

BILL NO. 35-0076

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

May 3, 2023

An Act honoring and commending former Senator and St. John Administrator, Noble Samuel, posthumously for his many years of dedicated service to the Virgin Islands National Park, visitors to St. John, and the people of the Virgin Islands, by renaming the Centerline Road on St. John from the roundabout in Cruz Bay to the Bordeaux Road entrance, “Noble Samuel Drive”

PROPOSED BY: Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

WHEREAS, Noble Samuel, born on March 26, 1926, was one of Amelia and Henry Samuel's 10 children, and grew up in a one-room home in Pastory, St. John, Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, Noble Samuel enjoyed a simple childhood: cooking and having a picnic, having Papa read and play games with he and his siblings at night, and sleeping on the floor; and

WHEREAS, Noble Samuel started to work at age 16 in the Public Works Department. By age 18, he was teaching at St. John's East End School, and at 19, he was dipping ice cream in a store at the Grand Hotel on St. Thomas. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952. He spent two years in Korea, and after a stint in New York, he returned home to St. John in 1958, where he found a job as a policeman; and

1 **WHEREAS**, as a young man, Noble Samuel was excited about the Virgin Islands
2 National Park that was being established on St. John. He loved St. John and wanted to see it
3 preserved, and the National Park Service seemed a perfect way to do that. He became an avid
4 snorkeler and trail guide, and as a park ranger, an ambassador for the islands and the National
5 Park Service, not only for tourists but locals as well; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Noble Samuel gave tours and slide presentations at Cinnamon Bay and
7 Caneel Bay, and his love for the uniqueness of St. John, its natural beauty, culture and history
8 was evident wherever he went. His days off from work were often filled with hikes and snorkel
9 swims with visitors; and

10 **WHEREAS**, over the years, Noble Samuel advanced within the National Park Service
11 to become Special Assistant for VIPs and he was exposed to visitors from all over the world.
12 He treated everyone the same and knew that the worth of a person was not in the color of his
13 skin or the wealth in his pocket but in the integrity of his heart. He gained as much from the
14 visitors as he shared with them and took advantage of these experiences to grow personally.
15 He got to teach President Johnson's wife, Lady Bird Johnson, to snorkel, much to the fear of
16 her secret service men. He became friends with the family, and was invited to President
17 Johnson's ranch in Texas; and

18 **WHEREAS**, because there was no high school on St. John when he was growing up,
19 Noble Samuel never finished high school, but he was encouraged to study and get his GED by
20 the children and their families at the campground at Cinnamon Bay. He valued education and
21 taught people that education does not have to take place in a classroom, or in a book, and that
22 we continue to learn through our experiences during our lifetime; and

23 **WHEREAS**, in 1972, friends convinced Noble Samuel to run for Senator-at- Large and
24 he was elected twice and served in the Virgin Islands Legislature for two terms from 1973-
25 1977. As a senator, he was chairman of the Home Rule and Interstate Committee, vice

1 chairman of the Agriculture Committee and a member of the Finance Committee. He sponsored
2 a bill that appropriated \$90,000 for the St. John ambulance boat; and

3 **WHEREAS**, in 1983, Governor Juan F. Luis appointed him to the post of St. John
4 Administrator. He served as Administrator until Governor Luis left office in 1987.

5 **WHEREAS** Noble Samuel was very humble and always amazed at how his life turned
6 out. As a little boy, he walked barefoot up the steps of the Battery (Government House) with a
7 strap of fish his father sold to the Administrator for 50 cents. As an adult, he lived in that same
8 house and felt very privileged to be able to oversee government affairs for St. John and continue
9 to meet and help visitors and the local community. And although he did not live to see it, Noble
10 Samuel would have been proud that years later his nephew, Julien Harley (who he raised as a
11 son), would become St. John Administrator and continue his legacy; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Noble Samuel passed away on December 1, 2004 at the age of 78; and

