

In Loving Memory and
Celebration of the Life of

CELEBRATING OUR BELOVED MOTHER & FRIEND



HONORING CANDIA'S LEGACY AND IMPACT

Candia
Atwater-Shields

Sunrise: May 4, 1943 and Sunset: March 5, 2024

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH, 2024 FROM 3:00PM TO 6:00PM
CARIBBEAN MUSEUM CENTER FOR THE ARTS | 10 STRAND STREET, FSTED



Celebration of Life

in memory of

Candia Atwater-Shields

Sunrise: May 4, 1943 and Sunset: March 5, 2024

“Art Raises the Spirit”

Musical Selection

Elizabeth Robb

Welcome Remarks

Willard John

Life Story Reading

Cristeen Rodriguez-Cox

Video Tribute

Tributes

James Galbraith

Janet Cook-Rutnik

Fidel Campos

Lenny James

Words of Remembrance

Orville James, CMC Arts Board President

Friends of Candia

Poem

Scholarship Announcement

Lisa Mordhorst, CMC Arts Exec. Director

Closing Words

Evan Shields

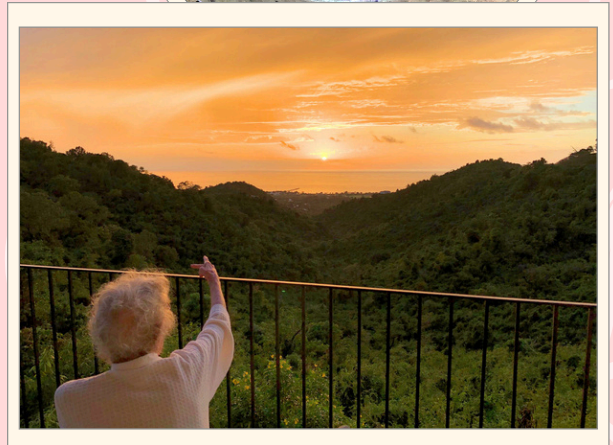
Quiet Reflection

Acknowledgements

Willard John

Musical Selection

Tony Richards





Memoirs from Sons

Candia Ann Atwater was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas to Nancy Virginia Walker and Robert Merriam Atwater. She grew up in Buffalo, New York, where her mother was born, and later in Oyster Bay on Long Island.

She married my father, Craig Milan Shields, and together they raised three sons: Mark Walker, Christopher Merriam, and me, Evan Atwater. My mother loved being a mom and teaching us and other children, for she was always very sociable and drew in other families. We lived in Port Washington, a multicultural, immigrant community, and had many pets. My parents were active community members; they established a local federal credit union and food co-op, and Candia taught pottery at the elementary school and Sunday School.

My mother treasured her close relationship with her Aunt Kitty, Catherine Merriam Atwater, who was married to John Kenneth Galbraith, the renowned economist and diplomat, for 67 years, until his death at age 97. She enjoyed time with them in their house in Cambridge and took us to their place in Townshend, Vermont every summer. Aunt Kitty and Uncle Ken no doubt inspired and encouraged Candia to pursue higher education, and to strive to make a difference.

As a mother of three young boys, Candia returned to school to pursue her undergraduate degree. Through Hofstra University, she spent a summer at the London School of Economics. We visited her there in 1978 and traveled to Wales and Scotland, creating lasting memories. She graduated with her first degree at age 30, and then continued to law school, on a mission to change lives.

As an attorney, Candia first worked in immigration law in Chinatown, where we hosted many exchange students. She remained passionate about immigration law, understanding that it had the power to help vulnerable families, especially young mothers. She spoke about the importance of this work to a group of enamored college students, just days before she died. Throughout her prolific life, finally retiring from her position as Assistant Attorney General at the age of 70, Candia traveled as much as she could. She loved to travel, believing it to be a great form of experiential learning. It was at her urging that I traveled abroad in high school, eventually settling in the Netherlands where I have been ever since.

