



Perma Plaque Presentation Ceremony

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 music Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Li-lu-la-la-le-lo-le-lo-la

0:02:33 Li-lu-la-la-le-lo-la Thank you.

0:03:30 We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:05:30 ¶¶ Thank you. ¶¶ Oh, my God. ¶¶ so

0:08:30 Thank you. Thank you.

0:09:30 Oh, my God. ¶¶ Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:13:00 Thank you. Oh, my God.

0:14:00 Thank you. Thank you.

0:15:00 Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God.

0:16:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:19:30 Thank you. Thank you. so so so Thank you.

0:22:30 Thank you. All right.

0:23:30 Oh, my God. Thank you. [2 such phrases repeated 11 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:29:00 Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, honorees, supporters, and members of the Virgin Islands community. Good morning. I love it. This house is full. You know I like that. Welcome to this special key to the city and perma plaque ceremony hosted by the 36th legislature of the Virgin Islands. Today we are celebrating six, I know that your program says seven, remarkable individuals whose dedication, service, and accomplishments have strengthened the heart

and heritage of our territory. Our thoughts are on the speedy recovery of one of our honorees, Mrs. Jewel Malloy, who is under the weather today. I am Karel Sheridan, the Executive Director of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands and your mistress of ceremony for today's program before we begin let's start with prayer I kindly ask everyone to rise as we welcome the legislature's chaplain Reverend Charles Brown let it be heart pray

0:30:49 on the sixth day of February Lord we claim you as alpha and omega the one who was before all and the one who has the final say today we honor the legacies of the late Ronald Alphonse Slimo Blyden and the late Myron Corbett and with them we honor Brian Benedemus, Bulli Georgia Francis, James Sasso and Arthur Gutu Solomon in Proverbs chapter 3 verse 27 you direct us to not withhold good from those to whom it is due and when it is in our power to do it and in the New Testament Paul's epistle to the Romans in chapter 13 teaches us to pay honor to those to whom honor is owed our territory is better because of these who haven't been bestowed gifts from on high did not rest on their gifts but gave freely to you and to our community so today we honor you Lord for blessing them and we honor them for blessing you and us teach us how to cherish their legacy for years to come in the name of the one who deserves all the honor and glory because he offered his own body as a living sacrifice for all of us in Jesus' name Amen Amen Thank you thank you Chaplain Brown. Don't get too comfortable being seated because you know what comes

0:32:35 next? The Anthem. So when you are able please get back to your feet so we can hear from the Ivana Eudora Kent High School Music Program for the National Anthem. Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming Whose broad stripes and bright stars Through the perilous fight O'er the ramparts we watched Were so gallantly streaming And the rocket's red glare The bombs bursting in air Gave proof through the night That the flag was still there Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

0:34:41 Thank you for that beautiful rendition. Because we're equal opportunity. Yes, give them a round of applause. We are going to have the Virgin Islands March by the Charlotte Amali High School Music Program students. Thank you.

0:35:48 Oh, hail the Virgin Islands, arrows of the sea, where beaches bright with coral sands, and Shabbos, bless our native lands. Oh, hail the Virgin Islands. May the waters bloom. We give our loyalty.

0:36:25 Oh, to thee I pledge allegiance forever true. God bless our Virgin Islands. Only now we pray Where all mankind can join today In friendly warmth of work and play God bless the Virgin Islands Beautiful and tall Beneath the sunny skies Hills, house, high, hold out a welcome Come for one and all.

0:37:08 Thank you. Now you may be seated. Thank you for those beautiful renditions to our major high schools here in St. Thomas. I know that our honorees, some of their trajectories changed due to involvement in school activities. So I hope that was a little reminiscent for you all as well. We'd like to bring to the podium now our esteemed Senate President, the Honourable Milton E. Potter, for opening remarks. Good morning, everyone. It's really awesome to see a full house here at the Virgin Islands Legislature today. The Virgin Islands is a community built on legacy, on the shoulders of men and women whose lives of service, talent, and leadership have shaped the rhythm, resilience, and character of our beloved islands. And it is in that enduring spirit that we come here today, together as one, to remember, to celebrate, and to give thanks. The Prama plaque ceremony reminds us that greatness does not always stand in the spotlight. Often it grows quietly in classrooms, in churches, in sports fields, in businesses, in songs, and in acts of kindness that ripple far beyond the moment.

0:38:51 The six honorees that we recognize today embody that truth. We pause with deep affection and respect to remember the late Ronald Alphonse Slimo Blyden and the late Myron Corbett, two extraordinary Virgin Islanders whose legacy continues to inspire through the lives that they touched. They remind us that one life of purpose can echo through generations. Alongside them, we proudly celebrate Brian Benedimas Boulay, Georgia Francis, James Sasso, and Arthur Gutu Salomon. My friend, Mrs. Jewel T.R. Malloy, she appears on the printed program but could not be here in person, as our MC mentioned, as she is a little under the weather. So we wish her a speedy recovery.

0:39:57 And God's willing, she'll be placed on our next Palma Plaque program. Each of you honorees, in your own remarkable way, has woven your gifts into the very fabric of this community through music, mentorship, enterprise, advocacy, and service. You've lifted others, nurtured our youth, preserved cherished traditions, and advanced our collective story. The promo plaque that bears your name is a tribute, yes. But much more than that, it is a permanent symbol of our gratitude. It ensures that long after this day passes, future generations of Virgin Islanders will know who you were, what you stood for, and how your dedication strengthened the territory that we love so much. On behalf of my colleagues in the 36th legislature of the Virgin Islands, I express my heartfelt appreciation for your contributions and your example. You've not only enriched the lives of many, you have inspired us all to see what is possible when commitment meets compassion and when service is done with love. May this occasion renew our sense of purpose and remind us of the responsibility we

each share to carry forward the values of excellence, unity, and pride that our honorees exemplify so beautifully.

0:41:43 Congratulations to each of you. And may your legacies continue to shine brightly throughout this beautiful Virgin Islands for generations to come. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for prioritizing your attendance here today. And may the most high bless our beautiful Virgin Islands. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd also like to recognize the senators who are present here with us. It is so very important to show up for our people. And so I want to thank you all for being here.

0:42:21 Senate President, of course, who just provided remarks. Then we have the Honorable Marvin A. Blyden, the Honorable Ray Fonseca, the Honorable Novell E. Francis Jr., the Honorable Carla J. Joseph, the Honorable Angel L. Bolquez Jr., our senator at large, Honorable Dwayne M. de Graff, and the Honorable Alma Frances Heiliger. Thank you very much for being here with us this morning. We also have a few former senators amongst our myths. We have the Honorable Judy Gomez, who is here. Thank you very much for being here. And I believe we have the Honorable Myron Jackson also here with us. Oh, okay. Someone told me, but I didn't see you.

0:43:07 So thank you as well. And we also have, she's on the program today, the Honorable Donna Fred Gregory with us today. Thank you, thank you. Letting you know a little bit about how today is going to flow, I'm going to announce the honoree, read the act, resolution, and bill number. I'm going to then invite the honoree or representative to stand. The bill's sponsor will be invited to the microphone to speak to the measure, and then will lead the plaque presentation. All senators will be then invited to the well for the official presentation and photos. Then friends, family, supporters will be welcome to come up and take a second picture with your honoree. And then the honoree or representative will be able to make acceptance remarks. I'll review as we go as well. So we're going to go ahead and begin.

0:44:08 The first honoree is someone who we would all be blessed to have oversee our homecoming. Mr. James Sasso, resolution number 1916, bill number 36-0007, sponsored by our Senator-at-Large, Angel L. Bulquez Jr., co-sponsored by Senators Avery L. Lewis and Ray Fonseca. Mr. Sasso, please stand to be recognized. Thank you. Now we invite our Senator-at-Large to provide remarks to tell us a little bit more about what you have accomplished for our esteemed community.

