Virgin Islands and the ways editors and publishers channeled their activism through journalism to challenge injustice, advocate for workers and civil rights, and hold public officials accountable. Students will examine

political cartoons by renowned artist Leo Carty, as well as works by contemporary USVI political cartoonists and comic book artists. They will then investigate a current social or civic issue affecting the U.S. Virgin Islands, consider it from multiple perspectives, and create an original work expressing their own point of view.

Creative Submission Options

Students may choose the medium best suited to their message:

- **Political Cartoon:** An original drawing, mixed-media work, digital artwork, or animation inspired by the tradition of political cartooning.
- **Editorial:** An essay or other written work connecting the legacy of Jackson and Black-led Virgin Islands journalism to a current issue affecting the territory.
- **Satire:** A monologue, spoken-word piece, short play, or short-form video using satire to address a contemporary Virgin Islands issue.

Participation and Important Dates

All public, private, parochial, and home-school students in grades 7–12 throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands are invited to participate.

Submission Deadline: Friday, **October 23, 2026**

Student Exhibition: Thursday, **October 29, 2026**, 12 PM–7 PM at Fort Frederik Museum

For more information and to set up an in-class or virtual presentation, please contact:

Monica Marin, Chief Curator via email at monica.marin@dpnr.vi.gov.