It was sometime after her divorce that Candia left Albany for the Caribbean. She fell in love with Saint Croix. Over the past thirty-five years, she lived in many places on the island (each one chock full of paintings), preferring Frederiksted, where she ended up on a hillside apartment overlooking the pier. It is here, on this beautiful and warm island, that Candia was able to return from Florida after many recent months of hospitalization, and here that she went to bed on March 4th and woke up in another world.

A devoted friend to many, Candia will be sorely missed. She was an intent listener who loved to make connections and share laughs. She understood that actions spoke louder than words and she was ever present for friends. She created an extended family for herself on the island and beyond.

Here, she left a legacy that will continue to inspire others.

Candia was more than a patron of the arts. Beyond the artwork, she saw the artist, and she espoused the transformative effects of creative expression. More than anything, she wanted that opportunity for the youth of Saint Croix; she wanted to showcase Caribbean artists to inspire young people.

From a vision entirely her own, she went at the creation of the Caribbean Museum Center of the Arts with everything she had. Its birth is her gift back to the island that gave so much to her.

Thank you all for being a part of her life and for taking part in her journey.

~ Evan Atwater Shields

Memoirs from Sons

It is hard, with tears in my eyes, to write about my momma. This is about Candia. We all knew her in our own way. As my Mom, Candia was funny and ever-present in my childhood. Her husband, my father, our family, for years, were a normal, happy as can be, suburban family.

Candia watched over us with fearful care, taking the time to teach us we would need to know in this life. Memories of Candia are inseparable from her compassion for the oppressed and poor. She gave almost everything she had to help her family and indeed complete strangers, I don't pretend we are all perfect, least of me, and my recollections. Many of you who knew Candia, know she was rugged and outspoken, full of fire. I wanted so much more with her, as we all did. Thank you. Thank you all so very much for caring about Candia. May you all be Blessed.

~ Christopher Merriam Shields

Scholarship in Candia's Name

The CANDIA ATWATER-SHIELDS Scholarship Fund

The Board of Directors and staff of CMCarts have dedicated a new youth arts scholarship fund in Candia's honor.

The Candia Atwater-Shields Scholarship Fund will be celebrated each year on Candia's birthday, on May 4th. In its inaugural year, the scholarship fund will support admission for several teens to attend the CMCarts' 2024 Film Over Gun Violence summer film program that aims to bring awareness to gun violence prevention in our community while teaching alternative methods of positive expression.

Each year, CMCarts will look to broaden the youth art scholarship program to support education for artists and learning for humanities based jobs in the arts with the inspired hope that students return home to share their knowledge and contribute to the arts economic sector of the Virgin Islands.

**Donations can be made to support the
Candia Atwater-Shields Scholarship Fund
at cmcarts.org/donate.**





STACEY E. PLASKETT
VIRGIN ISLANDS

2059 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT

On behalf of the Members of the 118th Congress, my office, and my family, it is my honor to give tribute to the late Candia Atwater-Shields.

I was very saddened to hear of Candia's passing recently. She had an incredible story and left an indelible mark on our local community as the founder of the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts (CMCArts). After starting college at the age of 30, she went on to law school and eventually was admitted to the bar at 44 after overcoming a years-long battle with illness. She moved to the Virgin Islands in the late 1980s and worked as a prosecutor and ultimately served as the Assistant Attorney General of the Virgin Islands Justice Department. It was during her years serving in these various capacities and encountering/engaging with many of our children, youth and families that she saw the great need to create a space for arts and education in our community and founded CMCArts in 1994.

I was first acquainted with Candia at the evening spots in Frederiksted in the early 2000s. Blue Moon jazz sets, late afternoon meals at St. Tropez, drinks at Pier 69 - Candia Atwater was there. A quiet smile, her accoutrements of linen wear, cigarette and crossed leg with foot shaking in quiet energy - Candia Atwater was part of town. I worked with Candia at the museum for a number of years serving on the Board and as a Chair of the Board of the amazing Caribbean museum - her love child. Candia explained art and shared her ideas with me and other interested young people. I saw her taking joy in the artists in residence program, exposing our young people to new art forms, and giving a paradise respite to artists from off island. She delighted in exhibits of local artists and I can still hear her deep laugh watching the creations of our children in the summer and weekend programs. We are a better community because of Candia, a grand woman who was willing to embrace our history and culture and bring her own strong ideas and energy to both preservation and advancement.

