

VENETIA HARVEY VELÁZQUEZ

Bar Memberships: U.S. Supreme Court * V.I. Supreme Court* Third Circuit Court of Appeals *VI District Court

EDUCATION

- Juris Doctorate** **Howard University School of Law, Washington, DC**
Magna Cum Laude (1997-2000)
Class Rank: (Top 3 percent: 5th in Class of approx. 130 members)
Howard Law Journal, Member
Awards/Honors: Merit Selection to Law Journal; Achievement
Awards in course of study for Legal Research and Writing II;
Advanced Legal Research; Remedies; Corporations; Sales and
Secured Transactions; Recognition for Appellate Arguments
- Master of Arts** **University of the Virgin Islands** (1994)
Education Administration/Leadership
Summa cum laude
- Bachelor of Arts** **Howard University, Washington D.C.** (1985)
Human Communication Studies; Political Science
Magna cum laude
- Judicial Training:** National Judicial College, Reno, NV
General Jurisdiction Training for Trial Judges (2025)
Judicial Academy: Training for Aspiring Judges (2023)
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PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS:

BAR MEMBERSHIPS:

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS SUPREME COURT	May 2001
UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT	Aug. 2013
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT	Aug. 2010
U.S. DISTRICT COURT OF THE V.I.	May 2016
Pro Hac Vice Appearances – S.D.N.Y.	2022-2023, 2024
Special Appearances: District Court, District of Columbia	2023-2024

CERTIFIED/TRAINED MEDIATOR, ARBITRATOR: 2012-present
Certified Mediator, Florida Supreme Court [Appellate Law, Family Law]

CERTIFIED COURT MANAGER

National Center for State Courts, Institute for Court Management

2009

LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

**Magistrate Judge
Superior Court of the Virgin Islands**

**Nov. 4, 2024
to present**

Duties: Preside over Initial Appearance proceedings in criminal cases, Criminal Bench Trials, Small Claims, Forcible Entry and Detainer cases; Domestic Violence, Civil Stalking and Harassment cases; Probate, Litter and Traffic; review and determine requests for arrest and search warrants; mediate civil and family cases that are pending before trial judges, on referral.

**Assistant Attorney General
Department of Justice
Criminal and Civil Divisions**

2016-2024

Assigned Duties and Responsibilities:

Civil Division Chief and Acting Chief (April 2023-October 2024). Duties: Supervised the legal work of a team of civil attorneys and administrative staff in the two districts; reviewed and determined administrative tort claims, proposed negotiated settlements, supervised outside counsel in specific extra-jurisdiction litigation; represented the Government of the Virgin Islands, its agencies and instrumentalities, and employees in civil actions before the local and federal courts; supervised and represented the Territory and its residents in multistate litigation and local consumer litigation.

Civil Litigator (2019 – 2024). Duties: Represented the Government of the Virgin Islands and various executive branch agencies and instrumentalities in civil actions (including Complex Litigation) filed in federal and local courts; researched and wrote legal briefs, motions, pleadings; participated in mediations and settlement negotiations; drafted settlement memoranda for approval and authority; managed litigation from initiation to resolution.

AAG, Criminal Division (2016 – 2019). Duties as outlined below:

Police Legal Advisor: Served as 24-hour on-call attorney to provide legal counsel/advice to peace officers on duty territory wide on legal bases for police actions, including search and seizure; reviewed case investigations to ensure adherence to Constitutional precepts and to avoid or identify legal challenges following arrest; assisted officers in preparing requests for warrants and other court

processes; approved and issued investigative subpoenas; provided in-service, recruit and remedial training in the areas of Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure, V.I. Code, Preparing Probable Cause Affidavits and Effective Courtroom Testimony; reviewed uses of force incidents involving officers and provided remedial training to encourage corrective actions and compliance.

Criminal Prosecutor: represented the People in both misdemeanor and felony criminal cases before the Superior Court, from case initiation to resolution.

Assigned to serve on various boards, on behalf of the Attorney General, as follows:

1) HIDTA-- Represented the Attorney General on the USPR-VI High Intensity Drug Trafficking Task Force (HIDTA) **(2016-2018)**, and served on the Finance/Budget Committee, participating in the development of budgets for the region; attended regular regional meetings in Puerto Rico and participated in assessing issues affecting various stakeholder federal and state agencies.