0:44:54 You may be seated during that time. Thank you, Madam Mistress of Ceremonies, Executive Director Correll Sheridan. First of all, I want to begin by offering my deepest and heartfelt condolences to one of our colleagues, Senator Franklin Johnson, for the loss of his daughter, Ms. Siobhan Johnson and to any other families that have lost a loved one at this time. Good morning, Mr. President, colleagues of the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, distinguished guests, the Sasso family, and the people of the Virgin Islands. Today is but one honouring of a man who has stood beside this community at its fragile moments. A man who has carried the emotional weight of others when they could no longer carry it themselves. A man whose strength has helped families find their footing when the world suddenly changes forever. This man is Mr. James Sasso. My people, there are moments in life that define each and every one of us. Moments of joy, moments of triumph, but there's also moments of loss. Moments when the phone rings and everything stops. Moments when time feels like it's frozen, moments when families feel broken.

0:46:43 My people, few roles in our society require the level of strength and compassion and emotional discipline and professional demands like the industry that Mr. James Sasso works in every single day. It is work that most people never fully see or understand. It is work that happens not in celebration, but in sorrow. Not in applause, but in silence.

0:47:18 And yet, it is among the most important works that has ever existed since the dawn of time. James Sasso has carried that responsibility with honor, with grace, and with an unwavering professionalism. He has stood beside countless families during moments they will never, ever forget. He has helped transformation come about in the chaos, sorrow into reflection, and grief into a path toward healing. His steady presence has given families something to hold on to when everything else feels uncertain. This is not a simple career. It is a service in its purest form. James Sasso was not drawn to this work for recognition.

0:48:14 He was drawn to it because he understood what it meant to serve others. He understood that dignity does not end when life ends. He understood that compassion is not reserved for easy moments, but is mostly needed in the hardest of moments. And through his work, he has become a guardian of transition and dignity, a steward of respect, a source of strength to our community. His hands and his words have helped guide families through their grief. His presence has helped bring peace in moments of pain. His professionalism has set a standard worthy of honor. Today's perma plaque ensures that his legacy is permanently etched into the history of this beautiful territory. It ensures that future generations will know that there was a man who served with quiet strength, who gave comfort without expectation, and who held dignity for our people in times that mattered the most.

- 0:49:21 Mr. Sasso, your work has mattered. Your presence has mattered. Your life service has mattered. And by extension, all that serve in this industry matter. We appreciate your service of love and comfort. On behalf of the 36th legislature of the Virgin Islands and on behalf of the people of this grateful territory that you have served, we thank you. We thank you for your strength. We thank you for your compassion. We thank you for your dignity that you have given to so many families. And we thank you for reminding us all that service to others, especially in their most difficult moments, is among the highest callings a person can ever answer. Today we honor you, today we recognize you, and today we ensure that your legacy will endure. God bless you James Sasso, God bless your family, and God bless the people of the Virgin Islands. Alright, the plaque presentation will commence, so we ask all senators to come to the middle of the well.
- 0:50:44 Resolution number 1916 a resolution honoring and commending James Sasso for his dedicated distinguished service in the mortuary and funeral service industry Friends, family, and supporters, please join your honoree for a photo.
- 0:52:13 Come in, friends, family, supporters. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:53:43 All right, Mr. Sasso, don't go back to the seats. The podium is now yours. Good morning, members of the 36th Legislature and your employees. Good morning and congratulations to the honorees. Good morning, family, friends and well-wishers. Good morning to the management and staff of Tumbles and Home. Good morning, students and teachers. Good morning to the viewing and listening audience. Today I'm very humbled to receive this award. This award is something I was not looking for. I was not really looking for any recognition.
- 0:54:55 When I set out to do funerals, I decided the service that I was seeing at the time was not good enough for the people of the Virgin Islands where I call home. So I decided we can do a better job. When I went to Turnbull's home, I said, Ms. Turnbull, we are going to change the game of funerals around here. We are going to step it up. We are going to do things that have never been seen before. So today, I would like to thank Sinta Angel Bolkes for bringing this bill forward. I'd like to thank the members of the 36th Legislature for supporting this bill. Thank you, thank you. I'll forever be grateful and never forget this day. So thank you all very much. Senators.
- 0:55:42 Senators, one more thing before I leave. When I was here the last time, I told y'all I'd like to see a Trade Center in the Virgin Islands. Senator, I know it's not easy, but we have to find a way to get a Trade Center for the Youth Center for Children's. We are losing too much youths. Senators, I have heard too many parents cry. I've heard the cries from the bottom of the belly come up as if they're giving birth again. I've seen parents grab their loved one in the casket and actually take them out, try to take them out.
- 0:56:20 I've had parents go into the grave and lie on the casket. Senators, I feel they're hurt. I know we mightn't be able to save every young person, but with a trade school, we can give them a future, and I think we can save 90% of our youth here in the Virgin Islands. So, senators... My plea as a funeral director who have seen death regularly, who have heard parents cry, is let us get together and do whatever we can do for the youths of this Virginia Islands. Let us try our best to get a trade centre. Let's not put it on the back burner. It's too long. We need to do something to give the youth hope and to give them a future. Thank you all and may God bless you all.
- 0:57:29 Thank you for that, Mr. Sasso. And you said that you were going to change the way funerals were done, and you did that. So I think we're going to have that trade school, because I know that you can keep the pressure on and make it happen. Thank you very, very much. I'd also like to recognize the presence of our Senate Vice President, Mr. Kenneth L. Gittins, who has joined us. Thank you. Next, we posthumously honor Mr. Myron Corbett, one of the duo who coached and developed our talented basketball players at the Charlotte Amalie High School. We would like Act No. 8939, Bill No. 35-0027. Will the representative for Mr. Corbett, his daughter, Jerusha Corbett, please stand and be recognized. Thank you. You may be seated. This measure was sponsored by the Honourable Donna Fret-Gregory, Marvin A. Blyden, Ray Fonseca, Carla J. Joseph, and Angel L. Bulquez, Jr.
- 0:58:59 We welcome you back to the well, Senator Donna Fret-Gregory. Please join us to speak to this measure. Oh boy, good morning, good morning Mr. President Potter, good morning Mr. Vice President Gittins, And good morning to all senators within the sound of my voice. It's good to be home. And of course, good morning to the wonderful people of the United States Virgin Islands. And good morning to all those that are here to support today's honorees. But I have something I have to say before we start. So I looked at the honoree listing, and I am not sure why I did not sign on to sponsor legislation for Georgia Francis. That is an absolute error. I am not sure why I did not sign on to support legislation for, I can just say, Benny Demos.
- 1:00:37 I think they missed it. I have to talk to my old staff. So I want to say that, of course, I was not a senator during the time that the legislation was sponsored for the amazing James Sassu. But I'm sure my name would have been there. So I want to say just congratulations to all of today's honorees, well-deserving. Many times our community talk about the fact that we focus on honoring and commend. But if we don't honor and commend our people, who will?