The condolences of my entire family and office go out to Candia's family and loved ones, especially her children. May she rest in eternal peace, and may her legacy live on through her love for and belief in the power of the arts, which she bestowed so graciously on our community.

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Delegate to Congress

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VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

A MESSAGE FROM ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL IAN S.A. CLEMENT

To the Family and Friends of former Assistant Attorney General Candia Atwater-Shields

It is with profound sorrow that I extend my deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues upon hearing of the passing of former AAG Candia Atwater-Shields.

As a former esteemed colleague of ours at the Virgin Islands Department of Justice's Paternity and Child Support Division, she served our community as a prosecutor from 1988 until her retirement in 2014. Attorney Atwater-Shields was not only a dedicated Assistant Attorney General, but also a cherished member of our professional family. Her unwavering commitment to justice, integrity, and excellence left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of working alongside her. Her passion for the law, and for the children of this Territory, coupled with her kindness and compassion, made her a pillar of our legal community.

During this time of profound loss, please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you. May you find solace in the cherished memories you shared with her and may her legacy of service continue to inspire us all.

With heartfelt sympathy,

Ian S.A. Clement Esquire
Acting Attorney General
Virgin Islands Department of Justice

St. Thomas

3438 Kronprindsens Gade | GERS Complex, 2nd Floor | St. Thomas, VI 00802-5749 | (340) 774-5666
Division of Paternity & Child Support | 8000 Nisky Shopping Center | 2nd Floor, Suite 500 | St. Thomas, VI 00802 | (340) 775-3070

St. Croix

213 Estate La Reine | Kingshill, St. Croix, VI 00850 | (340) 773-0295
Division of Paternity & Child Support | 3018 Orange Grove, Suite 4 | Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00821 | (340) 775-3070

LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

35th Legislature, THE HONORABLE SENATOR DIANE T. CAPEHART



3022 Estate Golden Rock
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Chairperson Committee on Rules & Judiciary
Vice Chair Committee on Disaster Recovery & Infrastructure
Member Committees on Health, Hospitals and Human Services
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture
Subcommittee on Health and Public Safety



April 18, 2024

The Family and Friends the Late Candia Atwater-Shields, Esq.

It is with great sadness I write this tribute to honor the life of Candia Atwater-Shields. Her contributions to the Arts community, not only on the island of St. Croix but also in the Caribbean, are tremendous and must never be forgotten.

Candia was passionate about children and determined to establish a place for families using the field of Arts that she loved so much. I served on the Board of the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts with Candia. I know her family, friends, and the Arts Community mourns, but we must live in the memories of all her accomplishments and tremendous contributions to the Virgin Islands in her role as an Activist, Assistant Attorney General, and the Founder of CMCA for almost 30 years. I offer my sincerest condolences to all who were blessed to have known Candia, especially her family, friends, and the Arts Community of St. Croix.

I pray that *"the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus,"* Philippians 4:7.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

In sympathy,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Diane T. Capehart".

Diane T. Capehart
Senator
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands



www.cmcarts.org
be Inspired!

340-772-2622
10 Strand Street, PO Box 734
Frederiksted, VI 00841

A Tribute to Candia Atwater-Shields
May 4, 1943- March 5, 2024

Thank you all for joining us in Celebrating the Life of Candia Atwater-Shields. On behalf of myself, the Board of Directors and staff of the Caribbean Museum Center for Arts, I offer our deepest condolences along with prayers of comfort and support to her sons, Christopher and Evan Shields.

