



| St. Croix Perma Plaque Ceremony

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0:00:00 This video is brought to you by S.T.A.R. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:03:00 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:04:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:06:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. do And we'll see you next time. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And here we go. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Let's go.

0:18:30 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, honorees, senators present, Good morning. I am Karel Sheridan, Executive Director of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and I will be your mistress of ceremony for today's program.

0:19:10 We welcome you to this prestigious perma plaque ceremony where we gather and recognize to honor outstanding individuals and organizations who have contributed and left an indelible mark on our community. Today, we celebrate the achievements and legacies of those who have dedicated their time, talent, passion and enriched the lives of others in our community and have inspired those not just here locally but abroad. Before we begin, I kindly request everyone present to rise for the occasion and the invocation led by our chaplain, Reverend Charles L. Brown, Jr., and remain standing as immediately following, we will have our national anthem and the Virgin Islands March. Reverend Brown.

0:20:06 Let every heart pray. On this 15th day of April, 2024, we begin the ceremony acknowledging the achievements of the permit plaque honorees by first invoking your presence, Lord God. For your word says that in your presence there is fullness of joy. And today we purposefully conjure up the spirit of joy because of the gifts and talents you have endowed in these men and women of honor who we recognize today. We give you glory and honor, Sovereign King, for the spirit of tenacity and commitment to excellence, evidence in their accomplishments. And we also invoke your presence,

Yahweh, because we want the example set by these honorees to be inspiration for hundreds, if not thousands, of Virgin Islanders to emulate. May their legacies motivate us to forever hold close to our Vesta motto that service is the rent we pay for the space that we occupy, high and that every single one of us must work the works of him who sent us while it is day because the night will come when no one will work but today in the ceremony Jehovah God let's celebrate and lift up one another help us to be compelled to push and challenge each other to bring forth the best versions of ourselves not for selfish vainglory but for the betterment of the territory and in response to all that you have done for us long after today Heavenly Father help us transfer this spirit of unity in the community into looking at our own lives and seeing how we can do our part to improve our islands not for paycheck or for vote but simply because we genuinely want better for our people this we ask in the strong righteous name of the one who sacrificed his life so that we could live abundantly. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

- 0:22:41 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. you may be seated please ensure that you have placed all cell phones on off or on vibrate for
- 0:25:28 this momentous occasion and thank you Reverend Brown for your inspiring words let us all be an inspiration to Virgin Islanders it is now my honor to present our esteemed Senate President Novelli Francis jr. who will share welcome remarks and formally recognize senators present Senate President Francis Pleasant good morning to everyone, and before we begin, I just want to ask for a moment as silent as we pay tribute to a former employee of the legislature, extended family member, Charles Charles James who passed away this weekend hearts are heavy today and we just want to pay tribute to him thank you very much a pleasant good morning a cruisian good morning to everyone welcome to the People's House the legislature of the Virgin Islands and Today, we're in the Fitz E. Lawitz conference room.
- 0:26:50 Morning, colleagues, former colleagues, family, friends, well-wishers. Of course, we have the former Delegate to Congress, Donna Christensen, with us today, as well as the Major General, Knox Limbaka, is also here today. Good morning. I'm honored to bring greetings on behalf the members of the 35th legislature and this occasion of honoring Virgin Islanders who have made outstanding and significant contributions to the betterment of not just St. Croix but the entire territory. Service and commitment have defined these award recipients. This spirit of community and service have been the driving force behind many of their accomplishments and I commend all all of the honorees today for their outstanding efforts to have positive effects on our community. I want to emphasize these individuals have not just talked the talk, they have walked the walk.
- 0:27:58 These honorees have exemplified how one's dreams can be accomplished through hard work, strength and character and dedication. I deeply admire and respect them all. I'm honored to congratulate today's honorees. William Balke, Jr. Alvin D. Burke, Sr. And if you could just stand while I call your name if you're here. And of course Alvin Burke, Sr. is being done posthumously. Donna Marie Christensen, M.D.
- 0:28:39 Command Sergeant Major General Major Charles David, Kemet Amon Lewis, Jose Julio Martinez, Rosalind Marr McFarlane, Joseph Almeida, Michelle Mecca Leong Smith, and of course Eugene Genix Thomas Thomas is also being done posthumously today, as well as Gloria H. Waterman on this most deserving recognition, a round of applause for these individuals.
- 0:29:23 We're also honoring collectively the achievements of the Virgin Islands National Guard, Shalita Shuster and Music and Motion of Higher Dance Education and the Virgin Islands Agriculture Food Fair, as well as the renowned St. Croix Majorettes. Round of applause for them as well. You may be seated.
- 0:29:52 Finally, we honor presumously the tremendous lifelong contributions of former Senator Edgar M. Iles, An event like this reminds us that those we are honoring today have helped weave the social fabric of this community and promote tradition of giving back. This honor today will stand as a testament of your exceptional record of public service and leadership. I also want to recognize the family of these individuals because while you make the sacrifice individually family members to endure those sacrifices a round of applause for all of the family members who have had to endure as their family member perform public service i just briefly want to talk a little bit about how we get to a promo plaque ceremony of course there's a recommendation a suggestion made or you recognize the contribution that being made by these individuals a senator then assume the responsibility of sponsoring a resolution to recognize those individuals in that resolution a lot of research goes into it where you put together the wherefore clauses again to make your case the bill is heard in Committee of Jurisdiction which is usually government operations. From there it's sent to the Committee of the Rules and Judiciary and again another vetting process goes through and eventually it comes for final consideration by the full
- 0:31:41 legislature during session. At that time all 15 senators have an opportunity to vote on that particular measure. Once that is done, the bill is signed and sent forward to the governor of the Virgin Islands, and not necessary for his approval, but at

least for his recognition and concurrence of that measure. Then it comes back, and of course that leads us to today, where we have a perma plaque ceremony. I want to also thank today's mistress of Ceremonies. Ms. Carell A. Sheridan and the Office of the Executive Director, the entire central staff of the Legislature and my senatorial staff are organizing this wonderful celebration of these exceptional individuals. We'll get an opportunity for the bill sponsor to touch briefly and each of the individuals are being considered here today and then of course we'll present them with the perma plaque and later on today then we'll celebrate a little bit in terms of these achievements. This is no easy feat. Often times the legislature get criticized for honoring and commending individuals in this community. If we don't do it, who will? So I'm resolute that in fact that these individuals that have gone through the vetting process and have arrived at this conclusion today are well-deserving of this recognition. God bless you. Thank you very much for being here thank you very much thank you very much president Francis for those words it's so very important for everyone to know what a process this has been and what an honor this is for the honorees so without further ado we have 16 honorees today let us proceed with the presentation of plaques to our respected honorees I want to let you know a little bit about

0:33:47 how what the process will be I will first read the short title of the resolution or the act and then I will welcome the primary sponsor to the podium to share a few words then the honoree will be invited to the podium to provide remarks as the honoree is making their way to the podium we ask that friends and family and supporters of the honoree stand the camera will pan your way so make sure you're smiling following remarks of the honoree one One official photo will be taken with the Senate president and measure sponsors, additional photo opportunities will be available following the official ceremony during the short reception. You can feel free to applaud as the honoree is coming to the podium. So let us begin.

0:34:34 First, we have the pleasure of honoring Alvin Delano Burke Sr. with resolution number 1889, a resolution honoring and commending Alvin Delano Burke Sr. posthumously for his service and contributions to the sport of basketball, horse racing, and the people of the Virgin Islands. The prime sponsor, the Honorable Kurt Aviale, we welcome you to the podium to say a few words on Resolution 1889.

0:35:13 Thank you and good morning, good morning to the honoree, good morning to the senators and morning to the people of the Virgin Islands. Before I speak about Mr. Burke, I want to piggyback just one second on what the Senate President said. are a way of documenting Virgin Islands history and we know it's very hard to find research on outstanding Virgin Islanders and I think I had a discussion with the Senate president last term that perhaps it's going to be important that the legislature produce something similar to profiles of the Virgin Islands in book form of all the resolutions that have been passed by the legislature so that individuals could research and be able to find the history of those who have served the Virgin Islands so I hope that we get to do that now to the family of mr. Burke and why he was honored You know, you read the short title, and it speaks about horse race, and it speaks about basketball. But when you actually read the resolution itself, the content, key to me is his educational background. Mr. Burke had a Bachelor of Science in community planning. How many individuals you know have a degree in community planning? Not much, and not committee planning alone, urban policy analysis and recreation administration. He went on to get a massive science degree in urban affairs with a concentration in land use law and administration, urban development, program management, and neighborhood revitalization. These are all the areas that we need right now. And from back in the 80s, Alvin Burke had acquired that educational background. Now, most people don't know him as Alvin. Most people think his first name was Baby. Because everybody called him Baby Burke forever. Those of us on the racetrack, in the gym, knew him as Baby Burke.

0:37:39 But he was an avid, avid sports fan. And his passion was basketball and horse racing. and he got deeply involved in both of those sports. In basketball, having Lakers and having teams from a very small age all the way up to men league, in horse racing, being the promoter of the racetrack, owning horses, training horses, having one of the best non-target we ever had or half, Reed Luigi, who went on to be a really, really good runner and traveled to St. Thomas back and forth.

0:38:16 So I think it was fitting that we document the life of Mr. Alvin Burke so that others that follow can see and be aware of his dedication to the people of the Virgin Islands, his dedication to the youths of St. Croix, his dedication to the sport of basketball and horse racing. So I congratulate Mr. Baby Burke and I extend congratulations to the family. Thank you very much, Senator VLA. We welcome Alvin Burke, Jr., who will accept this honor.

0:39:00 Family and supporters of the Burke family, please stand and be recognized. Good morning, everyone. I thought about what I really wanted to say today on behalf of my dad. A moment of truth, he would have probably hated the fact that he was getting honored today because he didn't do anything to be recognized.