- 1:01:14 So I just want to say I'm proud to be here this morning, and I'm immensely proud to stand before our community today to honor the legacy, service, and dedication of two extraordinary sons of the United States Virgin Islands, Mr. Arthur Gutu, we miss Goose Salomon, better known to me as Salo, and his brother posthumously, Myron MC Corbett, whose lifelong contributions to education, athletics, and youth development have left a lasting and indelible impact on generations and generations to come. Absolutely.
- 1:02:04 I don't know that there's anyone in this room whose life has not been touched by Guthu. I don't know. But Arthur Goose Salomon, story reflects the journey of so many Virgin Islanders, rooted in humble beginnings, strengthened by family and driven by determination. He is a third of eight children and began his basketball journey on the courts of Azrael Harris Court. What we would call it, Newhousin, right?
- 1:02:41 That community is an integral part of the man that you see before us today. He played alongside his brothers and developed a deeper love for the game of basketball. Following his high school, he earned the opportunity to play collegiate basketball at the University of Texas and later transferred to Morgan State University where he completed his undergraduate Studies. Mr. Arthur Gutus Salomon is the reason why I, Donna Fred Gregory, I, Donna Fred Gregory, attended Morgan State University in 1983. Mr. Salo was my ride home every day, every day. So I want to thank you for that publicly, Mr. Salomon. He served with the Department of Education and rose to become the chair of the Physical Education Department at the Charlotte Amali High School.
- 1:03:46 He was also an active union member because we all know Salo ain't easy. He advocated for the improved resources and fair compensation for coaches across the territory and teachers across the territory. As coach at Charlotte Amali High School, Coach Salomon built a championship program. Under his leadership, the Charlotte Amali High School girls basketball team won multiple championships, and many of his students, athletes, earned athletic scholarships to colleges across the United States, straight out of Yad to Solomon.
- 1:04:29 His impact extended beyond athletics as he helped shape disciplined, confident, and motivated young leaders. I did not play sports, but he most definitely motivated me to be the person that I am today. He's not only a family friend, but he's also my big brother, and I want to thank him for supporting me over the years. This morning we also, I'm also here to speak on behalf of Myron MC Corbett posthumously, my little brother.
- 1:05:09 Today we also honor him for his unwavering commitment to the youth of the United States Virgin Islands and his lifelong service through athletics and mentorship, and that is real mentorship. And I'll tell you, my son, Kaelin Gregory, got a scholarship right here in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Two coaches came to my home to recruit my son to play basketball on the mainland because of Myron Corbett. He made it happen. He saw the talents of my son, and he said, listen, we're going to do this. He did all the tapes and did whatever was necessary. He sent them to the colleges, and they came. St. John's University, Marist College, and there was one more in Philadelphia. The name escapes me as I speak. But we decided to take the option of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. And my son got the opportunity to play basketball for five years right out of the US Virgin Islands because of Myron MC Corbett. He always advocated for children. He's like family to me. I remember one evening I was in my home and I heard someone knocking on my kitchen window and it was him. That's when I was at the Department of Education when I served as the Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal Affairs and his students needed to travel to St. Croix and they didn't get the check.
- 1:06:44 And he came to my house 7 o'clock at night. I think I had on my pajamas. I was like, who this is knocking on my window? And it was him. He came to say, listen, these kids are traveling in two days. You've got to make this happen. And we did. He was dedicated to seeing the success of every single Virgin Islands child that passed through his hands. And for that, I am proud to stand here today as a sponsor of this legislation to name the Charlotte Amali high school gymnasium after these two brothers. I can't think of any other people, persons, who deserve this than those two individuals. Myron was known for his dedication, his high standards, and his belief in the potential of every student he coached. Coach Corbett consistently went beyond the expected, advocating for young people and opening doors that might otherwise have remained closed. Through his time with us, although his time with us was brief, his impact was profound. His legacy lives on in the many lives he influenced and in the enduring culture of excellence, accountability. What he used to say, Salo? These man is joke. Anybody that know him know it. If you ain't come and chew for the children, these man is jokers.
- 1:08:13 He believed in his children. He believed in service, and he helped build within our community, a community of athletic excellence. And it's fitting, and it's a fitting and lasting honor, naming the gymnasium at Shaw Tamale High School as the Myron MC Corbett and the Otta Gutu Salomon Gymnasium, as a lasting tribute to these two young sons of the soil of the U.S. Virgin Islands. As we rebuild Charlotte Miley High School into a modern state-of-the-art facility, it is only right that we honor two brothers who devoted countless hours within those gymnasium walls, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and shaping the lives of our children. This joint naming affects a shared legacy of service, excellence, and commitment to

the Virgin Islands. May every student who enters this space be reminded of what is possible through discipline, dedication, and service to our community.

- 1:09:26 It is always important to pay it forward. Thank you and love you all. Thank you. Mr. Solomon, please stand and be recognized. Please give him a round of applause. And now we will complete the plaque presentation. So we are going to have the representative for Mr. Myron Corbett first and then we'll have you, Mrs. Salomon. So, bill sponsor, Senate President, all Senators, please come forward. You guys want to go together? You want to go together? Okay, all right.
- 1:10:34 Thank you. and commending Myron Corbett posthumously for his lifelong contributions to the youth of the territory and renaming the Charlotte Amali High School Gymnasium, the Arthur Gutu Salomon and Myron M.C. Corbett Gymnasium.
- 1:11:26 Family, friends, and supporters, please join us in the well. Oh, that was just a point. and act recognizing Arthur Gutu-Solomon for his leadership as head coach of the Charlotte Amali High School girls basketball team and his contribution to the Virgin Islands men's national basketball team by naming the existing and any future CAHS gymnasium the Myron MC Corbett and Arthur Gutu Salomon Gymnasium. And Ms. Corbett, you'll join us first at the podium for remarks.
- 1:13:11 Ms. Corbett first. I miss your father, he was there too, I see help a lot of people. Are you ready for this? Okay. Hi, everyone. Hello. Good morning. I just want to say thank you to everyone that has supported my father over the years. I sit in the hospital with my father in his last moments. You know, and he would always tell me, Jerusha, support the, he would say, support those who support you. That's what my father lived by.
- 1:13:50 You know, and I'm just so, you know, thankful to be up here today. All right? I just want to say thank you. I don't know if it's a good day. I don't know if it's morning or afternoon. still morning okay well good morning to everyone and i gotta thank the uh sponsors of the bill and all the other senators that supported this bill to name the gym after my brother my young brother and myself this go back all the way back to harris court when i attended the lockhart elementary school fourth grade and being in fourth grade you might as well say that i was also part of charlton valley high school because that's where i really grew up with the likes of arthur jimerson who is not here with us today and you wouldn't believe it charles wesley thornball the late governor of these virgin islands i knew these guys from the time it was our elementary school and and that's how i actually grew up and have my brothers there my two brothers my niece and a very good friend of the family oh god how could i forget your name in the blue shirt there Steve, and Myron niece, my niece. Boy, come on, Sal, come on, Salomon. Yeah, Shaney.
- 1:15:52 And my two, you know, is unbelievable. We go from elementary school all the way today. We are still friends. Pedrito Estrell, Mr. Sidney Bell, and many more. And today, we're still here. I remember the use of us saying that if something happened at school and you go to Mr. Estrell, Mr. Estrell is going to tell you if Mr. Solomon say it's so, it's so. So don't go complaining because we are like this.
- 1:16:32 also mr bell he was scared of uh teaching on the higher level so he stayed with the kids even though we plead with him but you know his joy was with elementary school kids and i'll be honest with you i love elementary school kids okay i'm not gonna you go to school with elementary school kids right and you can be upset and falling apart just looking at those young kids right it give you all the muster and the glory right to see them you know they're gonna do something silly you know they're gonna do something stupid but what can you do you know so i love it too mr bell okay i love teaching the little ones and once again man i can't forget my sisters in washington dc and my friends uh looking at this right now and uh the one that make a speech for me when uh we were doing the first inception of the honor mr charles fonseca his brother a senator he's looking at it very good friends we go back from god knows when you know and hey i just cannot say anything different my mom is home and mom i know you're looking and you're smiling and thanks a lot for bringing us up eight guys it in the family and a whoo thank you once again man for all your guys mr. Richards Keith Richards the Commissioner and mr. Jackson hey mr. Potter I'm a former student she told me you're my former student miss carla joseph senator she let me do all the time and the guy back there you won't believe it uh senator get things when we had dances in the gymnasium charlotte mudd high school gym right i gotta tell you guys right everyone is the mecca of the virgin islands we did everything in charlotte city uh the marshal back there bending his head mr howard we went from 10 o'clock in the night to four day morning having danced in the gymnasium all right and i know we got kids some people in here who remember that and the gym was hot when you see those guys and those young people the ladies them dancing when they finish they ring the shirt out right he's laughing also right because the commissioner knew that hey it was a joy and we cannot have it now i don't know why But I'm going to say something to the principal, them, and the commissioners of education, right? We have to go back and start having activities after school in the gym. It kept the crime rate down.