Candia's contribution to USVI community was evident in her determination and dedication to create a space for the youth of St. Croix, in this beautiful, "blue historic building", here on 10 Strand Street, Frederiksted, St. Croix. Today, the museum has become a place that offers so many different programs and classes for all ages, including performing arts, Artists in Residence, music, poetry, pottery and exhibitions.

Candia, the Founder of CMCARTS, remained actively involved with the operations of the museum for many, many years. I recall receiving several emails and telephone calls from her regarding matters that needed to be addressed at the museum. Although she retired from the workforce, she never retired her heart and soul, from the museum.

Securing funding for not-for-profit organizations can be a challenge. Candia met this challenge by creating the now famous museum calendar, *Island Art and Soul*, which began publication in 2003. This yearly calendar features artwork by Virgin Islands and the Caribbean artists and has been highly sought after and has been a great revenue source.

As an art lover and someone who enjoyed traveling the world, Candia created her home gallery with a collection of arts she purchased locally and on her off island trips.

Frederiksted is unprecedented. Her rich legacy will continue to inspire the lives of everyone and continue to create opportunities for them at the museum. In November 2023, the "blue historic building" was dedicated in her honor with a plaque placed on the exterior wall.

Artfully yours,

Orville James
President - Board of Directors



501(c)(3) # 66-0529152

Tributes to Candia

Tribute to Candia delivered March 6, 2009 at the opening of the first exhibition, Facing Locality, curated by Luis Camnitzer in the upstairs CMC Arts galleries:

Dreams do come true but it takes vision, inspired leadership and sometimes an almost satanic single mindedness to bring them to fruition. One woman, Candia Atwater, has accomplished the formidable task of founding a museum, finding a building, and finding funding for it. This has been a personal and social goal of hers for the 15 years that I have known her.



In the best of circumstances this would be a huge success – in a small community like ours, and I am speaking of all 3 Virgin Islands – with a total population hovering around 100,000 – a community that to this day has no University level art department – no documented history of VI art and no public collection of Virgin Islands art – it is an even bigger accomplishment. What possessed this woman who will tell you she has no formal art background to take on such a huge art task?

Having been raised in a liberal, socially conscious New England family whose wealth was a result of a cultivated and inspired intellectual originality and brilliance but also – for very personal reasons – a long stint of illness spent alone in a room with some well-chosen paintings – Candia formed a lifelong belief in the healing and enriching power of art.

This early experience in which art became a source of renewal was translated to the social level many years later when her work as a lawyer and assistant Attorney General in the VI Govt.'s Paternity and Child Support Division brought her in contact with so many people and especially children whose lives needed a new vehicle for salvation and inspiration.

Candia was raised by her Aunt Kitty and her uncle, the late John Kenneth Gailbraith, one of the most influential world famous economists of the 20 th century...This family raised its' own to give generously and to understand the symbiotic relationship we all have with one another, the society and the world we live in.

Candia has been living up to these goals with heart and soul. Many lives have been enriched by her dogged determination, her family's support and those patrons and Virgin Islands institutions that have supported her vision – which is now a living, breathing, bona fide art museum – the Caribbean Museum for the Arts housed in this breathtakingly beautiful, historic architectural gem in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

Bravo, Candia and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

~ **Janet Cook-Rutnik**

Rest in peace, beloved Candia. On the first day of clean-up we met twenty years ago. May your spirit live on forever as we keep the memory of your guidance and inspiration alive. It was in high school that Art Raised My Spirit for two years while painting and charcoal drawing. CMC Arts opened and allowed me to Raise The Spirit of many students and adults through Cultural Arts Workshops and Summer Programs. The time we spent together through sickness and in health allowed me to receive your love as you gave your service especially to our youths in this community. I will surely miss your support and respect.

~ **Daphne McIntosh-Rodriguez**



Candia, a pioneer. Equally an advocate for the creatives of fine arts and films. Without her unwavering commitment and profound determination there would be no flagship to call, The Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts. I will continue to keep close our conversations, memorable dinners, and her outspoken words. I am grateful, and I will miss her.

