

March 25th, 2011

This Week We Feature Young Professional Lenette M. Lewis

There is an old saying “you never judge the book by its cover” and that rings true to this week’s young professional Lenette Lewis, who at age 24 is a lecturer at the H. Lavity Stouff Community College (HLSCC).

The vivacious young Virgin Islander has an aura of confidence and authority, and admitted she needs it when lecturing Biology to her students.

As a product of the Leonora Delville Primary School, the then BVI High School and HLSCC, Ms. Lewis admitted she was always curious about corals and other marine organisms as a child since she spent much of her time at the beach.

“My sisters, cousins and I went to beach all the time and I was constantly in the water. It’s amazing how soothing it is underwater,” Ms. Lewis remembered with a smile. “It’s truly fascinating, and I can’t recall exactly at what age I told my parents I wanted to go into that field.”



Her mantra is, “Whatever you try, you need to have a passion for it. It’s not all about making money, you have to make the right decisions in life.”

After completing an Associate Degree in Natural Science, the ambitious young lady was ready to forge ahead and enrolled at the University of North Carolina Wilmington where she obtained her Bachelor’s Degree in Marine Biology with a minor in Chemistry.

Ms. Lewis then jetted off to Florida, where she spent some time working at the Newfound Harbour Marine Institute in Big Pine Key, and at the Ecosystems Exhibit at the Smithsonian Marine Station in Fort Pierce. According to her, these were opportunities to present information to both students and adults about marine ecosystems in an interesting and hands on manner.

Ms. Lenette Lewis is a lecturer at H. Lavity Stouff Community College

And it was an experience she will never forget. "I took the younger students on tours, we snorkelled to explore the many species underwater, I got to captain the boats...I have many fond memories and met lots of friends...it was a good opportunity for me."

Not long after that, Ms. Lewis proceeded to study for and earned her Master's in Tropical Coastal Management from Newcastle University, United Kingdom.

Interestingly, while many may be absorbed with the young professional's academic accomplishments, Ms. Lewis sees them as an opportunity to help others.

"To be honest I really don't make a big deal out of it. Even my friends don't mention it," she said with a smile.

Ms. Lewis described herself as an adventurous person and revealed she could be shy at times. Slowly but surely she overcame that habit when she taught for a year at the Elmore Stouff High School and now as a lecturer at HLSCC.

"I never thought I would take up a job teaching. It just happened," Ms. Lewis divulged. "After returning from England I took a much needed rest and decided to apply for a job in the teaching field."

She is currently on a two year contract at HLSCC, and the young lecturer is "loving it".

Musing over her first day in a HLSCC's classroom, Ms. Lewis said "I was so nervous because here I was thinking I would be speaking to individuals who may be older than me. However, it was not that bad. As you can see I survived."

The young professional has earned the respect of her students, which she credits to her no-nonsense, yet friendly approach and professionalism.

"It is also how you interact with them...from the beginning you have to set that tone they will know who is ultimately in charge," Ms. Lewis revealed.

Notwithstanding that, she admitted the workload can be quite hectic, and at the same time she strives to make her lectures as interesting as possible.



The highlight of any given day for the young professional is the faces of her students as they grasp concepts in Biology.

"When a student can come to me and explain and show that they understand a topic it makes me feel that I have accomplished something," Ms. Lewis revealed.

As for the future, the 24 year-old is "going with the flow". However, she would like to continue teaching for a while.

Ms. Lewis, pose for the camera moments after she graduated from North Carolina University.

While at the moment, her job takes up much of her free time, Ms. Lewis disclosed that her personal relationship with God keeps her grounded when the going gets rough. She also acknowledged the tremendous support she gets from her parents Margaret and Lennox Lewis, who helps her to keep things in perspective.

"I usually bounce ideas off them...they will tell me their honest opinion whether it is positive or negative," she said.

In her spare time she enjoys scuba diving, playing sports, reading, playing with HLSCC's woodwind ensemble and collecting stamps.

She is also the National Coordinator of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network – BVI Chapter (CYEN-BVI) – an organisation that seeks to improve the quality of life for Caribbean youth through the protection of natural resources.

"Just a plug here for the organisation. On Saturday, March 26 we are observing Earth Hour which is being held at 8:30 p.m. to bring attention to climate change. Residents are urged to turn off non-essential lighting and plugging out electrical appliances for one hour," Ms. Lewis noted.