- 1:20:00 We used to have the chief of police will tell us, Solomon, every time you all have a dance in the gymnasium, the crime rate go down, the calls go down. And it's something we have to stop being scared. Have the dances, have the activity, they're going to come. And parents going to let the kids out if they know it's a controlled environment. so i'm telling all you out there listening let your kids go we need it it brings development it brings communication and like i say senator gettings he was the police officer in st croix he came with the team central high and guess what coming with them everybody have fun and we go but i must end now because you don't want to pick up all the time but hey i had fun a little guy growing up in harris court short pants sneakers bending down and that's how we did it man thanks again i appreciate it god bless you thank you mr salomon now we all kind of wondering how it was to be in your class because it was pure jokes all day we know that we know that all right thank you and thank you Ms. Corbett for your remarks as well. Next we are going to hear from the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works. The Legislature is very proud of the partnership that we have formed with the Department of Public Works and the road namings. It has been an awesome partnership. We thank the Department of Public Works. They printed the booklets for us on cover.cos. We certainly appreciate that as a way in which we all can have one ceremony instead of several ceremonies relating to the road name-ins, saving money and being able to provide all of the honorees an opportunity to come together. So, thank you very much and now we'll hear from Commissioner Gabriel.
- 1:22:13 Good morning, Senate President Milton Potter, other members of the 36th Legislature, of course other senators, past senators in attendance, I see some of my cabinet colleagues, good morning to you guys. Good morning to the members of Charlotte Mali and the Eudora Kent School, thank you guys for being here. Good morning, family, friends, supporters, good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands. I am proud to be here today. As Ms. Sheridan said, we are really pleased with the partnership that we had. Our team, I do want to recognize Ms. Benzen and Ms. Evans in our office as well for all your hard work on this. It really brings a lot of joy to us when we can partner together to recognize our great Virgin Islanders. I will say, I didn't realize the money for this came out of the District Road Fund. Definitely did not realize that, boy.
- 1:23:08 That was a shock to me today. So for those who have roads named after them, if they are not resurfaced in the near future, you know why. But on a serious note, it is very important to continue to honor our rich tradition and culture by naming roads, by naming buildings, by naming anything that we have here in the Virgin Islands after our Virgin Islanders. For generations to come, people will know who Ms. Georgia Frances is. They will know of the impact that she had on thousands, Well, let me say hundreds. I ain't want to say thousands. I ain't going to leave it like that, but thousands, right? You know, we try not to, you know, but on thousands of Virgin Islanders, through the sound of music, the discipline that it brings, the stick-to-it-ness, the commitment that it brings. And I could just hear you, even though I did not go to Charlotte, I could hear you coming up the road with the band in unison. So I do want to thank you. People will always, we will no longer know it as Rumour Drive. It's now going to be Georgia Francis Drive, so thank you for that.
- 1:24:10 And of course, honouring Mr. Ralph Alphonso Slimmo Blyden by naming it the Slimmo Blyden Drive and the cul-de-sac. I'm sorry? Ronald. Ronald, I apologise. Ronald, Ronald. I think it's really important, again, because these are people that live in our community that really made a difference every single day for our children, for our adults, for our seniors, and for every one of us that live here. So to all of our Virgin Islanders today, I do want to thank you for your commitment. Even though none of us has things named after us out there, I think our chance is coming. You know, Senate President, I saw something. At least we don't retain or withhold funding to get stuff named after us. We just go to our senators and, you know, they named stuff after them. So, of course, I do want to thank you guys, congratulate all of our honorees and thank you for the sacrifices and commitment that you give to the people of the Virgin Islands. Thank you.
- 1:25:03 Thank you very much Commissioner. We still need those resurfaced, signs or not. Just speaking for our vehicles that we cannot afford to have too much repair cost. So just speaking for all of us, we expect them to still also be resurfaced. Now we are going to hear from the Ivana-Eudora-Ken chorus for a special selection. ¶¶ Rise man's city, only fools rush in. But I can't help falling in love with you. Shall I stay? Would it be a sin if I can't help falling in love with you?
- 1:27:08 Like a river flows, surely to the sea Darling, so it goes, some things are meant to be Take my hand, take my whole life too For I can't help falling in love with you Like a river flows surely to the sea Darling, so it goes some things are meant to be Take my hand, take my whole life too.
- 1:28:15 For I can't help falling in love with you. For I can't help falling in love with you Awesome. Thank you very much. Under the direction of Ms. Jada Lark. Oh, I'm sorry. And Mrs. Davis. Sorry. Mrs. Davis. My apologies. My apologies.

- 1:29:08 Uh-oh, I'm getting in trouble. All right. At this moment, I'd like to, I'm going to get in some further trouble, some good trouble today. Senator DeGraff, you know you're always, Sabaneros, Sabaneros kind of run the signs kind of a little bit. But Old Tutu, Old Tutuhausen, you are being represented here today, the unofficial mayor. of Tutu is being honored, we posthumously honor Mr. Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blyden. The representative, his daughter, Mrs. Laverne Blyden, please stand to be recognized. Thank you. You may be seated. And this measure was sponsored by Senator Donna Fred Gregory, our Senate President, Milton E. Potter. Please come forward, Senator Fred Gregory, to provide remarks on this measure.
- 1:30:20 And while we're doing that, we would like to show you where this road naming is going to be. The sign has been unveiled as we were in this ceremony by the Department of Public Works. So it is the former flamboyant avenue in Estate Anna's Retreat, and you can see on the screen that it has been revealed. Senator Fred Gregory.
- 1:30:50 So, good morning again, and I'm unofficially part of the Old Tutu Massive, OTM Massive. And I'm going to tell you why. Because in the 70s, I moved to the country from hospital ground, and I moved to Dunu Housing Community, and I was a shortcut, and we used to go down to Old Tutu and spend time down there all day. So I'm an official part of the OTM Massive. So good afternoon again. It's afternoon, all right? It's morning still. Good afternoon, everyone. It's still morning. Good morning.
- 1:31:29 And today really makes me especially proud as a Virgin Islander. It's a powerful reminder of the people who came before us. Those whose lives of service helped to shape our communities and whose legacies continue to guide us. I am honored to have sponsored this legislation to recognize and celebrate the life and service and legacy of Mr. Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blighting posthumously, a man whose commitment to the Virgin Islands, particularly the old Tutu community, was both deep and enduring. Donald Blyden was far more than a resident of Old Tutu.
- 1:32:21 He was a beacon of community spirit, leadership, and dedication. His constant presence, generosity, and willingness to serve earned him the affectionate and well-deserved title of mayor of Old Tutu. And I remembered as a little girl walking through the roads of Old Tutu. He would be there sweeping, cleaning, picking up. He just made sure that he kept the place immaculate and encouraged youngsters like myself to do likewise. When Slimmo was not working to uplift his community, he could often be found at Slimmo's nightclub that became a well-known gathering place for Virgin Islanders, one that brought people together and added to the cultural fabric of our island. Slimo dedicated 36 years of service to the Department of Education. Retiring as a graphic arts specialist, his artistic talents were widely recognized and highly sought after, and many in our community benefited from his creativity and skill.
- 1:33:35 Above all, Mr. Slimo was a devoted family man, an entrepreneur and a community leader who constantly worked to better the lives of those around him. Today, by renaming Flamboyant Avenue as Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blyden Drive and formally naming the cul-de-sac in the area where his family lives, Slimo Circle, we ensure that his legacy, you do Slimo Circle, Commissioner? good, that his legacy lives on while no recognition can fully capture the impact of his life.
- 1:34:13 This stands as a meaningful tribute to a remarkable man who truly embodied the spirit of our community and the spirit of service. I would like to take this moment to recognize his beloved wife, Ms. Eleanor. Could you please stand? Ellie. And we already recognize Miss Laverne, but I also want to recognize Mr. Ronald. Could you please stand? Ronald Jr. Yeah, oh, he's a photographer. I'll tell you a little story about Ronald. He probably don't remember, but when I was in seventh grade, he was my Civil Air Patrol leader and he did not play with me so a lot of why of why I'm the way I am have a lot to do with Ronald okay so Ronald I want to thank you thank you for all that you've done as well for this community I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues of the 35th legislature many of whom are present today, for their support of this measure and for standing with me and ensuring that SLIMO's contribution will be permanently honoured in our community.
- 1:35:38 Minutesplot not only serve as a marker of a name, but as a reminder of what happens or what it means to give selflessly, to lead with heart and to serve a community above all else thank you for sharing mr slimmer with us and this is to his family god bless you all thank you all senators please come to the middle of the well for the plaque presentation and this also includes a mini road sign as well Hey, let me rotate and I'll be mini for sure. and act honoring and commending Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blyden posthumously for his years of service and contributions to the Virgin Islands community, renaming Flamboyant Avenue in Estate Anna's retreat as the Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blyden Drive and naming the cul-de-sac Slimo Circle with an appropriate signage. Friends, family, supporters, please join Ms. Blighton in the well.
- 1:38:14 I don't know. So fast.
- 1:39:14 Thank you. Let's go.