~ **Johanna Bermúdez-Ruiz, Cane Bay Films, LLC**

Tributes to Candia

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page"
- Augustine of Hippo

Candia was passionate about well almost everything ... and that included travel. Always planning a trip or coming back from one. Volumes worthy of travel experiences! Here she is at Hacienda Cusin. December 2015. One of so many cherished memories.

~ **Joanna Soltan**



It all started one evening when we were at the bar in Café du Soliel. Tom, one of the owners, told us about a friend who we might like to meet. Ultimately, introductions were made and our friendship with Candia began. This was long before 10 Strand Street and at the first of the calendar series.

It wasn't long until Candia "recruited" us for a wide variety of opportunities. Those included consulting on non-profit organizations, meeting potential staff and boards members, event volunteers, hanging art, fixing a wide-variety building fixtures, innumerable long discussions on the daunting tasks of maintaining and growing CMCA and occasional dispensing of tough love.

Connecting Candia to Karen Rike helped bring the first internet presence of CMCA to life. Through it all our friendship flourished. Vicki, has a personal debt of gratitude to Candia. Her vision to create CMCA has provided an outstanding venue to display and sell my art. No other venue has been so supportive and successful.

Candia, you have left a legacy for the arts in the USVI and well beyond that may never be surpassed.

With love ~ **Vicki and Steve Nelson**

My friend, your strong spirit remains in my heart; you and Eddie had a special bond and my children have loved and admired you throughout all these years. Our trip to Europe was life changing, amazing, and big fun because of your wit and wisdom.

We have enjoyed many dinner parties around your big round table with the most erudite and interesting people. Always a gracious hostess. You lived large and royally and have become a part of us we cherish for the rest of our days. Your brutal honesty woke me up to many essential realms of being that I can only attribute to the privilege of knowing you.

Rest in peace my sister, you left the world a better and more beautiful place.

~ **Susan Beach**



Photo was taken in Gstaad, Switzerland in 2017, a six week holiday across Europe.

Sleep Well Candia, Sleep Well! Candia was a visionary and activist for the arts practically in St. Croix USVI. I met her around the time she had acquired the building for The Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts. She was very passionate about having a place to showcase artist work. Around that time, I was a member and also became President of St. Croix Digital & Photo Club which met once a month at Gertrude's restaurant to share photography tips and techniques. It created wonderful fun and camaraderie among those of us that were passionate about photography. St. Croix Digital & Photo Club held one of the first art exhibits at the Museum. Candia was very proud about that. As a professional photographer she hired me several times to photograph. I am very happy the Museum still stands and has become the community center to showcase artist work as Candia hoped for many years ago. Rest in peace my dear friend - you did good.

~ **Dr. Denise Bennerson**

Tributes to Candia

Thanks to the monumental role of Candia's legacy for building a thriving arts community, many of us have stepped into the powerful role of advancing the arts in the Virgin Islands through the work of CMC Arts. When I moved back to the VI in 2004 to teach, Candia quickly recruited me to help develop and launch programs, fundraise, and write grants for CMC Arts. Candia afforded me my first opportunity to help run an arts center which forged my path for the next 15 years - curating numerous exhibitions and programs at the intersection of contemporary Caribbean art and social justice.

Candia opened many important doors of opportunity- bringing important national and international curators, who all advised on best practices for CMC Arts and encouraged our creative endeavors, curating shows and helping to create a platform of visibility that previously didn't exist for Virgin Islands artists. She believed in me and made me feel like my ideas were important, always providing space and institutional support in a cultural landscape with no Dept. of Culture and nonexistent funding streams. Candia supported me in founding the first artist advisory for CMC Arts with the great encouragement of advising curators so that CMC Arts would be an artist-led initiative grounded in the local culture and dynamics. With Candia's support we developed the upstairs for museum-quality shows to address the critical issues facing the Caribbean. Under her leadership, we developed accessible programming that helped to build community and harnessed local knowledge to serve the residents of Frederiksted. We developed a calendar for exhibitions based on culturally relevant themes central to Virgin Islands and Caribbean history with educational outreach. We kept the exhibits up for 3 months to be intentional in ensuring all school-age children would have the opportunity to engage with programming designed for each exhibit and to expand the artist in residency to work with artists from the Caribbean and Diaspora whose practice was grounded in community.

