

Good morning everyone.

First off, I would like to thank The Honorable Senator Myron D. Jackson, The Chairman of Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth & Recreation, distinguished colleagues of this wonderful body, and the 31th Legislature of these U.S. Virgin Islands. I would also like to say good morning to those of you in this room as well as the listening audience whether you're listening by radio or watching on television.

My name is Bingley G. Richardson III, but most people call me Junior. I am the third of my father's seven children, but his first son. I am here to represent my father, the former Senator, Business Owner and Captain Bingley G Richardson Sr.

I know he would've liked to be here this morning, but he's unable to attend due to health reasons.

My father, Bingley G Richardson Sr. was born here on the island of St. Thomas on September 18, 1935, to the late Bingley E. Richardson of St Thomas V.I. & Lillian M. Smith of Jost van Dyke, British V.I. My father was born and raised in Savan. As a child, my father attended primary schools here in St Thomas and in Puerto Rico. He attended high school here in this legislature building and in the Bronx, New York City.

While in New York, my father became interested in mechanics and fascinated about how planes propelled. As a result, he enlisted into the United States Air Force where he proudly served and was honorably discharged after serving four (4) years. While serving our great Nation, my father visited several places such as Newfoundland, Canada and South Korea shortly following the Korean War. During his enlistment in the US Air Force, he simultaneously completed his high school education and studied courses at the University of Maryland.

In 1958, Senator Richardson returned to New York City and was employed by the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation. Ten years later in 1968, he returned home to St Thomas where he held positions with the Virgin Islands Government's Department of Housing and Health. Despite working for the government, his passion and love were always for the waters surrounding these islands, and he was always thinking about the abundance of food in our waters. As a result, he started fishing with his 25 foot boat, Sea Bay, to help support his growing family.

With a passion and love for these islands, Senator Richardson also became actively engaged in social concerns facing our community and later organized citizens in support of the "Free Beach Movement" advocating for allowing public access to all local beaches throughout the territory. He was never the type of person to sit behind a desk, so Senator Richardson left public service and obtained his Coast Guard certification as a 100 ton vessel operator. During that period, he was the first Virgin Islander to do so. With that certification, he became employed as an Operations Manager at Lindberg Bay Center, Inc. an inter island ferry service which included a fleet of passenger vessels named, the **Bomba Charger**, the **Bomba Challenger** and the **Bomba Cruiser**. Through having an excellent maritime record, his Coast Guard certification was later up-graded to a 500 ton vessel operator, which allowed him to pilot much larger vessels.

In 1978, Senator Richardson seized the opportunity to purchase the **Bomba Charger**, and he became the independent owner of Charger Inc. Under his leadership, there were daily scheduled ferry services between downtown Charlotte Amalie and Tortola including special trips to Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke with charters to St. Croix and Anegada. Seeing another available opportunity, my father expanded his enterprise and later opened the Tortola Wharf Bar & Restaurant which specialized in local cuisines.

With a commitment to make a difference in his community, Senator Richardson ran for a seat in the Legislature of the Virgin Islands. In 1988 in his capacity as senator, he served as Vice President of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislature, and prepared & presented testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives. He also chaired the Community on Education and Youth. He was re-elected again to the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislature and chaired the Community on Planning and Natural Resources. During that time, he authorized legislation and served as Chairman of the Great Seal Commission, which selected our current Seal of the Virgin Islands. In 1990, he ran unsuccessfully with the former Governor Juan F. Louis on an Independent ticket for Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands. However, he was re-elected in 1993 for a third term in the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislature and served as President of the Legislature.

Among my father's accomplishments as Senate President of the 20<sup>th</sup> legislature, the Virgin Islands Government purchased the West Indian company allowing the Virgin Islands to have absolute control over its ports, and working with other colleagues, the Virgin Islands Maritime Academy was established.

After leaving the Legislature, my father returned to his passion and started piloting barges that were given to the Virgin Islands Government by the US Army, which ran weekly between St. Thomas and St. Croix carrying supplies for our local government.

Knowing Senator/Captain Richardson and the knowledge he possesses, he was quickly recruited by the BVI Government and became Marine Manager and the Port's Facility Security Officer for the British Virgin Islands Port Authority. In that capacity, he developed a comprehensive Port Security Plan, which ensured all ports and harbors for each of the British Virgin Islands met the United States Homeland Security Readiness Standards, making them among the 1<sup>st</sup> in the Caribbean to become in compliant.

Senator Richardson is also a certified scuba-diver and an aquatic instructor. He also was the Director of the Sea Explorers program and the Associate Director of Aquatics Northeast Region Camping School for the Boy Scouts of America. He produced, directed and narrated several educational films on the history and culture of the Virgin Islands. Cavalcade Africana was a carnival troop that he organized portraying cultural heritage themes. One of those themes led to promoting Virgin Islands togetherness that resulted in a popular play, titled the **Strummo Wedding** which was performed locally at the Reichold Center for the Arts.

In 1987, in recognition for his contributions to the public schools system, Senator Richardson received the "Volunteer of the Year Award". He also served on the board of directors for Self-Help, Inc. and the V.I. Power Boat Racing Association. In addition to his many civic activities, he often collaborated with his good friend Brownie on WSTA 1340 AM Radio as was a regular guest on the Walter and Brownie program where they discussed topics on Virgin Islands culture and perspectives.

In 2007, Senator Richardson traveled with a contingent of Pan Africanists and other Virgin Islanders to Ghana in recognition of their 50<sup>th</sup> year on independence.

My father Senator Richardson was married to the late Marilyn E. Donovan for 53 years, and he is the proud father of seven children: Janice Richardson, Laura Ofoha, Yours truly, Stephanie Richardson, Shirley Richardson-Edwards, Sekou Richardson and Taiwo Richardson, he has 21 grand-children and 5 great grand-children.

In conclusion, I again would like to thank the Honorable Myron D. Jackson, The Chairman of Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth & Recreation and the distinguished men and women of this wonderful body for considering a bill to honor of my father, Bingley G. Richardson, Sr.

Thank you!