- 1:40:14 Thank you. Thank you. Blyden is making her way to the podium. Wanted to say something?
- 1:41:26 Yes, quick. I just want to acknowledge my daughter over there in the corner, Shayla Solomon. You know, my one and only, my heart. Right over there, Shayla Solomon. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Blyden. Good morning, I'm going to try to stand like how my father would stand tall and proud with a big smile. I'd like to thank former Senator Donna Fred Gregory and Senator President Potter for sponsoring this bill on behalf of my mother and my brother we are now proud to see the sign unveil it was saying we saw it for the last couple days covered but now it gets opened up it's been a real exciting and kind of emotional feeling But I'd like to thank everyone and God bless everyone. Thank you.
- 1:42:45 Thank you and I also heard that he was a little difficult with test-taking. Somebody mentioned he was very strict with that. So thank you very much for those remarks. You could certainly feel how important this is to the family as well so thank you for showing us that. Next we have Ms. Georgia Francis, a proud chicken hawk thank you, who earned a women's basketball scholarship to Fisk University awesome and came back and made such an indelible mark on the children of the Virgin Islands. So we would like for Bill's sponsor, the Honourable Dwayne M. DeGraff, to speak to this measure.
- 1:43:45 Thank you. Good morning. Good morning. You know, I want to clear up one thing first. All the bills that you see here only have my name on this one. But all of us vote yes. all 15 senators voted yes i was one so all of us represented for our people uh so i just want to make sure that is said no you know miss francis being a teacher when when i i i was uh quizzing eudora ken and chs students here sitting down because i know those are things that she would do and they answered all the questions uh excellent but um impact on the young generation is what ms francis is about um and not only as a musician but as passing on what the future of virgin islands is and i think like i asked one of the students really what were they here for and they said well they were here to just you know do a song or two and you know be a part of it but but I want them to understand that they are part of the future, they are part of history.
- 1:45:05 On this day, 100 years from now, when I, great-great-grandchildren, look back and they see you, they're going to see history. So we're here making history. Incidentally, this is about, I think this is about my eighth Virgin Islander that I've named either a road or building after. And that's the kind of stuff I like to do because we are second to none. And it's, like I always tell them, the only question I think they got wrong, really, as Ms. Francis would probably gig them on, is I asked them what was the greatest neighbourhood in the world, and they couldn't answer, Savant. But again, you know, and why I say that is because my parents always tell me all would be good because people watching you. I've been watching Miss Frances for years, how she intermingled with children of our Virgin Islands. I see her being strong. I had a couple of times where I said, wow, she's going to beat them down.
- 1:46:12 I mean, being strong, but to get a word across and serious and to let them know that, hey, you know, we're not trying to keep you down. We're here trying to build you up, but you got to go in a certain way and be a certain way about it. You know, I found out that she was also an avid basketball player, so she could have gone a different direction. She'd have been running the WNBA now. Now, she chose to be, you know, this is, and for Ms. Francis, it's not about being, again, a musician to me. I didn't look at her as being a musician. I looked at her as the impact she had on, as somebody was saying, hundreds, thousands of young people here in the territory. And I think that's the message I wanted to get across to the students from Eudora Ken, the students from Charlton Mali High School, that there are great people among us.
- 1:47:03 and, Ms. Francis, you might not think that you weren't being watched, but people are looking at you, and I had the intent on naming or honouring her. That was my initial intent. Mr. Chris George from the Lieutenant Governor's Office, in the road section, he singled me out one day, and he said, I see you're going to honour Ms. Francis. Let's name Rumour Drive after her. Rumour Road is the road that comes down from Dotsie, elscu hill the old rapoon hill and from there down to mandela circle which connects on to if you're going back toward the south side the east um elmudi roebuck drive so for me gear it are all the colonial names of the virgin islands we have we have appraised of reason from that put on virgin islanders and it is so fitting to have uh former senator attorney judy gomez who i named the highway after her uh from down by the graveyard going west on this day here with miss francis so majority francis like i said the impact you've had on me is being a a resident of this community seeing the great things that that you have done in music uh in representing your family name you You have not just did well for children and stuff going for you. You have represented your family name. So anybody who's your family should be proud of this young woman. Anybody who's a Virgin Islander should be proud of all of these individuals because of the impact.
- 1:48:49 Man, they only got to them before it got to them. Because I was going to name a road or something after every one of them. So without any further ado, I give you Through the Master of Ceremonies, Ms. Georgia-Francis. All senators, you can come forward for the plaque presentation. and the Department of Public Works for the mini road sign.

- 1:49:59 An act honoring Georgia Francis for her community service and contributions to the youth of the Virgin Islands in the area of music by renaming a portion of Rumor Drive as Georgia Francis Drive. Family, friends, and supporters. Thank you.
- 1:51:18 Thank you. Oh, John. Thank you.
- 1:52:48 And as Ms. Francis is coming to the podium, I would like to recognize the presence of our Senate Secretary, our Senate Secretary, Avery L. Lewis and Senator Kurt Viallet. But Senator Kenneth Gittins, our Vice President, I'm going to recognize him for some remarks. Sorry about that. Good morning to all. You know, I couldn't sit back there and not say something and Miss Georgia there, because, you know, her work has inspired our children to dream boldly.
- 1:53:47 And I was just telling her, I'm sure that she doesn't remember me like that, but back in the day, I was really slim, you know. That's when I was a young police officer, and I came from St. Croix, like Gotu Salomon was saying, and I travelled with the varsity teams from St. Croix to St. Thomas, and it was Ms. Georgia who inspired me to work with a teacher at Central High School to have the first marching band at St. Croix Central High School. And every time we came to St. Thomas, I was like, man, if they could do it, we could do it too. And she was like a drill sergeant with these children. I have never been no place else and see that 6, 7 o'clock in the night, students still at the school. And all because of teachers like these two that we see being honoured today. And we're missing that, and I continue to tell people, if we really want to take control of our streets, let's first take control of our homes. Take it from these two leaders that we're, or all these leaders, but these two educators that we're honoring today. And if we have that dedication, like we saw then, today, we can do it. Thank you.
- 1:55:24 Thank you. All right, Ms. Francis, you're recognized for your remarks. Good morning. Morning, Senate President Potter. all the senators of the 36th legislature, my classmates, family, friends. Congratulations to my fellow honorees, and good morning to the listening audience out there, and they are far. You discipline those whom you love. Everybody always knew I always say that.
- 1:56:20 You discipline those whom you love. If you want a child to go in the right direction, you guide them to do so. That was the first thing from my mom, Lopi. Everybody know her as Lopi, Yuli Lopi Lopez. Our first teachers are moms and dads. Say goodnight. Thank you. They were our first teachers. So I got to discipline those whom you love. This has been my motto for the 40 years of service as a band director and music educator here in St. Thomas community. I can't give you a final number because I'm actually still in the classroom at All Saints Episcopal School.
- 1:57:11 So last year, when I finished at CAHS, I did a 30-year stint. And sorry to say, the governor came up with this thing about if you work over 30 years, you have to give 16% of your salary back. So I'm like, OK, no, there's an exit bonus. I can leave with an exit bonus, and I'm going to leave.
- 1:57:41 Antilles courted me. So I went and I gave Antilles five years. And then I said, OK, I'm going to go home. Phone ring again. All Saints. Gave them five years. And yesterday, last year, in the last faculty meeting, I put on a graduation cap and gong and said that this class graduated, and I was graduating as well. So September, I was actually on my way to, I traveled with this group.
- 1:58:12 I was actually on my way to Ghana. Ms. Francis, we still need a music teacher. I was like, but I graduated last year. So I'm back. The schedule was a little bit more flexible. Today, I would have been in class till 11 o'clock. But I'm still in the classroom. So I can't give you a definitive number as to the 40 plus. But here I am. And then so with that, you know I'm on second generation, because thank you to Mr. Gabriel, I'm teaching. Well, I was teaching his daughter before she went over to Antilles. But I'm on second, third generation, folks. So hopefully, at some point, people will allow me to go home and sit down and do nothing, OK?
- 1:59:05 So as I said, I am the daughter of Yuli Lopez and Manasseh Francis, that's the bus line Francis. I actually have seven brothers. We have one in the audience, Austin Thomas. And I don't know him by Austin Thomas. I know him by Black Man 88. But you couldn't come to my mother house and ask for Black Man 88, because she'll tell you she ain't christened a child named Black Man 88. She christened him Austin Thomas. And so we are native sons from Oldhausen.
- 1:59:44 Mr. Solomon, you from Newhausen? We from Oldhausen, Portland, Pearson Garden. That's what we call Oldhausen, right? Started out in one-room classroom, Miss Thomas. And that's the late Judge Audrey Thomas's mom. She had a one-room classroom. And so we started before a locker school got built. See, he said he went at fourth grade. I went at third grade to Lockett School. Atalita Kankara and Shalomali High School. I always knew I loved teaching. So I knew that that was going to be my craft.
- 2:00:23 Music became the vehicle of choice when, during my high school years, I was able to go to exchange performances. Ms. Garfield, remember, we went to Mamaronek, New York. We were little freshmen. You see the milk in our face from