Candia always wanted to ensure our young people had opportunities to create, and arts education for our youth was at the heart of her mission. She believed in the transformative power of art to inspire, educate, and heal. We are so grateful for all she has given in founding and defining the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts. She touched and transformed so many lives. Her vision has helped us shepherd a new generation of artists forward in the VI for whom the museum has nurtured and entrusted. So much gratitude for Candia for visioning, challenging, hoping, supporting, and pushing, always believing we could create more. Personally, for helping me grow - and for helping us all grow a greater arts community here in the VI.

We will miss her boldness and her sharp insights. Her conviction, her dedication to young people and artists. Her great wit, intelligence, and sense of humor. Her love of the arts and open mind. We are thankful for Candia's commitment, her wisdom, and her unyielding support of the arts. We will miss her guidance, heart, and humor. Thank you, Candia, for paving the way for so many of us artists and arts leaders throughout the years. We stand on the shoulders of her love and support. Her legacy will be carried on by all of those whom she's influenced and supported either directly or indirectly through CMC Arts. Rest in power, Candia, we will forever love and miss you.

~ **Monica Marin**

I remember Candia coming into my gallery, The Gilliam-King Gallery, back in the early 90's visiting, and discussing her dream of a Caribbean Museum of Art to showcase and honor the artists of not only St. Croix, the Virgin Islands, but of all the Caribbean. She started out small, creating Calendars that featured the Islands' Artists, and they were a huge success. I was honored to be featured in that very first Calendar. The Calendars not only celebrated working artists, but brought attention to the diversity of art created on St. Croix and the Virgin Islands... Her's was a noble concept, one that I had hoped would come to fruition, but I could never have imagined how her dream would unfold into such a special place for the Arts, and in my town of Frederiksted. One can only guess the economic impact the Museum has on the town... Candia embodies the concept of, if you can see it in your minds eye, it can be achieved! It was her Field of Dreams... Well done, Candia, you have a place in Virgin Islands History, and certainly a place in the hearts of all artists and art lovers! I have kept that first Calendar in my archives, it is something I cherish.

Thank you, Candia

~ **Trudi Gilliam**

It's hard to imagine what a desert it would be, artwise, around here if it hadn't been for Candia.

~ **Mike Walsh**

Tributes to Candia

I met Candia for the first time in the summer of 1992. I had not been gone from St. Croix for a year when I relocated back to settle my father's estate after his recent death. I moved into my grandmother's (Alma Peters James) pink cottage in La Vallee (a homestead house), located on the left after the bend on the road to Cane Bay, and Candia was renting the house next door to me, from Evelyn Crittenden, who lived across the street. We became fast friends, initially introducing ourselves at our fenced backyards. Because of Candia I began planting flowers and a vegetable garden. Every now and then her small dog, Jade, a chihuahua, would visit me through my always opened back door. If you knew Candia, Jade got her name because of her love of jade. Her other beloved pets were Winston, a black lab, Sister and lastly, Puff, a small poodle.



While neighbors, Candia talked with me about starting a museum. One of her earliest ventures was an art show at Carambola, which was well received. Her interest was to start a museum by acquiring funding through grants and a yearly published art calendar. Eventually, a few of us gathered for meetings, which consisted of writing proposals for grants and bouncing around ideas, while Candia worked on getting a 501C3 status for the museum. So many contributed their time and energy to the first art calendar by editing, photographing art, typesetting, transporting art, delivering calendars to organizations to sell and more.

