FORDE, EUGENIE MARIE
Health Official, Midwife
St. Croix
1900 - 1987

An individual who literally touched the lives of thousands of Virgin Islanders as a midwife, Eugenie Marie Tranberg Forde not only delivered over four thousand babies, but provided health care for parents and children. Born on July 24, 1900, in Frederiksted, St. Croix, Danish West Indies, she later moved to St. Thomas with her parents, Laritz and Lucy Ann Bastian Tranberg.

She received her early education at St. Patrick’s Catholic School on St. Croix and St. Anne’s Catholic School on St. Thomas and graduated at age sixteen. Due to existing laws against hiring minors, she was not eligible for employment, but accepted a temporary position at her alma mater as a pupil-teacher. After one year she applied for a nurse’s position at the hospital. As a nurse-trainee, she was exposed to a rigorous three-year program. In 1923, she also completed the nurse-midwifery training program and was awarded a certificate. She pursued additional training at Freedman’s Hospital in Washington, D.C., 1948; New York Hospital, 1949; Columbia Hospital, 1953; and Johns Hopkins Obstetrical Clinic in Baltimore.

Her positions at the Municipal Hospital and later at Knud Knud-Hansen Memorial Hospital included supervisor of nurses and midwives, head nurse, nurse anesthetist, and nurse midwife. Other related activities included chairperson, Nurse Midwifery Board, member of Board of Nurses Examiners, and treasurer of Virgin Islands Association of Nurses.

For her dedication to these services, she was honored by several groups. In 1966, she was selected Woman of the Year by the St. Thomas Chapter of the Business and Professional Women’s Organization. In 1967, she was the honoree of the Virgin Islands Nursing Association on the 50th anniversary of her nursing career. That same year the Christian Family Movement of the Roman Catholic Church also paid tribute to her.

She was awarded the territory’s highest honor, the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor, by Resolution 1259, August 1, 1986. She was the recipient of two previous Legislative resolutions, Nos. 416 and 831, both of which cited her outstanding and dedicated career. Legislative Act No. 4768 named the obstetrics-gynecology wing at the St. Thomas Hospital and Health Center the Eugenie Tranberg Forde Obstetrics-Gynecology wing.

A member of Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church, she was an active member of several church groups. The wife of Volcy Forde, she was the mother of four children—Olor, Lelas Forde Giffat, Alden, and Ashre.

Mrs. Forde died on November 25, 1987, in St. Thomas.