2) Peace Officer Standards and Training Council ("POST")- (2016 – 2018)-
- Represented the Attorney General on the governing board of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), which included attending board meetings and assessing issues affecting peace officers territory wide, reviewing and working on the development of administrative rules.

3) Hearing Officer , Peace Officer Standards and Training

Duties: Served as Hearing Officer for POST, hearing challenges in law enforcement employment/ termination cases involving peace officer recruits and in peace officer decertification cases within POST's jurisdiction.

**Deputy General Counsel to the Governor,
Office of the Governor**

2015- 2016

Duties: Researched legal and policy issues to guide decision making and policy development; Drafted and reviewed proposed legislation; reviewed professional services and construction contracts from executive departments, applications for Economic Development benefits, Coastal Zone Management permits, and prepared memoranda regarding recommended outcomes of the foregoing.

**Appellate Public Defender
Office of the Territorial Public Defender.**

2014- 2015

Duties: Represented indigent clients before the Supreme Court of the V.I. and the Superior Court of the V.I. in criminal appeals, appeals of petitions for writs of habeas corpus, and in criminal cases before the trial court. This included: conducting independent reviews of the trial records in criminal cases to identify and raise legal

challenges to trial errors by the court, by the police or by attorneys, writing appellate briefs and arguing the same before the Supreme Court; representing defendants charged with crimes in the Superior Court, including advice of rights, competency hearings, and bench trials.

**Clerk of the Courts,
Supreme Court and Superior Court of the Virgin Islands**

2007 – 2013

Duties: Served as an administrator for the operations of the Supreme (2007-2008) and Superior (2007-2013) courts; managed staff in the Clerk's office territorywide; developed operational plans/strategies and participated in setting policies for the continued development and improvement of the various divisions of the Court.

**Staff Attorney
United States District Court of the Virgin Islands,
Appellate Division (V.I. Judicial Council)**

2002 – 2007

Duties: Served as a staff attorney for the District of St. Croix with sole responsibility for ensuring resolution of appeals in criminal and civil cases in this district, by: Reviewing the appellate record and legal briefs in each case; Independently researching and analyzing legal issues raised on appeal; Providing advice and recommendations to panel judges for resolving legal issues; drafting appellate opinions and orders on motions; managing the appellate case docket/case filings.

**Law Clerk
Superior Court of the Virgin Islands
Hon. Maria M. Cabret**

2000 - 2002

Duties: Researched and analyzed legal issues pending before the Court and Provided advice and recommendations to the trial judge on those legal issues, both verbally and in legal memoranda; Drafted opinions and orders; prepared jury instructions; prepared judge for court hearings and trials; attended trials and other court sessions and noted issues requiring research and follow-up action or resolution, and worked with the trial judge to devise such resolution.

**Legal Intern, United States District Court
of the Virgin Islands, Appellate Division**

May-August 1999

Duties: Researched and analyzed legal issues; Provided advice and recommendations to panel judges on legal issues, both verbally and in written bench memoranda; drafted appellate opinions and orders based on research. (Unpaid Externship)

**Legal Intern
Territorial Court of the Virgin Islands (now Superior Court)**

May-August 1998

Duties: Researched and analyzed legal issues, Provided advice and recommendations to judge(s) on legal issues, both verbally and in legal memoranda; Drafted legal opinions and orders reflective of research outcomes.

OTHER EXPERIENCE:

Adjunct Instructor **Aug. 2015 – 2024**

University of the Virgin Islands

Criminal Justice / Social Sciences

Duties: Provided course preparation, instruction and measurements/evaluation in assigned courses, to include: Contemporary Corrections; Introduction to Political Science; Criminal Evidence and Criminal Procedure, Administration of Justice.