being freshmen. I played with a local entity called the International Orchestra. It traveled between St. Thomas and St. Croix. We did musicals. We did plays. I went to summer enrichment programs and Michigan. So I'm like, hmm, this music has a thing. I'm traveling. I'm going about, and I'm doing different things, and I'm having fun. So then music became the vehicle.

- 2:01:08 So after my high school years, I studied at Fisk, Florida State. I even got the Marcel De Castro Fellowship, which allowed me a year of study at Berklee School of Music. Fast forward, I came back home, and I started teaching at Locker School under the direction of Ms. Bianca Andre. It's all the old stalwarts. I was a Joseph Gomez with Ms. Armasua, OK? I was kind of adopted and mentored by Ms. Gwendolyn Kent.
- 2:01:47 So we did dinner. She'd take me out. This is how you eat. This is you go to concert. So I was a mentee of Ms. Gwendolyn Kent. So the old heads kind of looked at me and started shaping me to become the person that I am today. And then I became the first female director at Charles Marley High School. And I knew a number of persons expected me to fall on my face because everybody was enamored with Mr. Austin Van Zandt, who had left and went to the university.
- 2:02:30 And so you know, not your little child. I studied. I read discipline stuff, educational strategies, found whatever I would do to help myself in the classroom. And that came into me. And nobody would ever think that my first year as the band director, there was this student. He made me cry. If you could ever think Ms. Georgia France is crying. He made me cry because he missed Mr. Austin Vincent.
- 2:03:08 And so as well as, you know, kids will try you. So I went out of the classroom crying. And then that night, I came back, and I was like, no, no, no, no. This is my classroom. So from that day, I became the person that disciplinarian is like, no, this is my classroom. This is my turf. You're either going to follow my rules, or you got to go. Or you got to go. That incident made me the stronger person that I became. After it's like real life, no, I'm in charge.
- 2:03:46 I'm in charge. And so I've taught at the university in the evenings, CHS. When I retired, I did go to Antilles, and I taught at Antilles School for five years. As I said, I left there, and then All Saints call. And here I am at All Saints. Through my tenure at CHS, I try to provide my students with some of the same experiences that was given to me as a student. Because remember, I did all that traveling, playing in various groups. So, what I did is I found persons that would help me, help my kids go to summer enrichment programs, jazz camps. So, that was Reuben Rogers. Marching band camps. So, that's when I started learning about marching band. So, I wasn't the panacea for everything. I knew I needed help figuring out stuff. What would I do? send my students to get trained and they have to come back and in turn teach and do what was necessary to further the program okay that's that's basically what happens realizing that opportunities presented themselves and you can use the students to help you to help facilitate and move stuff further through that also as a group where Sean and John we remember we traveled where we go New York Canada Toronto was it Washington DC we did Clinton's inaugural event I tried to combine when all the schools so I would write the letters to DC and what I
- 2:05:41 did is I combined all the schools, got a sample of students from St. Croix, got a sample of students from St. John. We put together and we become, we're the Virgin Islands, it ain't St. Thomas, we're the Virgin Islands so we would travel, we do that kind of stuff. I've taken the kids to Argentina with the help of Babe Monsanto we've done California we've done London these are experiences that you can never take away from these kids I always say to a parent when we went to see the Toronto Blue Jays play baseball when that dome open you can never talk about that as a parent only the child can talk about it because they're the ones that experienced it.
- 2:06:35 These are the things that I wanted to provide for my students to do and to become whatever. You didn't have to become a music person. He just needed to be the best person that he could possibly be and just enjoy his life and do whatever that suits his fancy. You know, I'm going to come up with the mic. But you know that we have professional performance. Mr. Rashawn Ross, Deon Parson, Ruben Rogers. We have, I have doctors, whatever. 80% of your teachers within the school system here in St. Thomas are my former students. That's why people would say in the audience, I've taught thousands, okay, and I'm still doing so. Again, congratulations to my fellow honorees. I want to say thank you to the 36th legislature for bestowing this honor upon me for doing what I love to do. I don't even think of it as work, OK? And I'm still in the classroom serving and doing whatever. I want to say, besides having the children of this community, so I'm not going to do like my son did, I do have, I didn't manage to procreate, and I have a child.
- 2:07:58 Besides having your children, I do have a child otherwise, and four grandchildren. And actually, he was here last year when the resolution. So I thought he came to surprise me and support me for my event. So the night before, I was like, OK, let me bust your bubble. I know you came to support, like, Ma, I don't know what you're talking about. I came to be confirmed on the GRS board. So, yeah, my son, Timon Clark, is one of your GRS board members. So I thought that he was here to support me when, in fact, he actually was coming for his own event. So, yeah, and through him, as I said, I have four grandchildren, two boys, two girls. They load them on the ark by twos. So he gave me four. Two girls, two

boys. And his name is Timin Clark. So when you hear the name Timin Clark on your GRS board, that's Ms. Georgia Francis, his son. OK? So thank you again, and good morning. Thank you very much. I'm also wondering what it was like to be in Ms. Francis' class as well, after she became the disciplinarian. I'm wondering how that went. I'm sure we would have. Last but not least, we're now turning to Devilry Country, someone who has attained global recognition for his musical talents and whom we love dearly as a Virgin Islander for his philanthropic spirit.

2:10:16 We now honour with a key Brian Benidimas Wulay. Please stand and be recognized. You can be seated. The sponsors of this legislation are Senators Ray Fonseca, Angel L. Bocas, Marvin Blighton, Javon E. James Sr., and co-sponsored by Senator Samuel Carrion. So we welcome to the podium Senator Ray Fonseca to speak to this measure. Cebula, you can be seated, or you can stand.