0:39:37 He didn't do anything to be said, I did this, so I did that. He did this out of the kindness of his heart. I always said I embarrassed him, but he was a very honest man. My dad had ten children, four girls, five boys. And for those of you who count in, I'm my father's first son. And I always consider Shaggy Joseph Roy to be the older brother that he used to take

care of us, pick up us from school and stuff like that. My father believed in family more than anything else. With all the children that my father had, he never made any of us feel like we were different. um we picked us up on his ford bronco his old betsy truck you know and we go to the racetrack and gymnasiums and that's that's the life we live that's the life we live in and so playing basketball in the dark court um rishan got test that he used to call us 12 one o'clock in the morning and as Senator Viale said, if you have a basketball fan and you have a team on the West Coast, you know, like Lakers lose again. You know, that's our West Coast games and, you know, so, but what I like to also say that most importantly, not my dad alone, but there are so many different individuals who have given their time and just their efforts to make sure that, you know, they give back to the community without being recognized. And when I see people like David Iceman Bermudez or Basie Gonzalez, and these people who have been involved in sports, and that's not sports, music, you know, I see my good friend Al-Baptiste Jr., he gave back to the Jr. Calypsonians, and people like King Dobby, Shalita Shuster, who have been doing it for the last 40 years with Music in Motion, they don't ask for these things. They don't start it out asking to be recognized. They just do it because it has to be done, you know? So, and I appreciate you all, and congratulations to all the honorees. Thank you for my family, my father's brothers and sister in the back, and his nephew, and I appreciate everybody. So, like, when we give, we give from our heart. We don't expect to be rewarded it or anything and thank you for the time and congratulations again to the rest of the family although the honorees and I appreciate everyone for for being

0:42:20 here and and congratulations again Thank you. So that's after, after. Thank you.

0:44:10 Thank you, supporters, also for being here. Next, we have the honor of recognizing William Bulkey Jr. with Act 8088, an act honoring and commending William Bulkey Jr. for his assistance in the introduction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration hurricane hunters, as well as his numerous contributions towards the Virgin Islands through his business and philanthropic efforts.

0:44:49 The late Senator Alicia Chuckie Hanson sponsored this act. Therefore, the Senate President, Novell Francis, Jr., will speak to Act 8088. Thank you very much, Mistress of Ceremony, and again, this honor goes to William Bulkey, Jr., and in addition to Senator Hanson being the sponsor in this, she was also signed off on by Senator Brian Smith, as well as co-sponsored by Senator Tregenza Roach, and of course all other senators certainly approved this measure.

0:45:32 It is my pleasure to introduce Mr. William Bulkey, Jr., a man who is not a Virgin Islander by birth but has the heart of the Virgin Islands in place. An American Airlines pilot for 38 years, Bill could have lived anywhere in the world but chose the Virgin Islands and continue to choose the Virgin Islands. Bill is honored today for his integral role in introducing the Hurricane Hunters to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the territory and persuading the Hurricane Hunters to relocate to the U.S. Virgin Islands to monitor Hurricane Maryland. Since then, the information gained by the Hurricane Hunters have been critical to our ability to prepare for storms and also reassure us during those critical times. Bill is deserving of every accolade many gained during his professional career, including the Spirit of an American Award in 2002, the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009, the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2013, and Sophia Pegasus Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018.

0:46:53 He's a generous person, as evident by his many philanthropic causes that he supports. What I appreciate most in his unwavering commitment to the territory's aviation industry. Bill has monitored and trained so many of our territory's pilots, ensuring that Virgin Islands in aviation will continue to thrive. I'm honored to present William Bulkey Jr. for this perma plaque ceremony today. Thank you, Senator. Good morning to each and every one of you.

0:47:36 This year makes 60 years that I've been flying back and forth between St. Thomas and St. Croix. I've flown your grandfather, grandfather, grandmother, grandparents, uncles, aunts, senators, governors, just everybody, and I've enjoyed every minute of it. Yes, I'm not born here, but I've been here for 65 years now, so that makes me almost a native, not quite but my my my children were born here um my grandkids are born here and this is my home st croix and i want to i want to thank the virgin islands for all the help that they've helped everybody in getting their education in aviation we have several as senator said earlier Several pilots that have gone on to be airline pilots that I trained. And it just, aviation has been my life.

0:48:45 We've helped people in emergencies in the middle of the night, flying people off the island, on the island, every place. But I've got to thank the one person, it's my wife. every every fourth day I would go on a trip with American I'd say bye I'll see you and whenever and she always she always kept the the fire lit and kept the island going and and did whatever she needed to and she's dedicated and she's been on the island even longer than me she got here in 1959. So she's not born here either, but she's as close to it as she can be. So I want to thank everybody, everybody that's here today for honoring both Tutti and I, because it's Tutti, it's half hers as it is my award. So thank you very much. Thank you. We'll go have the official photo right there in the front.

- 0:49:53 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:51:14 We now turn our attention to Command Sergeant Major Charles David, retired with resolution number 1894 a resolution to honor and commend command sergeant major charles david retired for his service to the virgin islands national guard prime sponsor the honorable senate president isn't going to get a break from this podium today novelle e francis jr we welcome you back to the program to say a few words on resolution 1894 thank you mistress of ceremony sergeant major charles david the best legislation originates from the community i'm honored to partner with the former members of the Virgin Islands National Guard in bringing this measure to the floor. Carolyn Fox, Burris Ford Edwards, Brian O'Reilly embodied the soldiers' creed, meaning they did not quit in their efforts to honor Command Sergeant Major Charles David.
- 0:52:29 Command Sergeant Major David's life is defined by his service. He's a native son who was born in St. Croix in 1948 and graduated from the Christenstead High School in 1966. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1968, which was the start of his life in service to the people of this territory and the nation. David has served longer than some people in this room have been alive. That's what you call a commitment to service.
- 0:53:03 Over 50 years of service. Command Sergeant Major David earned multiple awards and decorations. His legacy, however, goes beyond the length of his service and extends to his continued involvement in the American Legion and mentorship to the veterans of this territory. In the years to come, St. Croix will also see the benefit of our designation as the National heritage area something that Donna led the ground work for while serving in Congress oh wow that's a little skip over you know so there's again command sergeant major David thank you for your contribution he was instrumental in a number of veterans day parades all the booklets that you have seen over the years you know he certainly have prepared those booklets I see my former boss here second you know Roman Cruz who's also a veteran and I know you're part of the the American Legion and certainly here to support Sergeant Major David can his family please stand. Thank you so much for your service, second to none. We appreciate you. We love you. Take care of yourself and here's the mic. I know that you want to say a few words. Good morning. Thank you all for this honor. just a few words notice some of the personnel who they call who was responsible for sponsoring of this bill it seemed like all of them got got other important mission to do and they are not presently here with us today but i know they've been fighting for this um bill for some time I'd just like to thank the personnel who selected my name, or selected me, and as indicated, I've been with the National Guard, the American Legion, anything to do with veterans for quite some time. And it's my job, like I said, my duty to help all veterans of the Virgin Islands and make make sure that we continue to progress on. Let's go together with the Army National Guard and the American Legion. Again, thank you all for the presentation and thank you.
- 0:56:09 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And we will continue honoring the National Guard as we honor the Virgin Islands National Guard with resolution number 1907, a resolution honoring and commemorating the Virgin Islands
- 0:58:07 National Guard on the commemoration of its 50th anniversary. The prime sponsor, the Honorable Marie C. James, we welcome you to the podium. Thank you. Good morning, Virgin Islands. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning everyone in the room and especially the honorees. Good morning. When I first got tricked into joining the Virgin Islands National Guard, because they needed an attorney, and came on topics, and I saw, I see Colonel Maturin Lee, she was one of those people, who came on topics, Channel 12, and said, we need a, we need a JAG.
- 0:58:58 And I said to the audience, anyone who wants to join the National Guard, they need an attorney. they all looked at me on TV and said, what about you? And then I was like, okay, if I'm encouraging people, I have to do it. One of the first persons that I met was, and she's actually here, Major Sweeney, who said to me, I'm your commander. And I went, okay, because I had no idea what a commander was. I didn't know anything. And when I went to JAG school and they said, you know what a soldier is? And I was like, okay, we're lawyers here. And they were like, no, a soldier is somebody who's trained to kill and I went oh I think I'm in the wrong place but I had the I had the honor and the privilege of serving some of the best people in the Virgin Islands best people good people who came into the guard you know we have army values and we have Air Force values but a lot of these people came in with values that they got from their parents values that we had in this community oh I see I see come on Sergeant Major Mona Barnes who's here also people who just gave of themselves and so when I learned that we were celebrating 50 years. It was and remains an honor and a privilege for me to have sponsored this resolution.
- 1:00:36 You know, I was looking at some quotes and I think it's good for people to know less than 1% of our population serves in the military. And for the Virgin Islands, when I joined, it was accurate. It were about 800. It's now declined because we've lost people just leaving Island we as we know we have a declining population but I want to encourage young men and women out there to consider the Virgin Islands National Guard as a place where you can be educated trained and become a better person and one of the things that you need to realize is that I saw a really good quote freedom of freedom of the press doesn't come from the media it comes from the men and women who serve in the military freedom of speech

doesn't come from the poets and authors out there it comes from the men and women who serve in the military the freedom to demonstrate doesn't come from the people you see organizing out there. Those freedoms come from the men and women who serve in the military and give their lives to defend those freedoms. And rarely in the Virgin Islands, and I'm going to say standing up right here, rarely in the Virgin Islands, while I was serving, did I hear people in this community say to us thank you for your service and yet every single place I went in the United States every state and in Puerto Rico they always said to us thank you for your service. So I hope going forward when you see someone, whether it's the tag with his two stars or an enlisted member with the little, what do they call it, a mosquito? Whatever it is, right? Thank them for their service and be grateful that we have men and women who decided to join the military and so General, Major

1:03:04 General Knox Limbacher, on behalf of the 35th legislature, you will notice that all my colleagues joined in this. We thank you and the men and women of the Guard and Simon David, everybody who's in here who served in the military, we thank you and served in the Virgin Islands National Guard. God bless the Virgin Islands National Guard, and God bless the Virgin Islands. Thank you.