13 **WHEREAS**, in 2021, the Noble Samuel Scholarship and Internship was first offered
14 through the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park. This annual scholarship of \$2,500 a
15 semester, or \$5,000 annually, is awarded to Virgin Islands youth attending college, at the
16 University of the Virgin Islands or another university. It is funded by a donation from an
17 anonymous couple who came to St. John for a stay at the Caneel Bay Resort in 1968. Noble
18 Samuel was a ranger at the National Park then, and generously shared his love for the park with
19 them with so much passion and humility that they fell in love with St. John. They wanted to
20 leave a legacy in Noble Samuel's name because he had spent his entire life learning and sharing
21 about St. John and becoming a source of encouragement to others, especially the young people
22 of the Virgin Islands; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Noble Samuel's compassion for his island was evident in his love for
24 people. He wanted to see young people succeed and mentored many. He was comfortable with
25 locals and tourists alike, the rich and struggling, and was always there to help. Although St.

1 John had changed from his days growing up, he always loved the uniqueness of his birthplace.
2 In his later years, he lived on St. Croix with his wife Barbara where he raised chickens, goats,
3 rabbits and pigs and had a big garden. A cousin who visited said he left St. John to go to St.
4 John. That's how important his "St. John life" was to him. He and his wife also travelled
5 extensively doing ministry work; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Noble Samuel attributed all of his success to his humble beginnings, his
7 faith in God and the close-knit family and community of St. John where he learned morals, a
8 strong work ethic and a sense of pride in himself and his heritage. Through the National Park
9 Service, he met wonderful people who enriched his life, and he was thankful for all his
10 blessings; Now, Therefore,

11 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

12 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
13 Islands, honors and commends the late former Senator and St. John Administrator, Noble
14 Samuel, posthumously for the many years and dedication he gave to the Virgin Islands National
15 Park, the inhabitants and visitors of St. John, and to the people of the Virgin Islands.

16 **SECTION 2.** The Centerline Road on St. John from the roundabout in Cruz Bay to the
17 Bordeaux Road entrance is renamed "Noble Samuel Drive".

18 **SECTION 3.** The Commissioner of the Department of Public Works shall provide for the
19 erection of appropriate signage in an appropriate location on Centerline Road bearing the
20 inscription "Noble Samuel Drive."

21 **SECTION 4.** (a) The sum of \$8,000 is appropriated for the fiscal year ending September
22 30, 2024, from the General Fund of the Virgin Islands to the Department of Public Works for
23 the erection of signage for the purpose set forth in section 3.

24 **SECTION 5.** In recognition and appreciation of his contributions to the people of the
25 Virgin Islands, the President of the Legislature or the President's designee shall have a perma

plaque copy of this Resolution prepared and presented to the family, or the family's designee,
of the late Noble Samuel, at an appropriate ceremony.

SECTION 6. Act No. 6280 section 1 is repealed, and section 2 is amended to read: “In honor of the Ernest Waymouth Marsh family’s contributions to the Territory, and Gerda N. Marsh’s outstanding contribution to the people of St. John, the Centerline Road on St. John running from the Bordeaux Road entrance to Coral Bay is hereby named “The Ernest Waymouth and Gerda Marsh Scenic Drive”.

BILL SUMMARY

Section 1 honors and commends Former Senator at Large Noble Samuel for his many years of dedicated service to the Virgin Islands National Park, the inhabitants and visitors to St. John, and to the people of the Virgin Islands. Section 2 renames Centerline Road on St. John from the roundabout in Cruz Bay to the Bordeaux Road entrance “Noble Samuel Drive”. Section 3 directs the Commissioner of Public Works to erect the appropriate signage to commemorate the event. Section 4 appropriates the sum of \$8,000 to fund the cost of the placement of the signage. Section 5 requires the Legislature to present a perma plaque copy of the act to the family of the late Noble Samuel at an appropriate ceremony. Section 6 repeals in part and amends in part Act 6280. Section 1 of that act names Centerline Road running from the Emmaus Moravian Church intersection to the Bordeaux Road entrance “The Marsh’s Scenic Highway”, in honor of Ernest Waymouth Marsh, and section 2 names Centerline Road from Coral Bay to Cruz Bay, "The Gerda N. Marsh Drive", in honor of Gerda N. Marsh. To ensure that this bill does not override both of those eponyms, section 1 of Act No. 6280 must be repealed, and section 2 amended to change the name of the roadway.

BR23-0332/May 2, 2023/ HLF