2:10:52 Why you like how big y'all want to go? Well, sir, well, sir, popa. Blessings and good afternoon to everyone. Yes, I got a follow-up on that because most of the senators in the 36th legislature, we have the biggest contingent, the Eudora Ken Pasi. We got our Senate President, Potter. We got Senator Carla Joseph, Senator Angel Boulkes, Senator Marvin Blyden, and of course myself, Papa. Good afternoon to everyone and congratulations to all the honorees, Miss Frances, Miss Blyden, and your brother Rob Blyden, one of my frat brothers, also Gutu, Arthur Solomon, we call him the goose. You know, one thing he forgot to mention also with his daughter is that I'm her godfather. So he was busy, busy, you know, but thank you.

2:12:25 And also Myron Corbett, his daughter, Myron and I are real close friends. Spent a lot of time together. We traveled a lot together. So, nobody want to see us together, but it don't matter, no. Because I got you. How do you do on Fred Gregory? So it is a great honor and a privilege for us to get the approval of Bill number 35-0285.

2:13:09 And I want to congratulate all my colleagues in the 35th legislature, because all the senators signed on to this bill. It became act number 8926. And normally, Brian Boulaye, you know him as the DJ with ACON. But you know I'm going to give you some detailed history and information about him. He was born in 1977 in St. Thomas to Claudina Bonau and Benny Bollai. I'm sorry. I got a little sore throat. As a matter of fact, I got to apologize for that, because I can't forget this. We also have the new combined CEO for the Roy Lester Snyder Hospital and the Wang Louie Hospital, Ms. Darlene Baptiste. You can please stand. We can put the mic, the camera on her, Darlene Baptiste. Congratulations. Now both hospitals is under one administration, and that's the boss woman, Darlene. She used to be my boss also. When she was the Commissioner of Health, I was her chief assistant. But getting back to Benny Demos, he attended Benjamin Oliver Elementary School, Brota Bushelta Middle School, and, of course, Ivana Eudora Ken High School.

2:14:38 Well sup, opa? So in his early childhood years, he was captivated by the melodies of music and started playing the saxophone. That's right, the saxophone. Benedimus displayed a profound affection for the art of disc jockeying, DJing, and started DJing when he was in the fourth grade, allowing him to nurture his innate talent and passion for musical expression. In 1997, he attended Maynard State University in North Dakota, where he made the decision in his freshman year to transition from playing the saxophone to dedicating himself full-time to the craft of DJing.

2:15:27 In 1998, Benny Demos continued his academic journey at Western Wyoming Community College, and in 2003, the artist known as Akon enlisted Benny Demos as his personal DJ, propelling him into the whirlwind of opportunities where he entertained audiences not only for Akon, but also for a roster of renowned artists, including Rock City. That's right, our own Thomas Brothers, TLC, Milani, Foyana, Chantel, Cardinal, Offshall, and Eve. In 2004, Benny Dimas contributed to the signing of RCT to Acon's record label, Convict Music, and he also played a pivotal role in the signing of Canadian superstar Cardinal of Sin and Convict. And in 2005, Benny Dimas assisted Rock City in securing their first writing placement on Akon's eight-time platinum album, Convicted.

2:16:39 Awesome. Congratulations. Benny Deimos earned global recognition as entertainer extraordinaire, showcasing his talent as a DJ, producer, screenwriter, film director and artist manager. manager and he built the loyal global following true performances in over 180 countries including Germany, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, Nigeria, Egypt and the Virgin Islands to name a few. In 2011, Benny Demos was honored as a global ambassador of Liberia, West Africa by former President Ellen Johnson. And in 2019, Benny Dimas opened the MTV European Awards held in Spain by introducing Akon and the awards show host Becky G. Benny Dimas has quietly contributed to the success of numerous popular musicians, including Kenrick Lamar, Lloyd, Jada Kingdom, WizKid, TLC, Eevee, DJ, Ape Man. Benedimus launched his own management company, the Purple Beacon Management and Touring, where he manages talents such as R-City and Jamaica superstar Jada Kingdom. Benedimus has demonstrated a philanthropic spirit in so many ways, including collaborating with a team of Virgin Islanders in Atlanta to transport 24 40-foot shipping containers filled with supplies to the Virgin Islands after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Awesome.

- 2:18:33 And, of course, most of us know him for this, sponsoring the Virgin Islands men's all-star basketball games, bringing Akon and Rock City to St. Thomas and St. Croix to visit children in local schools and spread information to youth. He also has the Benny Demos Foundation and he has privately provided family-oriented activities on St. Thomas such as the Luminate bike ride and of course the Carnival kickball tournament, another thing that he's famous for. These These activities have allowed him to donate school supplies for teachers on St. Thomas, St. Croix and provide donations to other local non-profit organizations such as the Family Resource Center, My Brother's Workshop, City of Refuge Church, the Mamba Mentality Basketball Tournament, St. Thomas Rescue, St. Thomas Basketball Explorers, Young Women's Christian associates kc art creations apc classic tournament and big man 40 things basketball tournament awesome and on and on and on a native son of the soil so in recognition and appreciation of his outstanding achievements in the music and entertainment industries and for his contributions to the virgin islands community benny dimas is awarded the official key to the virgin islands and today we are honoring him this bills honor him for all his achievements and he will be presented the official key to
- 2:20:36 to the Virgin Islands. Congratulations, Benidimas. Blessings, brother. And I also wanted to say, I also wanted to say congratulations to Sasso. Normally, when you see Sasso, it's condolences, but today's congratulations. Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Blessings. Thank you, all senators, please come forward for the plaque presentation.
- 2:21:36 and act honoring and commending Brian Benidimas Boulay for his outstanding achievements in the music and entertainment industries and for his contributions to the Virgin Islands community, awarding him the official Key to the Virgin Islands. Thank you.
- 2:22:36 Friends, families, and supporters, you can join the honoree in the well. Thank you.
- 2:23:36 music Thank you. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.
- 2:25:36 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:27:36 Oh, my God. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back.
- 2:30:36 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:32:06 Thank you. All right, Mr. Boulay? Mr. Boulay? The microphone is yours for remarks.
- 2:33:35 is afternoon all right good afternoon to everyone in the building tonight today this afternoon this morning since we were all so confused earlier um i made a promise to my wife that i would not embarrass her today so just so everybody know I'm going to keep my promise I'll make sure that I do not embarrass her at all with the things that I just say when I am a microphone thank you to all the senators who signed on for this bill greatly appreciated most of them have said to me in one way or another it was very long overdue some of them actually thought i had it already it was it was like wait you just have not gotten this and it was like no but we're here right now um i want to talk deeply about friendship and the things that you do as friends um i have the akon band and vj is here uh akon has a show today in saudi arabia and all of us said we're not going so none of us have a job anymore just so you know but mike brian ak man i thank you all so much for being here with me um a lot of y'all know me to be a road manager first and now i'm a manager also beginning with deejaying but i learned all my road management skills from mr ron bird who's in the building right here um years upon years of learning and studying under his tutelage just
- 2:35:34 watching what he's been doing um chinway osezi is in the building chinway was a lady that gifted me the first thousand dollars that i needed to buy my beat machine so that i could become the producer that i became um i try to make sure i catch everybody mr farrell is the band teacher well mr harry mr emmanuel first then mr harry and then mr farrell whose hair had the biggest impact on my life as a youngster um i would always say that after seventh grade i turned to the dark side that's when i really start uh meddling into the streets and the street stuff in which led me to being expelled from the durakin high school but i'm still always going to be a devil ray okay um honestly speaking i'd never felt so uncomfortable in my life as to when miss francis was up and all those chicken hawks came up and stood in front of me it was by far the most uncomfortable thing for me but i was able to get through it so i thank y'all um it's unfortunate i have to share this room with chicken hawks today babe am i going good so far i ain't embarrassing yet right i haven't have i said something okay okay i know just making sure but i just want to make sure that i get to everybody that i really need to get to my brother francis is here my brother is the one that i actually learned how to dj from so everything dj wise that came from me came from him
- 2:37:40 so and shyla chill we we're coming out um my mother claudina bulli is here in the building ladies and gentlemen. Stand up ma so they could see you. Stand up please. I don't think my mother ever thought that she would have a son that would have this much love from the community before or you know she would be in this position but here we are ma. We here. I gave my mother so much grief when i was coming up when i did turn to the dark side um but you know through my