1:03:46 Pleasant good morning everyone. As I stand here before you pretty much humbled and extremely honored to be accepting this particular recognition in the Virgin Islands National Guard, and particularly as we look at this esteemed body that's actually recommended in all the sponsors, when you look through that brochure, almost every single senator of the 35th legislature supported this effort, whether sponsored or co-sponsored. But as the cameraman will look, just pan the cameras out to that audience.

1:04:22 So the audience you see out there is the people of the Virgin Islands, and this is the reason why we serve every single day. It's an honor to be able to put on this uniform and serve with people like Sergeant Major David, who's technically been serving longer than I've been alive, and to sit here and actually received such kind words from was Major Maurice James now Senator Maurice James and all the co-sponsors and understand what this really means so we often look at the conch shell blower down on all three islands and that is the call the call one to defend the nation to defend our Caribbean islands that I have taken on to be the Minuteman of the Virgin Islands and we We thank every one of the educators, leaders, military, policemen, and everyone in the community, senators, congressmen, who have cleared a path for us to continue to lead. I have the fortunate timing to be 52 years old, to have grown up with a guard that's now 50 years old, so I've actually had the opportunity to continue to now ensure this will be left for another 50, 200 years of excellence within the territory. So as we speak today, our National Guard men and women are on the plane. Actually, they're en route to their individual weapons qualifications, where they're going to learn to be highly trained killers there, Cinder. So we know our primary mission is to fight and win our nation's wars, and we stand at an inflection point in the world right now. And I want you to thank you for trusting us with your sons and daughters, but understand at any given time, we will stand ready. We will board the planes and we will show up on a battlefield anywhere in the world to fight and win our nation's wars. And so we'll continue to be a ready, relevant and responsive joint force and thank this entire 35th legislature and the people of the Virgin Islands for the opportunity to continue to serve and all the veterans here inside. Thank you for your service. Thank you, your family's sacrifice. And we look forward for great things and a long, long legacy of excellence within the Virgin Islands. Thank you.

1:06:48 Anyone who has served in the military, if you could join for the photo. Thank you. Is that all right? Thank you for your time.

1:08:32 Next, we honor the late Eugene Jennings Thomas with Resolution 1888, a resolution honoring and commending Eugene Jennings Thomas posthumously for his outstanding contributions to the Virgin Islands community as a baseball, softball, and life coach. The prime sponsor, the Honorable Curt VLA, we welcome you to say a few words on Resolution Once again, good morning.

1:09:16 Good morning to the family of Genex, who is known as one of the great power households out of the Tonga of Fredrickson. You can't mistake and say he called from Christian Stead. But somebody from Christensen honoring this good individual from Frederiksen. I had the, Frankie right behind me. I had the opportunity to know GeneX for a very, very long period of time. Again, true horse racing.

1:09:50 Horse racing allows you to meet a lot, a lot of people. And then through softball, because he was always known as one of the greatest pitching coach on the island of St. Croix. And then I was transferred to Arthur Richards in 2011, and Genix was still going strong. And Jennifer Brady was then working with me, and she brought on Genix to be one of the coach for the girls' softball team. I used to practice them every lunchtime and after school. And it's then that I saw the real dedication that he brought to the sport. And I think some of our greatest female softball pitchers that are still alive right now were trained by GeneX. But GeneX was multifaceted because along with being in sports, he used to write.

- 1:10:42 He used to write a lot of poems. And I think that he has a number that were published. And we included some of them in the Resolution, Divine Guidance, Ode to Maria, Life, Love, Prosti, Learning the Hard Way, and many, many, many more. He believed in the development of anything local. And when he got into horse racing, he was not one to buy an imported horse. An imported horse are really horses that come from the mainland. We purchase them. We bring them here.
- 1:11:17 Genex believed in developing local thoroughbreds. He would breed and raise horses right here in St. Croix. I had an opportunity to attend his funeral. And at his funeral, it was a strange occurrence. Because in the graveyard were this group of guys that were on non-tourbred horses, looking at the funeral ceremony. And I said, said what are those guys doing with those horses and one of them told me he trained every single one of us he taught us how to take care of animals and the importance of commitment and dedication so to the family of GeneX hats off congratulations great Frederick Stetter as Mario would say he come from the tongue of Frederick said so you know he must be great so congratulations to the family of GNX and his representative is here his son morning that's right Frederick Stetter Crucian Virgin Islander as the book says a nostalgic journey with Eugene GNX Thomas available on Amazon right now On behalf of my family, the Thomas family, I'd like to say to Senator Vele, thank you for sponsoring this resolution, along with your fellow senators, definitely the family is very happy that you guys have honored my dad. Growing up in Frederickstead, everyone knows that you could find my dad, Genex, on the field in Frederickstead, whether it's the Polly Joseph Stadium or the small ballpark. In many instances, he would actually pick players up from their homes and take them to the ballpark. One of the things that stand out is what you learn on the baseball field, or on the softball field.
- 1:13:46 We learn motivation, we learn determination, we learn working as a team, and we learn perseverance. We also learn you win sometimes and you lose sometimes, and how to carry that on throughout know your career as a student or as an adult and I can see what comes to mind when the resolution was presented to the legislature I see command sergeant major Mona Barnes here and she spoke about what he meant to her growing up we We also heard from Dr. Merlin Theodore, who is the director at the Oak Ridge National Lab on the mainland, and from other individuals who he meant a lot to.
- 1:14:45 And he didn't say much, but on the field, you understood exactly what he was about. would prefer to actually put his words on paper as an avid poet and you know definitely he had a lot to see when he put stuff on paper so on behalf of the family I'd like to say you know thank you for this honor and I know that the one thing he would like to see is for in Frederickstead for that ballpark to be finish. He was very serious about that and right now you know you pass by that area. What I ask of you guys in the legislature is to at least find out when we can see Frederickstead transformed back into having a small ball field and and a big ball field in Frederickstead, where other coaches, you know, I would go as far to say he not only affected hundreds of lives, but thousands of lives in these communities, you know, in the Virgin Islands community. So we just asked for the ballpark to be restored, you know, in Frederickstead, and I'm glad, you know, I'm quite sure my dad would be happy to see that. Thank you very much.
- 1:16:50 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Next, we have the pleasure of honoring Gloria Kanagata-Waterman, Act No. 8557, a resolution honoring and commending Gloria H. Kanagata-Waterman for her outstanding years of service.
- 1:18:50 to the Virgin Islands community as an educator and public servant through various organizations. The prime sponsor, the Honorable Kenneth L. Gittins, is unable to join us this morning. He extends his heartfelt congratulations to his and all the honorees, but for the devastating occurrence over the weekend he would be here today. So in his stead, we have the Honorable Alicia Barnes, former senator, who will join us here at the podium to say a few words on Act number 8557. Thank you. Good morning everyone. This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and we will be glad in it commendations to all of the honorees greetings to my former colleagues and members of the 35th legislature it is indeed an honor for me to stand here this morning to extend and say a few words on behalf of my mentor Gloria H.C. Waterman, my soror. And I want to begin by stating that Gloria left here in 1954 to attend Hampton University, at the time Hampton Institute, and she was inducted into Beta Kappa Chi which was no small feat. And if we could think about that time, leaving St. Croix to go to school in Virginia, how challenging, how intimidating that may have been. And she went there and she excelled. Not only was she a member of Beta Kappa Chi, but she was initiated into the Gamma Theta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority at Hampton Institute at the time. Again, no small feat. Gloria Waterman served 16
- 1:21:14 years as superintendent of schools on St. Croix, appointed to that position by Governor Evans, and she was responsible for constructing six schools here on St. Croy, a time when the Department of Education was going through significant transition in terms of having to accept more students into the public school system. And she oversaw all of that capital construction and improvement. She was simply, in my words, a bad mama-jama. I loved her dearly. And on a personal note, I want to talk about when I first encountered Gloria Canigata at the time. She was superintendent of schools and I was a young student in the public education system. And when I saw her walk into Alfredo Andrews school and the respect that she commanded the way she carried herself I was in awe as all of the female students were to see someone

black like us confident strutting and everyone just stood back in awe the reverential awe I will never forget. It left an indelible mark on me, so I researched her at that very young age. I learned that she went to Hampton Institute, so now when it was time for me to go to school, I applied to one school, Hampton University. I learned that she was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha

1:23:13 Alpha Sorority Incorporated. And when I walked on Hampton's campus, I knew I was going to be initiated into the Gamma Theta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. I'm saying that to say, you never know who's looking. You never know whose life you're going to impact. Live a life of excellence as Gloria did. She impacted us in so many ways. from teaching us basic culinary skills, basic homemaking skills, basic protocol skills. She lived a life, she taught us, she was a true, true mentor of Virgin Islands, shero in every sense of the word. And I really have to echo the sentiments of Senator Kurt Viale. When we passed resolutions to honor our Virgin Islands heroes and sheroes. It's just not a whimsical act, but we are truly, we are truly paying tribute and homage to those persons who have truly demonstrated a life of public service, of excellence, and who have left a legacy for us to follow. So congratulations to the family. I want to thank them for the opportunity to speak and thank you, President Francis, for the opportunity to speak on this measure. Of course, this measure started in the 33rd legislature, but because of COVID, we weren't able to get it across the finish line. So I want to thank the primary sponsor, Senator Kenneth Gittins, for being able to bring this through, and all of the members of the 34th legislature who passed this resolution. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity.

1:25:14 Thank you. I believe that we have a representative here, Mr. Harold Brown III. Welcome you. Would you like to say a few words? Good morning. Nothing gets the juices flowing like an impromptu public speaking opportunity.