In 1995 the initial Island Art and Soul calendar, from the Caribbean Museum Center, was published with Leo Carty's "Fish Catch at Cane Bay," gracing the cover. The first couple of calendars or so contained some pieces from Candia's personally curated art collection (purchasing the best by local artists), with her full collection eventually being sold to one buyer. Candia's family also financially contributed in order for her to realize her dream. However, the hardest part was getting an actual location for a museum. Luckily, in 2003, Mr. Warren Mosler came to the rescue and the beautiful Danish building, on Frederiksted's Strand Street, eventually became the Caribbean Museum Center's home.

Candia and I remained friends all these years and I'm still amazed at how extraordinary it was for her to have achieved her goal. The museum's diverse art exhibits, residency program, classes and workshops are a testament to her legacy and dogged determination. Thank you, Candia, for your contribution to the arts and culture of the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean. You are sorely missed.

~ **Carmella A. Richards**

Please add my condolences to a stalwart bearer of the arts.

~ **Elizabeth Betsy Rezende**

Unlike many people here celebrating Candia's life, I clearly knew her barely if at all. I would have conjured up some image of a headstrong do-gooder artsy matron, who in a fit of mid-life crisis decided to spearhead the creation of an art center on St. Croix. (...and in Frederiksted no less). Certainly I admired and appreciated this tenacious and visionary woman at the very tail-end of her tenure, but with only the sketchiest details of her actual life's trajectory. The old adage "If you want something done right, ask a busy woman." is truer than true for Candia. Oh, and that's without having been asked. Who juggles three children and an illness while getting a law degree? Then imagine building up CMCArts simultaneously with the serious business of being at the high end of the judiciary system here, well it is all a bit mind boggling. So from the island, the children, artists and patrons alike, three very big Cheers to Candia Atwater's uniquely wonderful, fruitful and impactful life!

~ **Lyn Voytershark**

I was invited as an artist in residence in 2011 to Saint Croix and had an unforgettable time. I will forever be grateful to Candia for this opportunity. Candia made my stay wonderful. She gave me a warm welcome and did all her best to get me in touch with the local art scene and experiencing the island to the Max. I loved her way of being. An openminded, open hearted and generous women. Her contribution to the arts will have a lasting impact. Many Greetings from Germany,

~ **Maria Feck**

Tributes to Candia

I met Candia and became friends with her over 30 years ago when she moved to St. Croix and began organizing art shows showcasing local artists. The shows were held at Carambola, St. Croix by the Sea, and any place willing to accommodate her requests. At that time, the most prominent St. Croix artists were Leo Carty (RIP), Anselm Richards (RIP), Paul Youngblood, Marcia Jameson (RIP), Charles "Bud" Hawes (RIP) and Elroy Simmonds. Later, artists and sculptors like John Jones, Mike Walsh, Jymmy Dunn and Janet Rutnik were added to the crew. Most recently, she lauded the work of Niarus Walker, Lucien Downes and Elwin Joseph all of whom have made significant contributions to the artistic landscape of St. Croix. Candia always envisioned the development of a museum center to promote Virgin Islands and Caribbean artists and provide programming for the youth. To raise funds to fulfill this dream, Candia created the "Art and Soul Calendar." For many years, I served on the committee to select the artists to be featured in the calendar and continued, in this capacity, several times once the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts (CMCArts) became a reality in 2003.

Along with business women Judith Patalidis, contractor Richard Borck, art teacher Pedra Chaffer, myself and Candia, we formed the Founding Board of CMCArts. For several years, it was a "working" Board without staff but with an outstanding cadre of truly dedicated volunteers, most noteworthy among them were Gwen Hazzard and Daphne McIntosh-Rodriguez. The primary goal of the CMCArts Board was to renovate the facility that had been unoccupied since hurricane Hugo in 1989 and to promote its future offerings. Last November, CMCArts celebrated its 20th year of occupancy. Today, it is one of the most beautiful facilities and courtyards on St. Croix sustained through fundraising, grantsmanship, donors, contributions from Candia, her family over the years, Warren Mosler and the present outstanding staff who have brought her vision to fruition.