Instructor

Aug. 2015 – 2019

**Virgin Islands Peace Officer Training Academy
& VIPD**

Duties: Provided instruction in various legal areas to Law Enforcement Recruits, and In-Service and Remedial Training to existing officers. In addition to providing instruction, prepared lesson plans and guidelines, to be used by other Assistant Attorneys General or United States Attorneys assigned to assist in providing such instruction as necessary; identified and fulfilled various training needs as required by existing federal Consent Decrees.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Board on Professional Responsibility **2024**
(Appointed by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court)

Auxiliary Member, American Legion, POST 102 **2020 – present**
Duties: provide assistance and outreach to veterans

Chair, Legislation and Legal Reform Committee **Dec. 2019 – 2022**
V.I. Bar, Duties: Reviewed pending legislation impacting on the practice of law and provide recommended responses to the Governing Board; drafted correspondence to the Senate, as needed.

Board of Trustee Member, V.I. Bar Foundation. **2018 – 2020**
Appointed to two-year term

Moot Court Judge, High School Appellate Moot **2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018**
Court Competition: Served as a lawyer-judge for high school moot court competitions.

V.I. Bar Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee, 2009-2014

Member and Chair: Duties: Investigated complaints of UPL, to include taking depositions, writing reports on behalf of the committee, filing complaint in the Supreme Court, and participating in the prosecution of appropriate cases before the Supreme Court of the VI; drafted procedural rules and recommended statutory changes for submission to the highest local court; managed the assignment of UPL cases to committee members and the development and prosecution of those cases.

V.I. Bar ABA Model Rules Review Committee, Chair 2013

Duties: Researched and reviewed proposed national rule changes of the ABA and drafted recommendations regarding the implication of the rules and their adoption in this jurisdiction.

V.I. Bar Journal Committee, Member (2002-2004); Chair (2004-2007)

Duties: Wrote and edited articles for the local Bar Journal; designed, laid out and produced a periodic journal for distribution to the legal community; Wrote article (s) for local newspaper promoting legal issues.

Traffic Strategic Coordinating Committee, Member: Feb. 2008-Dec. 2013

Duties: Served on an interagency committee to ensure stakeholder input and coordination on policy issues, to holistically address policy and technology issues in furtherance of improved traffic records reporting and compliance with federal highway safety standards, to develop e-citation and e-filing, and develop reports on policy issues. [Lead agency: Office of Highway Safety].

Panelist, District Court of the V.I. Annual Conference: 2009 and 2023

Invited by the Court to present at the annual Bar conferences

Topics presented: Court Administration (2009)
Persuasive Legal Writing (2023)

COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS: Ay Ay Cultural Dancers (member); American Legion Auxiliary Post 102; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS ; CERTIFICATES:

- **National Judicial College, Judicial Academy**, Course for Aspiring Judges (October 2023)
- **Advanced Trial Advocacy National Attorneys General Training & Research Institute (NAGTRI)** Nov. 16-19, 2021 Trial Advocacy Training, National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI), Oct. 2019 and 2021 (Philadelphia, PA)
- **Trial Advocacy Training**, National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI), Oct. 22-25, 2019 (St. Thomas, VI)

- **Trial Advocacy Training**, National Attorneys General Training and Research Institute (NAGTRI), Oct. 24-27, 2016
- **Appellate Mediation Certification Training**, University of South Florida, 2012.
- **Family Mediation Certification Training**, University of South Florida, 2012.
- **Administrative Hearing Process, PERB** (2009)
- **Employment/Labor Mediator Training**, Public Employees Relations Board (2004; 2010)
- **Arbitration Training**, V.I. Public Employees Relations Board (2002; 2004)
- **Law Enforcement Instructor Development Course** (2015)
- **National Summit on Human Trafficking** (Oct. 2015- New York), as part of the state team headed by the V.I. Supreme Court;
- **Conference on Language Access in Courts** (2012 – Houston, TX), as part of a state team headed by the V.I. Supreme Court;
- **Trial Advocacy: Effective Direct and Cross Examination** – National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) (2005)
- **National Institute for Trial Advocacy: Legal Strategies**(3/2016); **Constitutionalizing Objections in Criminal Cases** (3/2016); **Evidentiary Foundations** (3/2016); **Bench Trial Strategies** (3/2016).
- **Other:** Numerous other advocacy and mediator trainings as part of CLE and CME requirements.

MILITARY
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
Sergeant [4th Civil Affairs Group, Washington, D.C.] (6 years)
1980-1986
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REFERENCES:

Available upon Request