1:25:45 But as you know, this honor is for my grandmother. By the time I was here and I was able to realize what's going on around me, her prime years of public service were already behind her so I know my grandmother mostly as a loving grandmother who could shop all day can't wait for Christmas so she could make tarts and coquito and things like that but it's unfortunate but I'm grateful that even in her passing I'm able to learn more about her years of public service how much she meant to the territory, how much she cared about her home. So on behalf of me and my family and the friends of my grandmother, I'd like to say thank you for the honor.

1:26:41 Mr. Brown, you're a public speaker. You learned that from grandma. Thank you. Three, one, two, three.

1:27:54 Next, we honor Joseph Olmeyda with resolution 1815, a resolution honoring and commending Joseph Olmeyda for his dedication and service to the people of the Virgin Islands. The next honor was primarily sponsored by deceased Senator Alicia Chucky Hansen. Therefore, the Honorable Senator Samuel Carrion, we welcome you to the podium to speak to this resolution. Good morning to all. Such an auspicious occasion this morning.

1:28:42 morning. And on behalf of the late Honorable Alicia Chucky Hansen, we are presenting the resolution number 1815, a resolution honoring and commanding Mr. Joseph Olmeda for his dedication and service to the people of the Virgin Islands. Today we gathered to honor an individual whose lifetime service has and left an edible mark on the beloved community of St. Croix. It's a great pride that we reflect on the resolution passed in 2014 by the late Senator Alicia Chucky Hanson. Senator Hanson was not only a terrorist advocate for our community but also a beacon of dedicated service and leadership. Her work continues to inspire us all. We're here to recognize Mr. Joel Meda. It is no surprise that Senator Hanson chose to recognize Mr. Olmeda. He symbolizes and represents the spirit of community service and entrepreneurship. Having made St. Roy his home for over 50 years, Mr. Olmeda has become a part of our local economy and a champion for the well-being of its people. His tenure at the Governor Juan Luis Hospital exemplifies his dedication where he ensured that all patients received the quality care they deserved. Beyond his professional commitments, Joe, who we know affectionately, call him so, involved in numerous community organizations and has garnered him well-deserved accolades, including the Community Activist Award,

1:30:30 Outstanding Activist in the Democratic Party Award, and the Congressional Recognition Award for outstanding and invaluable service to the community, which was bespoke to him in 2003 by the Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress, Donna Christensen. This honor are a testament to the character and impact of a man we celebrate today. Unfortunately, Mr. Olmeda could not join us in person as he is currently off island seeking medical attention.

1:31:06 Instead, I have been graciously provided and shared with you his information, which I just shared. Let us take a moment to appreciate the profound legacy of Mr. Omeda, his life work, and continue that continues to inspire and motivate us all to strive for excellence and service in our community. Thank you. Mr. Omeda's representative and goddaughter who works here at the legislature, Ana Castillo, will say a few words. Thank you. I just want to say good morning, and you all are a good-looking audience. And on behalf of Mr. Omeda, I accept this plaque and promise as soon as he gets here, because he's away, I'll make sure I get it to him.

- 1:31:55 Thank you so much. Thank you.
- 1:32:55 Next, we are delighted to honor Jose Julio Martinez, better known as Papi Love, with resolution 1893, a resolution honoring and commending Jose Julio Martinez, better known as Papi Love, for his outstanding contributions as a radio talk show host, educating and entertaining the people of the Virgin Islands. The prime sponsor, the honorable Samuel Carrion, we welcome you back to the podium to say a few words on a resolution 1893 good morning once again mr. Julio Martinez better known as poppy love it's no stranger to our community resolution number 1893 honors him for his contribution as a radio talk show host educating and entertaining the people of Virgin Islands. Today is my distinct honor to stand before you as we recognize a truly remarkable individual whose voice has become very familiar to many in our community. We're here to celebrate the invaluable contributions of Mr. Jose Julio Martinez, affectionately known to many of us as Papi Love, through his prestigious resolution. Papilove, in 2002, started what we today know as Latino Radio Station, and has not only entertained us with his charisma and wit as a radio talk show host, but also played a crucial role in educating and engaging the Hispanic community and everyone in the Virgin Islands. His dedication extends beyond the airwaves.
- 1:34:42 He was the owner of a TV station, multiple radio stations, and something that many people don't know, he is a musician, formed the first steel band in Vieques, Puerto Rico. He's also a successful entrepreneur whose radio station has become a vital source of information connecting and empowering our community on a daily basis. Many of us hear the legislative sessions through his radio station, 91.9 FM. Furthermore, Mr. Jose's commitment to civic engagement is evident in his active participation in various community organizations like Happy Faces and Spanish Carita Alegre, which serves families of children who are in need of medical assistance, providing donations and support for their travel and medical expenses. His tireless effort and general concern for the welfare of others have earned him a well-deserved recognition for his community work. Today as we honor Papi Love, we celebrate not just a community activist or a successful entrepreneur, but a steadfast friend and mentor to many. His work has not only informed us, but has uplifted and united the Virgin Islands, bridging culture, gaps, and nurturing a community that values knowledge, understanding, and information.
- 1:36:11 Let us express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Papilove for his outstanding contributions to the Virgin Islands. Jose, your dedication inspires us all, and your impact will resonate for generations to come. Thank you, Papilove, for your unwavering service and compassion, and your advocacy in doing for the love of our community. Thank you. And English or Spanish? English. Well, let's see. This is the first time, first than nothing. Good morning, everyone.
- 1:37:02 let's see how I can read this thank you to this honorable legislature for this honoring I would like to say briefly two things first since 23 years ago my radio station air and from that time we serve not only the Spanish community we all the Virgin Islands in general in many many many occasion free of charge second we would like to share this honoring with you the senators that during 13 years has trust the broadcast of the section and that helped me to to help others. Thank you, and may all receive the blessing of God.
- 1:38:29 Thank you. Next, we will have Resolution 1887, which honors and commands Kemet Ahmad Lewis for outstanding service and contributions to the marine science industry in the Virgin Islands.
- 1:39:32 The Prime Sponsor, the Honorable Kurt Ville, we welcome you back to the podium for the final time today. Good morning, once again. not someone that many individuals know, Kemet Amman Lewis. I had an opportunity to meet him years back when I was serving as the principal of the Sinkra Educational Complex. We had a math science summer program. Here was this local individual that would come back and and speak to the students on a regular basis, and that was fully immersed in marine biology.
- 1:40:19 Avid scuba diver, great presenter, great motivator to the students. So I began to do a little research on him as to exactly what was Mr. Kemet Lewis involved in. Kemet holds a bachelor and master's of science degree in marine science from Savannah State University. He worked as a resource ecologist in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources Coastal Zone Management Program, but the most important part that got me turned on to Kemet was Kemet's career as a coral conservation manager. We all know how important it is to preserve coral reef. He led to the development of coral reef restoration programs across the Caribbean and throughout the world. One of Kemet Grady's achievement has been applying these best practices of coral restoration and using them as a template for assisting Cuba and China in developing their coral nurseries. Another notable achievement in 2017 was witnessing the natural reproduction of corals that he and his team planted in Green Key in 2012 and the St. Croix conservation effort with coral replanting and seeding, a lot of the research comes from Kemet Lewis. So right within our midst, we are this local Virgin Islander going above and beyond in being able to preserve the ecology of the Virgin Islands. What really got me more excited about offering a resolution was that Kemet contacted this rare disease many years ago in which many thought that he would not have been able to

- 1:42:17 bounce back. Very rare. I won't go into details, but he bounced back. He never stopped. He never stopped his commitment and dedication to learning, to sharing, to everything else you could think about. pillar of commitment to the Virgin Islands as to not letting anything, anything, keep you from moving forward. So I'm happy to be here today to meet Kemet family and to be able to present this resolution. Congratulations to Kemet, Amman Lewis, who is also an environmental advocate, a scuba diver, a tennis player, a choreographer, a world traveler, a photographer, a son, a brother, and a beloved friend to many. Congratulations, Kemit.
- 1:43:12 And his father, Eric A. Thomas Sr. is here to say a few words. Good morning all, my name is Eric Thomas Sr. I'm Kemet uncle, and I'm very proud that my sister Maria, who's sitting in the back, asked me to come and receive this award on Kemet's behalf.
- 1:43:45 now he's taking care of some stuff he was unable to make it down here so I'm elected like the former senator was saying Kemet has been through a lot in his life one of the things that he's taught a lot of us is to believe in God and never ever ever give up you know that you're gonna find some tough times in your life and most of the time when that happens you get ready to give up and throw in the towel all you need to do is step back for a hot second take a deep breath, ask God for help, and move forward and you'll get it done. I thank everybody that was responsible for this award on behalf of Kemet and my family.
- 1:44:54 God bless you all and have a great day. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Now we will have a captivating dance performance by Markemaia Cargile presented by Carlita Schuster and the Music in Motion School of Higher Dance Education as a tribute to all
- 1:47:35 of our honorees. And do you still swim in your thoughts? Do you still mistake your flaws for property?
- 1:48:13 Something that just don't sit right with you But heaven knows, heaven knows Your wings can weigh you down But angels make a way somehow And if we fall, we fall alone The black girl here, black girl with the black girl here Took a little sun kiss just to look like this God said you're an angel, angel, angel, angel, angel I'm a big deal I get sick and tired of holding it in rich blood probably see the Cold in my skin I'm more than a girl Won't let the troubles of the world Come wave me down But angels make a way somehow But if we fall, we fall apart Black girl, yeah, black girl With a black girl, yeah Took a little sun kiss Just to look like this God said you're an angel Angel, angel, angel, angel I know that you're a love They know you're an angel Angel, angel, angel
- 1:50:03 Some might hate and they wait on you for They don't know there's a grace for it all My flaws don't make me beautiful and real Are you fake and not compare? Are you perfectly a masterpiece and only Even my scars Even my scars Black girl hair, black girl with the black girl hair Took a little sun kiss just to look like this God said you're an angel Angel Angel, angel, angel Hello, angel, a .., Industrial, inexpensive Layer, you're an angel Angel, angel, angel Thank you so much, Ms. Cargill.
- 1:51:25 That was a beautiful, beautiful tribute to all of our honorees. We love it. So much talent here in the Virgin Islands. Young, old, everyone is just so, so talented. We are all at the top of our games here in the Virgin Islands. And we thank you, our honorees, for inspiring those around us to continue to excel in whatever craft that they so choose. Now we turn our attention to Michelle Micah Leone Smith as we honor her with Resolution 1898, a resolution honoring and commending Michelle Micah Leone Smith for her outstanding performance in track and field and her contributions to the Virgin Islands community as a sports ambassador. Prime sponsor, the Honorable Kurt VLA. We welcome you to the point.
- 1:52:16 Now is for the final thing. Thank you, and good morning again. Since I wrote this resolution and all our colleagues co-sponsored the resolution, you guys need to amend it. And I think you're going to need to amend it for the next probably 10 years in which this young lady just continue to excel. This is a great, great student athlete beating the Jamaicans. And not beating them by a whisker, as I might say, but beating them far. I don't know if anybody played a YouTube video of her last race at, it's Karifta, right?
- 1:53:13 Karifta Games in Grenada. And she was like second or third, trailing right behind. When they get ready for the last lap, Michelle took off. It was amazing because I was saying one of the Jamaicans are going to try to stay with her. But she just began to widen the distance and widen. and once again represented the Virgin Islands two gold medals and a bronze two gold medals sometimes we don't understand the gravity of being able to achieve a gold medal against the best track and field athletes not in the Caribbean literally in the world because as we know the Jamaicans have been at the forefront and the leaders in track and field forever for a long period of time and Michelle beating them and she's beating them in their age group and she just moved up this year to under 20 she's 17 right okay she's 17 and beating the best in the world in under 20 so I'm looking forward to this young lady moving on to the Olympics I seriously believe that this is one of our best prospect to win an Olympic medal in the near future if not this year definitely you can imagine 2028 no but