years of my friendships with my peoples in the communities i was able to really persevere persevere persevere which one is it persevere there we go persevere and and and i was able to do good and great things and what i did do as i got older and i learned from a lot of the mistakes that i did make when i was giving mr farrell and my mother and some of my other friends here grief was as i got older i said to myself you know all the things that i seen happening to me when i was coming up and i didn't have someone to talk to or i didn't have someone to really sit me down mr farrell did let me not say that but um i just want to say that it really helped me as a when i got older to look back on the things that i had issues with and troubles with to say those are the things that were missing when i was coming up so i wanted to be that person for the community when i got into a position and that is the reason why i am the way i am today um i didn't grow up with my biological father but melbert matthias is here and he is the one that actually raised me as a father that was my father figure in the house i learned how to be a troublemaker from my big sister diane who's here in the house okay um i'm just making sure i'm missing anyone or forgetting anyone before i get here to my beautiful wife

2:40:14 ebony hill bulli um who's former senator hill's daughter everyone um natalia her sister is here and my three daughters are here jelani kennedy carly's i'm missing one more i have four daughters y'all um she's in the states now the oldest one is in the states but um i really want to thank everyone for being here for me and i want to say that the way that y'all are showing up here for me is the way that i've showed up for my friends time and time again especially when people felt like or when my family felt like i shouldn't have showed up for certain people at certain times but it's at the worst times is when you actually need your friends to stand next to you all right So, as you guys, Shelo and Tony, big ups to you guys for being here with me for my testimony. I just want to say that. Thank you, guys.

2:41:27 Levi, we have to talk when this is over because, all right. But I know there's some stuff that's going on in the government these days, including my best friend, Calvert White. And a lot of people may have felt disappointed in seeing me walking with my friend. But again, when you're at your lowest, you need friends to be able to stand next to you. you need friends to be able to support you and like i said with the convict band with acon's band being here and not going out to saudi arabia for that show today i really commend them for doing that i have joss springett in the building i have jessica grell in the building these are women that has been with me since uh jessica we were in head start we start from head start together and come all the way up they care that's crazy that's crazy yeah but again long lasting relationships is what really has gotten me to where i'm at today my long lasting relationships with rock city is what helped me to get them signed to get them their first writing placement i've always been that guy in the background not wanting credit for much not getting credit for much even to the skate park that's in freedom hall right now i'm a big advocate for that i've helped in facilitating getting the park here to the virgin islands whether it's known or not known but these are things that you do in the background and everything that you do for your people should not be blasted or commemorated or all that type of stuff you just gotta do things because you know it's the right thing to do love y'all thank you so much for those for those words and And we'd like to recognize the Ivana Eudorican music program students for a selection. Oh, I'm sorry. I am so sorry. The C, I'm sorry.

2:43:54 And you guys are looking at me like I will not touch this guitar. I am sorry. My apologies. The Charlotte Amali High School music program students for our selection. guitar solo Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you.

2:50:36 Thank you. Thank you to the music programs of both high schools for being here today with us. Ladies and gentlemen, we have witnessed the honoring of six extraordinary Virgin Islanders.

2:51:20 James Sasso, Myron Corbett, Arthur Gutu Salomon, Ronald Alfonso Slimo Blyden, Georgia Francis, and Brian Benedimas Boulay. They are truly extraordinary. Please give them one final round of applause. Their names will now live on in our record books, our roads, our facilities, and their legacy will be remembered for generations to come.

2:51:56 As always, we encourage the viewing and listening audience to visit the Legislature's website and utilize our Bill Tracker feature so that you can learn more about these honorees and others that we have honoured and recognised. As we close out this ceremony, I'd like to thank the staff of the Legislature, our Public Affairs Division, for their awesome graphics, for being out on the road yesterday taking those photos, as well as our Protocol Officer, Mr. Von Atlee, the Business Office, the Operations Division, Executive Office Team, our Chaplain, and, of course, the Senatorial Staff, the Office of the Senate President, for all of their work on this event. And at this time, to close us out, please welcome the Senate President of the 36th Legislature, the Honorable Milton E. Potter, for closing remarks. No, we won't. Good afternoon, everybody. Georgia, I have a pan.

2:52:54 I bought a pan about September of last year. It looked exactly like that one there. Somehow the sound, I just can't get to sound the way that young man. I don't know if it's something I'm doing wrong or if it's something with a pan. But I think it's me. But give that band a round of applause again. Those guys are excellent. They're exceptional. I mean, it's inspiring when I see young people doing big things. you know, doing tremendous things. I want us to really give the musicians, as

well as the vocalists, for my Vanuadore Ken High School, my alma mater, as well as Charlotte Amali High School, for doing big things. One thing I've learned, right, all you need to give Virgin Islanders is a chance, an opportunity. And we will soar to higher heights. So I hope we will really put our young people position to get these types of opportunities for us to support them so anything we have anything that we have here in the legislature for the coming months for the rest of this year we're bringing them back let's get a round of applause again finally let's give all of the honorees a great rousing round of applause Thank you for your contributions to this territory.

2 : 54 : 28 Thank you very much. I've always said that progressive communities honor, support, commend and recognize those among us who achieve excellence in whatever field. Whether it's music, whether it's sports, no matter what it is, we need to honor and support them. As someone said earlier today, if we don't support our own, who else will? Who else will? So thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for supporting this event. I think we have some food downstairs. We have some food downstairs? I think we have some food downstairs for you guys. We appreciate you. We respect you. Have a great rest of the day, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

2 : 55 : 21 The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. Bless the food, Lord, and bless the fellowship that we may and forever remember that all good things come from you. Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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.

- 3x **Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory, Donna Fret-Gregory
- 3x **Senator Fred Gregory**
the surname alone also matches: Donna A. Frett-Gregory; Donna Frett-Gregory
- 2x **Senator Angel L. Bulkes Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Angel Boulkes
- 2x **Senator Carla Joseph**
- 2x **Commissioner Derrick Gabriel**
heard in this transcript as: Gabriel
- 2x **Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna Fred Gregory
- 2x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: DeGraff
- 2x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**
heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson
- 2x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Kenneth Gittins
- 2x **Senator Kurt Viallet**
heard in this transcript as: Kurt Viallet
- 2x **Senator Marvin Blyden**
- 2x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
- 2x **Senator Samuel Carrion**

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.

Bill 35-0027	Act 8938 · An Act honoring and commending Mr. Myron Corbett posthumously for his many contributions to the youth of the territory and renaming the gymnasium at the Charlotte Amalie High School ·The Arthur ·Gutu· Solomon and Myron ·MC· Corbett Gymnasium· ---0
Bill 35-0285	Act 8926 · An Act honoring and commending Bryan ·Benny-Demus· Boulai for his outstanding achievements in the music and entertainment industries and for his contributions to the Virgin Islands community and awarding him The Official Key to the Virgin Islands af
Act 8939	Act 8939 · An Act honoring and commending police officers for the service they provide to the community and to recognize fallen law enforcement officers posthumously ---0
Act 8926	Act 8926 · An Act honoring and commending Bryan ·Benny-Demus· Boulai for his outstanding achievements in the music and entertainment industries and for his contributions to the Virgin Islands community and awarding him The Official Key to the Virgin Islands af
Act 8938	Act 8938 · An Act honoring and commending Mr. Myron Corbett posthumously for his many contributions to the youth of the territory and renaming the gymnasium at the Charlotte Amalie High School ·The Arthur ·Gutu· Solomon and Myron ·MC· Corbett Gymnasium· ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 36-0007