

St. Eustatius' Tourism Director knighted by H.M. Queen Beatrix



Alida Francis

Oranjestad - St. Eustatius' Director of Tourism, Ms. Alida Francis, is one of three citizens of St. Eustatius who received Royal Decorations from Her Majesty Queen Beatrix this year. A special ceremony was held at the official residence of Hon. Governor of St. Eustatius, Mr. Hyden Gittens, on Friday, April 27th, 2007. The pinning honors were conducted by Hon. Governor Hyden Gittens, representative of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix on St. Eustatius.

Other honorees include retired taxi driver, Mr. Josser Daniel and school principal, Mrs. Marchelle Debbie Clarke-Brown. Both were decorated as Member in the Order of Oranje-Nassau (Lid in the Orde van Oranje-Nassau). Ms. Francis' received the Royal Decoration Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau (Ridder in the Orde van Oranje-Nassau).

This marks the first time in St. Eustatius' history a person this young (42 years old) has been knighted in recognition for outstanding contributions to society. Ms. Francis' wide range of voluntary and professional contributions includes; culture & carnival, pageantry, economic development, education, environment, tourism, youth development, government, social development and nation building.

Her most notable contributions started already at the tender age of 13 years old in the field of culture. Ms. Francis has contributed to the realization of St. Eustatius' first Tourism Policy, St. Eustatius Investment Guide, Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Garden, St. Eustatius Marine Park, and St. Eustatius Saba Small Business Stimulation Fund to mention a few. She lectures to students and youth organizations on Discipline and Self Respect, Personal Hygiene & Grooming, Budgeting made easy for students etc. Ms. Francis is a well respected role model for young and old in St. Eustatius, the Dutch Caribbean and regionally.

Annually throughout the Dutch Kingdom individuals are honored for their contributions to their respective societies. These Royal Decoration ceremonies are held on Queen's Birthday (April 30th) to commemorate the birthday of the mother of H.M. Queen Beatrix, the now deceased Queen Juliana. In the three smaller Dutch Caribbean islands a total of 18 citizens received Royal Decorations (Saba (3), St. Eustatius (3) and St. Maarten (12). The two highest decorations (Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau) were bestowed upon St. Eustatius' Ms. Alida Francis and renowned St. Maarten painter, Mr. Roland Richardson.

St. Eustatius forms part of the Dutch Caribbean which includes Saba, St. Maarten, Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. The tiny island, commonly called Statia, is renowned for scuba diving, culture, heritage, hiking and tranquility.

For information:

St. Eustatius Tourism Development Foundation

Fort Oranje, Oranjestad

St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles

Tel: 599-318-2107

Tel/Fax: 599-318-2433

Email: info@statiatourism.com

Website: www.statiatourism.com