- 1:55:00 imagine 2028 when she's 22 years old 21 22 years old and continuing to run at the level that she's running we have a very good chance of winning a gold medal and not in a regional game in the olympics so hats off to the dedicated parents who also serve as coaches for the track and field federation the mom who travel with her on a regular basis dad who is also a local coach but i think the story of michelle emphasize the need for the virgin islands to put money and resources into the development of our local athletes and i'm done quickly now because imagine michelle left the virgin islands during covid um yes okay i'm not gonna ask you any more questions i'll ask the mom Um, you definitely, um, don't answer no more, please, Ms. Keats.
- 1:55:59 Michelle left during COVID to go to high school in Florida, correct? They were running while we were shut down. Our sporting program was closed, shut. And she left and went to the mainland and continued to run, continued to train, and continued to compete. And now she's one of the best. not every child had the opportunity so how many lost out and that ability but today isn't a day for that today's Michelle D so I really want to congratulate you guys she's an excellent excellent track star and she's the most humble individual you could barely get five words out of her if she was here she'd have probably just said thank you now her dad is something else but that would be a different story well congratulations Michelle Smith you're a rising star and I wanted to be the first to honor you so that when you get the Olympics you could remember that I honored you and perhaps invite you to one of the games. Thank you so much.
- 1:57:00 We invite her father Mr. Keith Smith to the podium. Good morning everyone and good morning to all the honorees the senators in the house. I first want to start with thank you thank you Lord for this wonderful occasion for giving us the opportunity to honor you with our talent I want to also thank my wife that is always be you know there with all the stats all the information I need all the support and my mother who has been able to guide and nurture me and send me off to the you know every day to school and to play in the woods of Annalee knowing that you know with faith I'll come back home after all my near misses and almost dying situations so thank you if Michelle was here she would say thank you to her roommate Adesha Hodge from Totola she would say thank you to all all her elementary teachers here in the territory, especially Coach Lewis at Ulla Rivera's school, coach at that school. She would say thank you to each and every one of you because she says every day, this is hard work and it's so gratifying to know that people appreciate what you do for the Virgin Islands. When she's asked, why don't you run for the U.S., she says, smiling, and I have to compete against you? I can run from my home, St. Croix, and the Virgin Islands, and that's where we look at in terms of saying, hey, she's a true Virgin Islander in all the sense of the words.
- 1:58:49 Her integrity, her hard work, her perseverance is evidence, like Coach, I mean, Mr. Viale said, he says, you know, She wouldn't say a word. She prefers to leave her mark on the track and say very little. You know, one story. During the hurricanes of Irma Maria, she and I were the only ones in the house, and we battled the hurricanes. After the hurricanes, we worked for eight straight days from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., cutting and clearing bush from our road to get out of the rainforest, or our little circle to get to the mahogany road. And when I say we work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., I mean we took maybe a half an hour lunch, but she was there with me through thick and thin, and that's the kind of dedication she has for the Virgin Islands. And she wants to represent the Virgin Islands to the best of her ability. If she doesn't feel like she's qualified, or she is not ready, she doesn't want to go. She wants to know that whenever she goes somewhere and she puts on that ISV, Islas Berthanes, she represents the Virgin Islands to the best of her ability. And I am thankful for the honor, and she's also thankful for the honor. And I say, God bless you all. I appreciate, and she appreciates it as well. Thank you.
- 2:00:59 Thank you. Next we pose obviously honor Rosalind Maude McFarlane with resolution 1897 to honor and commend Rosalind Vaughn McFarlane for her contributions to the Virgin Islands community and specifically as an advocate of independent living for people with disabilities. Prime sponsor the Honorable Franklin D. Johnson we welcome you to the podium to say a few words on resolution number 1897. Good morning thank you very much. Good morning to my colleagues, good morning to the viewing and listening audience and good morning to this beautiful audience you guys made me feel so proud when i walk in there this morning with the honor of standing up for me to walk inside this legislature it was a pleasure and an honor but i i must say when i met roslyn was through a good friend of mine's sonny barnes and i need to say this story because it really touched me after a while. It touched me every day. Sonny Barnes told me about Ms. McFarlane prior to me building my house and her works and her effort for the disabled. When I built the house, Sonny said to me,
- 2:02:59 Frankie, I want to come by the house. Do you have a ramp? He said, Sonny, we need a ramp. Lo and behold, before I actually fully moved into my home, I had two severe pinched nerves in my neck. and if I didn't do a surgery I would have been a quadriplegic it was a very touching and scary moment for me because we walk every day and we think that we gonna be strong we'll be able to do everything on our own help ourselves all the time and those were some very scary moment for me realizing that I can be paralyzed from my neck down when the doctor explained that to me the only thing happened was tears and he said you want me to stop I said no you continue talking my car these stairs ain't going to stop

to God be the glory I'm standing tall up to today I say that's to say all that Miss McFarland is the person that look out for people with these challenges she put her entire life her entire earning to make sure that folks that has physical or visual challenge was able to succeed and live on their own. Some of them learn how to do read braids, some of them learn how to even figure out their money. But not only did she do that, she made sure that MASH, Mutual Aid Self-Help, an organization that's national, came to the Virgin Islands. She formulated that group, they formulate the entire body. She didn't stop there. Every year, Ms. McFarlane organized the White Cane Day with the Lions. And I made a pledge from the day I met her that every year I will be a supporter of this event. They do it down in Fredericton by McFarlane Tower where all the folks with visual disability will come out with a white cane and we walk a block in the town of Fredericton. I thank her and her family all the effort and the time that she have put into folks with disability. Ms. McFarlane never quit on those people and I say to each and every one of you when you see someone with that challenge make sure that you lend a helping hand because you never know what tomorrow brings for none of us and I must say to all the honorees I congratulate all of you guys this is always a unique and personal time for the legislature. I want to piggyback a little bit on what the president said because this morning my office received a call. The call that we receive is, you all keep honoring the same people. These people are honored

2:05:42 already. People didn't realize and doesn't understand the works of the legislature, how it's conduct and how it's done. And yes, these resolution was passed, but today are all the honorees day and it's called a perma plaque and And today is the day that we recognize them and give them the flowers. And we always try to do this whilst people are alive. I worked very diligently on this for Ms. McFarlane. And when she got ill, she was in the States, and we had a phone call, and we were talking. I tell her, I'm doing this for her. And she said to me, I don't know if I'm going to make it back.

2:06:20 I say, you will. And she didn't make it back. But I continue pursuing with this and I thank all my colleagues again for allowing me to pass this resolution on behalf of Ms. Roslyn McFarlane. I thank you very much. I want to say a few words as a family member. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Esther Sweeney and I'm a friend of Ms. McFarlane's family and Ms. McFarlane. Ms. McFarlane has been a friend to me for over 30 years, and her daughter Deborah could not be here today. Most of her family live on the mainland, so she could not be here. And she asked me to accept this plaque on the family's behalf. First, I would like to say thank you to Senator Johnson for sponsoring this resolution, and to all the other senators that were part of this sponsorship. Ms. McFarland, what could I say about Ms. McFarland? She was a champion for the disabled population. And not only the disabled, but also the elderly, and anyone that needed help. I notice our honorable Congresswoman shaking her head, because I'm sure she had to deal with Ms. McFarland, and all the senators here who had to deal with Ms. McFarland, she would challenge you for what needs to be done.

2:07:58 Ms. McFarland, for me, she was a giant. She was my giant. And it's interesting, because we worked together all the time while she was alive, because I'm a retired social worker who was the district manager for the Office of Adult Protective Services, which in the Department of Human Services is the office that responded to neglect, abuse, and abandonment of the elderly and adults with disability. So we worked very closely together. And Ms. McFarland didn't care who you were. She was going to challenge you. And I had many experiences with her, many, many experiences with Ms. McFarland. And I want to talk about two of them that I personally experienced with her.