For those who knew her personally or professionally, Candia was not "easy." There were times when she was difficult, obstinate and stubborn.....BUT....her dream, her vision, her dedication to the arts, and her determination to create a facility where the artistic community could flourish outweighed these shortcomings. May Candia rest in peace knowing that her legacy of the Art and Soul Calendar and the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts have realized her goals, provided numerous programs for St. Croix youth, and left an indelible mark on the Virgin Islands community.

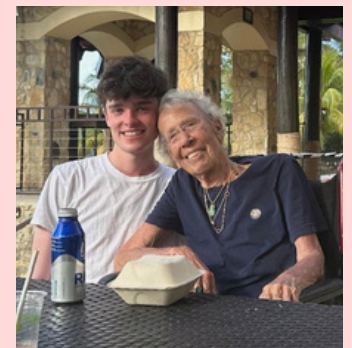
~ **Juanita M. Woods**

My appreciation for Candia runs deep. It began when I was a college intern for CMCArts. Two years later, I wrote a grant proposal for a cultural and environmental arts afterschool program and it was used to obtain CMCArts' first major federal grant. In 2006, Candia called and I had the opportunity to return home to be the Development Director/sole staff member. I excitedly accepted and it turned into a momentous and memorable year for Candia, and all of us, as it coincided with the unveiling of the grand renovations and full use of all the galleries, apartments, classrooms, and courtyard. It was also the year that Candia's dream of having a free afterschool arts program for over 40 Frederiksted youth was actualized. That year, we met our first milestone of having 500 students attend our artist-guided tours of the Expressions of Taino Mythologies exhibition.

For Candia, it was always about children. She was a lover and avid collector of fine art, and she also 'collected' many artist and curator friends... but her 15+ year dream of building a community arts center for St. Croix was driven most by her unwavering passion and commitment to create a safe and inspiring space for children and youth to feel loved, build creative expression, and to thrive. I remember one of Candia's favorite slogans to use was "ARTS: Art Raises The Spirit." She worked so hard and gave so much to build CMCArts. I am grateful to have been a part of, and to have worked alongside, the group of so many people who dedicated their time and resources to help bring Candia's vision to fruition. Special shout out to Warren, Elizabeth, Daphne, Janet, Gwen, & Monica. I'm profoundly thankful that I got to experience seeing Candia's spirit raised, over and over again, as CMCArts continued to grow and expand, serve more children, and cultivate new generations and a whole new community of artists and individuals whose spirits have all been raised as a result of the magic of expression that is cultivated within, and elevated beyond, the walls of the building that is the beautiful creation of Candia's dream. It is my hope that we continue to honor and celebrate Candia for her indelible contributions to our community, to the Virgin Islands artist community, to Frederiksted, to the Caribbean cultural institutional landscape, and most importantly, for her contributions to raising our collective spirit and the spirit of so many children through the arts, culture, community and place. Thank you Candia for all that you gave and created. May your soul rest in power and your spirit be eternally raised.

~ **Emily Graci**

“Art Raises the Spirit”



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VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Museum founder, ex-assistant AG leaves behind legacy in the arts

By KIT MACAVOY
Daily News Staff

ST. CROIX — Candia Atwater-Shields, patron of the arts and former VI assistant attorney general, died last week. She was 80 years old.

In the days that followed, a tide of remembrances swept over social media as artists and non-artists alike paid tribute to the trailblazing founder of the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts in Frederiksted.

Jane Cook-Ratnik, St. John artist and Atwater-Shields' friend of more than 30 years, said her friend worked long periods of time isolated in her room — alone, except for some “well-chosen” paintings. That experience fostered a lifelong belief in the power of art to en-



Contributed photo by REBECCA DELLEGER
Candia Atwater-Shields founded the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts



See News photo by KIT MACAVOY
A plaque dedicating the museum building to Candia Atwater-Shields adorns the wall outside of CMCArTS on Thursday afternoon in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

and to inspire others... I know we're a nonprofit, but it takes a lot to start something from scratch — particu-

larly, that celebration, they dedicated the building to Candia Atwater-Shields. A plaque adorning the wall outside cele-