2:08:46 One day, I walked into an elderly lady's home. And I'm telling you today, not even my dog I would want to have in that house. And when I left, I was like, oh my god, what am I going to do? I got to get this place clean. So I approached a cleaning company. It happened so that this cleaning company, the owner was a friend of mine and i'm like oh i got it got it done when the lady walked to the house she came outside she said esther come come she said i'm sorry i can't have my staff come into this house and clean this place and i just say oh i felt like the air everything left my body what am I going to do? And I said, I got to get this place clean. Who am I going to turn to if a cleaning company don't want to clean this place? So I went to Ms. McFarlane, and I told Ms. McFarlane what the situation was, and she said, okay, no problem. I have somebody for you. And that lady came and cleaned that house. It was pick and span. It was night and day and i said thank you god i got it clean and you know the lady after the lady cleaned the house because we were haggling about the price because she was going to be paid by the department of human services and we were haggling her up a price and i'm telling her what what i think she should charge but she keeps saying i'm a christian and i don't want to charge that kind of money i said you haven't seen this place you haven't seen this place and you know what she said and I would say thank you Jesus what she said when she walked out of that house when she was finished she said Miss Sweeney had I known this place was that bad I probably would not have done it but since I was already here I decided to accomplish the mission and that was Rosalyn McFarlane because this person wanted to honor Miss McFarlane too and get the job done

2:10:57 The next time, like Senator Johnson, I had a diagnosis, and when I got a diagnosis from my doctor, I was so upset, and I cried. Like Senator Johnson, I cried. I said, oh, boy. And I went to Roslyn's office, and I was just talking to her about the diagnosis, and I'm telling her, and I was crying too, and she was so shaken because she said, Esther, I've never seen you

cry in all the years I've known you. I said, this is scary. And she said, you know, you just told me that you're going to DC to a social worker conference. When you're done, I'm going to make an appointment with you at John Hopkins. And she said, because that's where my internist is. And I'm going to get an appointment for you to see my internist at John Hopkins. And right after the conference, I went to the John Hopkins to the um the appointment I saw her internist she spoke with me and she turned to me and said I need you to see a neurosurgeon but the problem is you don't see neurosurgeon for maybe six months out and you're just passing through but let me back up she said when she saw me she said to me who referred you. And I said, Ms. Rosalind McFarlane. And she looked at me and looked at that lady that doctor gave to me. She said, oh my God, I got to do the best for this lady. And so she told me, but you're just passing through and it's maybe four or six months before you get an appointment to see a neurosurgeon. And I said, okay. And she said, but let me see what I could do. Before I got to the place I was staying, there was a phone call telling me, report to that neurosurgeon tomorrow morning. And that was all Rosalie McFarlane's doing. Because Rosalie McFarlane, when she

2:13:06 goes to John Hopkins, she will tell him at John Hopkins, I don't know how many of you know about John Hopkins, but he's practically in the ghetto of Baltimore. And she would tell them, you guys need to be doing something for the people here in Baltimore. And that was Miss McFarlane. Miss McFarlane was a devout Christian of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and she takes no prisoners when it came to advocating for the disabled. And today, there's a lot of stuff that has been done here in the Virgin Islands, and I'm sure you senators, there's a lot more to be done for the disabled population and for our elderly and I want to thank you again senator Johnson's and all the senators that sponsored this bill for Miss McFarland and the family want to thank you for this opportunity good day Thank you.

2:14:45 Next, we have the pleasure of honoring the Virgin Islands Agriculture and Food Fair Board of Directors, University of the Virgin Islands, and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture with Resolution 1890. This is a resolution honoring and commending the Virgin Islands Agriculture and Food Fair Board of Directors, the University of the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture for their 50 years of diligence in coordinating, promoting, and hosting the Virgin Islands Agriculture and Food Fair, known as AgriFest. Prime sponsor, the Honorable Jayvon E. James, could not be here with us today. Therefore, his chief of staff, Miss Andrea Mishela, will speak to resolution number 1890.

2:15:44 Good afternoon, congratulations to all the honorees, this is your day. I am here on behalf of Senator Jovan James and I will read a speech on his behalf. Today we gather to recognize and celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of the Virgin Islands through resolution number 1890, formerly known as 340220, that supports the St. Croix Agriculture and Food Fair, known affectionately as AgriFest. This annual event serves as a testament to the hard work, dedication, and resilience of our local farmers, artisans, and producers who contribute to the vibrant tapestry of our community. As we reflect on the history of the agriculture fairs in the St. Croix, we are reminded of the deep-rooted connection between our land and our people. From the early days at Estate Anna's Hope to the modern day celebration held over the President's Day weekend, the agricultural fair has been a beacon of tradition and a showcase of our agricultural progress. On behalf of Senator James, I am proud to stand here today for this ceremony, Permaplex Ceremony, which recognizes the importance of AgriFest and its role in promoting local agriculture, fostering community engagement,

2:17:42 and preserving our cultural heritage. Through the unwavering support of the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, the University of the Virgin Islands, and the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, this event has grown into a beloved tradition that brings joy and inspiration to all who attend. As we move forward, let us continue to support our nurture events like AgriFest that not only promote economic growth and sustainability, but also strengthen the bonds that unite us as a community. Let us reaffirm our commitment to preserving our agricultural heritage and ensuring a prosperous future for generations to come. In conclusion, I urge all of us to stand in solidarity with our local farmers, artisans, and producers by wholeheartedly supporting this legislation and that honors the agricultural and food fair. Together, let us celebrate our past, embrace our present, and cultivate a promising future for the agricultural industry in the Virgin Islands. Thank you. And we would like to welcome Ms. Yvonne Price of the AgriFest Board.

2:19:25 Thank you, good afternoon. It was towards the end of last week I was contacted by the President of the Agriculture and Food Fair, Commissioner Peterson, because he was unable to attend today, and he asked me to represent him. It's been over 20 years I've been a member of the Board of Directors for AgFair. a lot of work but guess what we enjoy doing it and we look forward to doing it as soon as one is finished we take a break for one month and we start planning the next year we've already started to plan the next fair also I have traveled a few times to the islands to represent the ag fairs in the islands and guess what? None of them like ours. The fair of St. Croix is the biggest and the best in the Caribbean.

2:20:35 And it's all because we plan and we plan and we plan. I would like to thank you all for this honor, for the award. I'm not going to say anything more because I know everybody here come to the fair. and guess what we're looking for you all again and again and again and I can remember faces so I'm gonna be looking for you all thank you all very much Thank

you.

- 2 : 21 : 47 now we recognize charlita schuster and the music in motion school of higher dance education with resolution 1906 resolution honoring and commending music in motion school of higher dance education and its founder, Charlita Schuster, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Music in Motion Dance Academy. Prime sponsor, the Honorable Samuel Carrion, will provide a few words on Resolution 1906. Thank you. Moving quickly, I want to say congratulations to all the honorees right so resolution in 1906 is honoring commending music and motions school of higher dance education and its founder charlita schuster on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of music in motion dance academy and today we had the honor of seeing one of her very own students grace us with a beautiful performance it was a It was a great pleasure that my colleagues and I were able to sponsor this resolution. Through this resolution, we not only commemorate four decades of exceptional service, but also celebrate the profound impact that Charlita and her esteemed institution has had on our cultural education and personal development here in St. Croix. Music in Motion is more than just a dance school.
- 2 : 23 : 29 It is a place where character is built, resilience is fostered, and discipline is formed. Here students learn not only to dance, but to thrive in life with grace and discipline. Charlita Schuster, the visionary behind this institution, has worn many hats throughout her illustrious career, Master of Dance Educator, Ethic Consultant, Professional Artistic Director, many others. Each role has been performed with unwavering dedication and enduring commitment to excellence, which is something that distinguished Charlita. Her multifaceted contributions have not only elevated the performing arts within our community, but also have set a standard of excellence and discipline that resonates through each student who has walked through the doors of Music in Motion. As we honor this significant anniversary, let us also express our deepest gratitude to Charlita for her visionary leadership and her tireless dedication.
- 2 : 24 : 35 Thank you, Charlita, for your enduring commitment and for nurturing generations of performers who carry forward the legacy of your passion. May Music in Motion continue to inspire and cultivate the arts for many more years to come. everyone for being part of this celebration and it is your support that sustains the art and together we ensure that the cultural fabric of saint croix remains vibrant and dynamic congratulations to charlotte schuster and the music in motion school of higher education on this remarkable anniversary well good afternoon I've been here since this morning you know it's afternoon but I just wanted to first say I want to thank God for giving me the talent that he did he blessed me with I know growing up with my parents, the late Earl and Thelma Schuster, they always tried to find something for me to do, because it wasn't easy for me to catch on to a lot of things.
- 2 : 25 : 53 So one day my mother said, would you like to take dance lessons? And I said, yes. I didn't know what it was. And from that point on, I was five years old, I've never stopped dancing. and they found something for me to do and to also to grow to become a professional because I was good at it and they were just so happy to find that one thing and sometimes in life you may see a student a child that has that one thing that they could do and sometimes some of us say no forget about that do something else and that may be that one thing so I just want to just my message is to don't overlook that one thing that that child can do or wants to do because it just may be like my mother said they're bread and butter so and that's what happened with me but I want to thank senator Carrion for bringing this award to me and to honoring me and not only me but the school of higher dance education because I just wanted everyone to know that dance is just not something to it's not just fun it's an education it's something to learn and to for your life that can take you far far far from whatever you thought it could be a little thing it can grow to a huge remarkable thing and being in the performing arts is a wonderful thing to do. And with the music, dance, drama, it just continues to go on. You all witnessed a beautiful dancer who is now studying to get her dance degree right here in St. Croix, because we do have in the Virgin Islands our dance degree program, our BA program, which I helped to develop. and now our students don't have to travel anywhere to leave the island to continue on to receive their dance degrees and to continue on to be professionals here in the Virgin Islands and this is something that I want everyone to understand the dance is never gonna go away it's always going to be a part of our lives no matter what style you may choose I also want to thank all those who came to the resolution to testify for me and to make it all happen I want to thank the senators that voted for the resolution to pass thank you so much and I just want to thank
- 2 : 28 : 40 the St. Croix and the Virgin Islands completely for always honoring and supporting Music in Motion and the students and the parents that put their children in the program. Thank you so much. Thank you.
- 2 : 29 : 40 Thank you. Three, one, two, three.
- 2 : 30 : 40 Next, we honor the St. Croix Majorettes with resolution 1909, a resolution honoring and commending the St. Croix Majorettes for its outstanding 50 years of commitment to nurturing youth, enriching community service, advancing the art and sport of baton twirling, and for its invaluable contributions to the cultural and social fabric of the Virgin Islands. Prime sponsor, the Honorable Ángel L. Bocas, Jr., we welcome you to the podium. Thank you, Executive Director

Sheridan, and good afternoon to everyone here in the audience today of course good afternoon to my colleagues and good afternoon to all of the honorees in addition to afternoon to all of the listening and viewing audience and of course miss Garcia and our beautiful St. Croix Majorettes here this afternoon today we celebrate a remarkable 50-year journey of the St.

2:31:57 Croix Majorettes an organization that has not only nurtured the youth of our community but has also become a vital part of our cultural heritage and this organization was founded in 1974 by visionaries who saw baton twirling as more than an art it was a way to shape futures instill morals and values and teach persistence this group has blossomed influencing countless lives and representing St. Croix proudly on local, national, and international stages. Despite facing challenges through the natural disasters, the global pandemic, these St. Croix majorettes have had a commitment that has never wavered, and their resilience and dedication has enriched our territory, fostering talent and camaraderie among its members as we honor their past achievements and anticipate many more of course it is with great pride that I present this perma plaque along with my colleagues to the St. Croix majorettes this plaque symbolizes the legislature's deep appreciation for the St. Croix majorettes and will serve as a lasting tribute to their enduring legacy Congratulations to 50 years of excellence, cultural heritage, and a positive impact on our territory and its people.

2:33:36 Thank you. And we welcome Ms. Diana Garcia to the stage to accept the honor. Good day, everyone. It is an honor to be here representing my dear aunt, Ms. Cielo Maldonado, the founder of the St. Croix Majorette, which she started in 1973 but was registered with the government in 1974. And how loving that it is our 50th anniversary and we are receiving this honor. I would like to personally thank the senators that worked on the resolution, Senator Angel Bulkes Jr. and Senator Donna Fred Gregory. But I also have to thank the senators that actually passed and voted on the resolution. And I want to say thank you. And today we just have a small representation of our group. We are 150 strong. And we pray to the good Lord that we can keep on this legacy here in the Virgin Islands. Thank you so much.

2:35:06 Thank you. Thank you.

2:36:06 so you can see the same yes All right. Thank you.

2:37:36 Thank you. Thank you.

2:38:36 And during the reception, we'll also have a performance by the St. Green Beach Reds, so we'll get to see these young ladies in action as well. The next two Parma Plaka recipients are also Medal of Honor recipients, and I just want to take a few moments just to talk about the Medal of Honor, which is currently being executed on the island of St. Thomas. The Medal of Honor is made of 14-carat gold. It has a 2D-lettered, beveled front bezel. It is approximately 42 millimeters wide and 4 millimeters thick, including the bale. It is approximately 48 millimeters high. It is approximately 30 grams in weight, and it is made in seven parts and put together by hand. The coin is slightly domed. The outer bezel front is, of course, 2D letter. The back has an engraved flat plate. The back bezel is engraved the outer bezel has 2d lettering it is a framed outer bezel and there is a three-part bail with dark blue velvet ribbon made and stitched as one and it is done here locally by a virgin islander mr jay richardson of exquisite jewelers who designed the first medal of honor and per the Virgin Islands Code, all future Medal of Honor recipients receive one in the same fashion. So we are so pleased we'll be delivering that to our two Medal of Honor recipients shortly. It is already commissioned, and it is the three parts of it, I believe, are completed at this time. And once all seven parts are completed, they will be put together, and the stitching will be completed. So the next two honors, please know that you will be receiving a piece of 14-carat gold that provides you with an extreme honor, the Medal of Honor from the Virgin Islands.

2:41:03 Today, you will be presented with your parma plaque for the President of the Legislature. So, without further ado, we recognize Donna Marie Christian Christensen, M.D., with Act number 8739, and act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian Christensen, M.D., for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the medical field and representation in the United States Congress. The Prime Sponsor, our Senate President, we welcome you to the podium to say a few words of our Medal of Honor recipient for Act No. 8739. Thank you very much and good afternoon.

2:41:55 So I don't know where the time has gone because it's almost like four decades and a half that I've had the opportunity of knowing on Dr. Christian Christensen. I remember, of course, being the son of a nurse that I spent a lot of time around the Charles Howard Hospital, as well as when I was a newspaper boy back in 1978 and 79, and I had the Golden Rock route all the way down to, right up to Christenstead, myself and Leroy, back in those days, sold newspaper. I used to be right there across from Pueblo, Golden Rock, and of course, after that, I was dating myself because we had double session at the time, so I went to school in the afternoon and sold newspaper in the morning. So I had the opportunity to run into Dr. Christensen because she had her office right there in Richmond at the time, and certainly she was one of my clients. I sold my newspaper and she bought newspaper from me, so I never told her about that, I reminded her about that.

- 2:43:07 When I calculated there, I said, that's 46 years ago. Where did the time go? But it's easy to forget we walk among giants, especially when they're humble and approachable. As Donna M. Christensen, Christensen, MD, every day we reap the benefits of Donna's lifetime contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands, both in the medical field and through her advocacy and representation in the United States Congress. Of course, we know that Donna spent almost 19 years as our Delegate to Congress Representative. Dr. Christensen has a legacy of firsts.
- 2:43:47 As the first female physician in Congress, the first woman delegate from the United States Virgin Islands and the first woman to represent an offshore territory in Congress. She is a public health and political leader. She's a mother and grandmother. Most importantly, she has been a mentor to so many that has assembled here today. For many of us, our first introduction to Donna was as our doctor. She operated a family practice from 1975 to 1996 while also serving the the Virgin Islands Department of Health in the emergency room and in the maternal child health care. She was acutely aware of the challenges experienced by our community in accessing quality health care and brought that insight to her work on the congressional floor where she fought for inclusion in the Affordable Care Act as was once voiced by the Virgin Islands and underserved minority across the country.
- 2:44:55 In the years to come, St. Croix will also see the benefits of a designation as a national heritage area, something that Donna had led the groundwork for while serving in Congress. We're also, in this resolution, we're also renaming the, as you know, we're demolishing the Charles Howard Hospital and when the new facility is being built they'll be named the Donna Marie Christensen MD Department of Health as well as Dr. Christensen will be presented with the Medal of Honor for her lifetime achievement here in the territory. I'm honored to certainly present this perma plaque and eventually the Medal of Honor to the Honorable Donna Marie Christensen and thank her all of her hard work and contribution to the people of virginals God bless you thank you Senate president good afternoon to the 35th legislature to the honorees to the family and friends who are here to support them and myself. As I said at another event, being honored is a very humbling experience and a very emotional experience and the higher the honor the harder it gets, you know, the more humbling it gets and the more emotional it gets and this is the highest honor that the Virgin Islands bestowed on anyone so you can imagine not only how I feel about it but how grateful I am to the members of the 35th legislature for bestowing this honor on me. I have a lot
- 2:46:53 of people I need to thank. I thank them, but I thank God for always making a way sometimes when there was no way and enabling me to better serve the community. I thank my family. They're not here, but they're all watching and listening wherever they are, most of them in the Washington DC area, my daughters, my grandchildren especially. As someone said earlier, your family makes a lot of sacrifices for you to serve, so I really am indebted to them. And in addition to my cousins and all who gave me their unconditional support over the years. I thank my church, Faith Moravian Church, our conference, and our province, the Eastern West Sinai's province. I often tell them that it's through being delegate to synod that prepared me for delegate to Congress. Anybody who's been involved in church politics, you know what I'm talking about. I thank those people who have my co-workers and the people who work with me over the years both in my private practice in the hospital Department of Health and of course in Congress without them I wouldn't be here being honored today I also have to thank the people of the Virgin Islands for entrusting me with their care for 21 or so years and then trusting me to represent them in the halls of Congress at the seat of government of this country and giving me that opportunity to serve not only them but serve on a national level as well. St. Croix, the Virgin Islands but particularly St. Croix has nurtured me
- 2:48:54 and made me what I am and so anything that I have done has been in just giving back. I always want the best for my territory and if I have been able in any small way to contribute to that I thank them and I honor them. I just want to say a word of honor of congratulations to my fellow honorees I'm glad that I was able to sit and listen to all of your accomplishments because it makes it like icing on the cake to be honored with all of you today. So thank you all and God bless you all and I will continue to serve as long as I am able.
- 2:49:55 Next. Thank you.
- 2:50:55 And in our final presentation, we posthumously honor former Senator Edgar Milton Iles with Act 8736, an act awarding the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor posthumously to former Senator Edgar Milton Iles, for his commendable public service and contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands.
- 2:51:33 As I stated earlier, the prime sponsor, the Honorable Kenneth L. Giddens, could not be here today. Therefore, the co-sponsor of this measure, Senator Franklin Johnson, will provide remarks. Good afternoon again. It's an honor to be here to say a few words on this big giant. Big giant out of Frederick Stead. And when I say a big giant, one of the most quiet big giant you can meet.

- 2:52:06 Very humble man. But I want to read a brief, you know, comment from Senator Gittins. And before I even read this, I can remember landing back on the island on Friday and seeing Mr. Chalo James right there to the airport, picking up Senator Giddens. Chalo James was Senator Giddens' really bunker buddy, the guy that got everything done. So I feel his pain today, and he asked me to just express his congratulations and appreciation to all those being honored, to include friends and family, all those nominated by the legislature for recognition have contributed to our community in their own unique ways. I am so grateful for their efforts on our behalf. As I was the prime sponsor for the legislation to honor former Senator Edgar Isles and educator Gloria Kanegata Waterman, I would like to extend special thanks to their family for being here. Lauding these two fine individuals was long overdue, and I was pleased to be a part of this process. I am not here with you today, as I experienced a profound loss over the weekend with the passing of my dear friend, Charlo James. He worked in my office at one point and has been alongside me every step of the way. He was also a veteran and served our community well. Please accept my apology for not joining you today as this loss is very fresh. Thank you all again and congratulations. He also would like to extend congratulations former senator Alicia Barnes for championship the rep champion the resolution in the 33rd legislature for Gloria Kanagata watermen it's a heavy heart to do this today because I talked to Charlo and when I received the calls
- 2:54:00 Saturday morning I I told Boston no I saw him and and and and this this life that we have you have to always be thankful and today is such a special there for doing these things because you don't know when, the time, or the hour. But there's a few things I definitely want to say about this big giant author, Fredrick Stead. He served four terms. He served the 14th, the 15th, he took a rest, and I could remember a little bit of the politics between that rest. And then he came back in the 17th and the 18th. But through his journey, coming down to the end, Edgar Isles realizing the importance of volunteering his skills, lending considerable time to the community activities such as the St. Croix Home Guard, the Boy Scout, the Boys Club, the American Red Cross, the Auxiliary Firefighters, and the Special Olympics, the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Fredericks Head Festival Committee, the Rotary Club of St. Croix West, the Horace Race and as a Judge, the Governor Blue Ribbon Committee and Parks, Sports and Recreation, the Inter-Island Athletic Meets Committee, and the Grove Place Action Committee, where he residing. So it's an honor to be here today to just stand up and talk about this big giant that I know to be such a quiet, humble man. By the time I get to know Mr. Isles, and a real good point was when he was relaxing in Frederick Stead, in the fish market, talking jokes and you never hear this man got loud I don't ever know him to be angry but I'll definitely his son explain a lot more for us thank you again for having this opportunity to speak on behalf of mr. and senator former Senator Isles good morning to everyone good afternoon rather praise be to the power greater than us all that brought us here today and keep us well and thank you to the senators and I'm so sorry that Kenny couldn't
- 2:56:12 been here because Kenny first term and his first session he says you got to bring your dad I'm inviting you guys and we were sitting in the front in Frederick instead, you know. But that said, I'm done. You know, a lot been said about my dad from Frankie that cut me short of what I'm going to say. But one thing a lot of people don't talk about is the farming days, the sugarcane days. You know, my dad was a great, a big farmer. He worked for the sugar factory. He'd been a man and horses. And I've seen food come out of property to go off Ireland. He had chicken, goats, pig, and all that kind of stuff. You know, I worked with him all during those days. And he owned a bar and restaurant when I was a kid, 15, 16 years. I worked for him. We get up and go. But this day, I wish he was here with us. We sat and talked about this so many times. That was my partner, my best friend my confidant you know where in a lot of days when you see him you see me you know uh we traveled together uh he went to uh santo domingo for the uh i think it was a pan-american games and uh he was president of the olympic committee and i was a referee basketball refugee I became the first Virgin Islander to him I got you know and took me to meet my family down there meeting my family down there open my eyes to who we really are and where we come from because he had an uncle lived there never came back to the Virgin Islands for Christmas all of us my sister one I could tell you, every one of us
- 2:58:06 will get a bottle of guava berry rum. I'm not a drinker anymore, and I still got it. I'm probably Frankie of get one from me. In my early days, in my teenage days and younger days, I was the tag along with him. Every vacation, Christmas, summer, I spent time with him on the farm because I wanted to learn a lot from him. When he worked for Parks and Rec, which was soil conservation, basketball, volleyball. They had a baseball league name after him.
- 2:58:50 He was an umpire. And I'm sitting in the stand and looking at people fussing about him, and I'm saying to myself, fellas, you ready to go protect my dad? You know, all of that kind of thing, you know. But anyhow, I love that man, you know, and today is his day. And I wish he was here. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:00:32 Please join me once again as we congratulate all of our honorees as we have reached the conclusion of our presentations. Thank you. Thank you. I must mention that the work of the 15 elected senators for all legislatures includes the recognition of so many Virgin Islanders inclusive of the honors of building and road naming so please make sure that you

continue to follow us online on Facebook on our website as we celebrate equally as momentous occasions on the road or at the building on site when we don't have them here in the building I further implore all Virgin Islanders to read the resolutions and the acts tied to the plaques that were given here today to learn more about our exceed honorees. They can all be found on the Bill Tracker section of our website. And as we conclude this ceremony, I invite Senate President Nouvelle Francis to deliver closing remarks.

3:02:07 Thank you very much, mistress of ceremony, and good afternoon to everyone once again. Thank you for the opportunity. Thank you for your patience today as we individually make sure that we recognize each and every one of these individuals. Today, we're extremely mindful that there is some joy and there is some pain as a result of this ceremony and we understand that because of course you know it evokes and and scab you know some of those things especially those individuals that we're recognizing posthumously for their contribution here in this community and i thank you for your patience i mean we have spent the last almost three hours here today but it's critical these individuals have made their mark and their contribution this government will never be able to pay them in dollar value for their contribution to this community so we so we certainly appreciate um your time for being here today and and it was um i'm beaming with pride i'm proud and certainly to be a part of this process we're doing a similar ceremony and the st thomas district will be recognizing those individuals in the st thomas and john district um i think later on this week uh monday next week monday So just thank you all for being here. I want to thank my colleagues for their presence here today and also for all of the bill's sponsors that have put their name and went through all of the rigorous process of putting together these resolutions and seeing them through to the end. You know, I said before that while individuals may be in a negative about some of these resolutions, it's important that we're able to honor

3:03:56 and commend those individuals that have made their contribution to this community. So, God bless each and every one of you. Thank you. I hope that this can become effectuous, that other people, too, will be able to make their contribution to this community. I've been serving 35 years in government myself, and I understand that there's a lot of self-sacrifice. You know, when you serve in public service, there's a lot of self-sacrifice that's made as well. So, you know, thank you for putting forward that. And again, I really want to commend the families because they too, they too served, you know, when the individual public servants are there, they too have to have the impact of missing birthdays and celebrations and have to work holidays and all kind of things, you know, and these things have lasting impact of family members.

3:04:53 So thank you for your service, God bless you, have a good day, and hopefully we'll be able to get a little bit of a performance from this inquiry majorettes outside today, so we're looking forward to that. Thank you very much. I also want to thank the executive staff once again for putting this together. I know that it was a tremendous task. You're getting family members together, getting individuals here. Unfortunately, we weren't able to house every single individual that you would have wanted here today, but we apologize for that. But again, having almost 16 honorees, it was very difficult for us to be able to have an open house. We really tried to keep it as tight as possible. Thank you very much, and we'll ask certainly our chaplain to do the benediction at this time.

3:05:49 May the strength of God sustain us, may the power of God preserve us, may the hands of God protect us, may the way of God direct us, may the love of God go with us this day and forever, amen. This is the reality that I got 5D. Oh, really? Yeah. That is so cool. Yeah. In 2003. We'll be right back.

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke · only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

- 7x **Senator Alicia Chucky Hansen**
heard in this transcript as: Alicia Chuckie Hanson, Alicia Chucky Hanson, Hanson
- 6x **Senator Edgar Milton Iles**
heard in this transcript as: Edgar Iles, Edgar M. Iles, Isles
- 5x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**
heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson, Johnson
- 5x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Giddens, Giddens', Gittins, Kenneth Gittins
- 3x **Senator Kurt VIAlet**

heard in this transcript as: Kurt Viale, Viale

3x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice James

2x **Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Angel Bulkes Jr

2x **Senator Javan James**
heard in this transcript as: Jovan James

2x **Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital**
heard in this transcript as: Juan Luis Hospital

2x **Senator Kurt A. Vele**
heard in this transcript as: Vele

2x **Senator Kurt VLA**
heard in this transcript as: VLA

2x **Senator Samuel Carrion**

1x **Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna Fred Gregory

1x **Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Bills and acts referred to

Matched by number against our own acts corpus. The number is what the recognition heard, so it may be wrong; where it resolved, the title is the one the Legislature gave the act.

- Act 8088** Act 8088 · An Act honoring and commending William Bohike, Jr. for his assistance in the introduction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Hurricane Hunters, as well as his numerous contributions toward the Virgin Islands through business and philanthropic efforts ---0
- Act 8557** Act 8557 · March 24, 2022 · An Act honoring and commending Gloria H. Canegata Waterman for her outstanding years of service to the Virgin Islands Community as an educator and public servant through various organizations; naming the Department of Education's Administrative Office Complex on the island of St. Croix ·The Gloria H. Canegata Waterman Administrative Office Complex; amending Act No. 8474 subsection R to appropriate \$75,000 for signage at the Gloria H. Canegata Administrative Office Complex and other related purposes onQ
- Act 8739** Act 8739 · An Act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian-Christensen M.D., and bestowing the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor upon her for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the medical field and representation in the United States Congress ---0
- Act 8736** Act 8736 · An Act awarding the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor posthumously to former Senator Edgar Milton lies for his commendable public service and contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands ---0
- Act 8474** Act 8474 · An Act providing an appropriation from the General Fund of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the operation of the Government of the Virgin Islands during the fiscal year October t, 2021, through September 30, 2022 =)