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Honorable Myron D. Jackson, Legislative Secretary
Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building, P.O. Box 1690
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00804

October 13, 2015

Dear Senator Jackson,

The following is the presentation I will make before your committee on Thursday October 15, 2015:

Good morning Senator Jackson, members of the Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth and Recreation Committee, family, friends and all others gathered here. I am honored to have been invited to be a part of this hearing regarding your resolution honoring and commending Senator Bingley G. Richardson, Sr., for his career accomplishments and contributions to the Virgin Islands, through his service in government, the marine industry, media, culture and the arts.

In the 40 years of our wonderful friendship, there are hundreds of things I know about, and stories I could shared with you in support of your timely decision to honor this distinguished Virgin Islander, but in the interest of time I'll mention just a few.

I guess it was inevitable that Senator Richardson and I would become very good and close friends, for I was told that our respective fathers were also good friends. Our friendship began in the mid 70s and blossomed when he and I realized we had many things in common. We both love the sea and all it has to offer, on, in, and under it. We also realized that we both have a love for the visual and performing arts, and most importantly, we know we had to do whatever we could to encourage the youth to explore the opportunities and take advantages of what was available to them in both the marine and arts industries. We both served in the United States Air Force, and, we both enjoyed teaching and sharing knowledge.

From his days as Director of the Sea Explorer's Program and his service as the Associate Director of Aquatics Northeast Region Camping School for the Boy Scouts of America Sea Scouts, up through his ownership of Charger Inc., and his outstanding service as a senator, Bingley G. Richardson, Sr. demonstrated his love for the people and especially the youth of his beloved Virgin Islands.

He offered the opportunity for interested youngsters and some, not-so-young members of the community to be trained, to learn and serve as captain or crew on the Bomba Charger. As a matter of fact, there are a number of captains and other mariners working today in the Virgin Islands and elsewhere because of Captain Richardson's encouraging, mentoring and teaching. I am one of those persons who trained, learned and eventually served as a captain on the Bomba Charger. And this year I celebrate my 31st year as a Coast Guard licensed captain, thanks to Captain Senator Bingley Richardson.

Numerous community and civic organizations and events were supported financially through his company Charger Inc.. For example he sponsored at least one recording by Milo and The Kings, and sponsored a softball team. The carnival troupe Cavalcade Africana was a result of his love for historical events and Virgin Islands culture. And, in order to celebrate the 15th anniversary of his vessel's service in and around the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, and to promote the ports of call, he produced the Bomba Charger In – Float Magazine. I have a copy with me if anyone is interested in seeing it.

While I was serving as the Managing Director of the Reichhold Center for the Arts, I wanted to start a summer program through which the youth of the community could become involved in the theater. I found out that "Captain Bing", was writing or had written a stage play. I invited him to present his play, *Strummo Wedding* at the Reichhold Center, with him as director. He agreed only if I was the producer. His abilities as playwright and director were very evident from the first time he met with and spoke to the cast and crew. His play had a great story line with a wonderful moral, and the comedy was just hilarious. He made outstanding staging, blocking and movement outlines. The play was a big success, and it paved the way for subsequent summer programs such as Kwabena Davis' *Bertha*

Stay Home, Rufus Vanderpools' Big Yard Review, and Romeo Malone's Lost Child of the Stars.

Almost every morning “Captain Bing”, Irvin “Brownie” Brown and I - we were called “The Three Bs”, would sit in his restaurant and have breakfast. It was there, during our conversations that many expressions of love for, and concerns about his beloved islands, the greater Virgin Islands, were revealed. He outlined numerous ideas as to how and what he could contribute to make life better in the islands and its people - his people.

His determination to do something positive led him to organize BRACE – the Bingley Richardson Action Committee for his Election. When he met with us and outlined what his goals and objectives were, what foundation would support his platform and how he envisioned accomplishing all he had in mind, his presentation galvanized us and we set out to ensure a positive political result.

He has an outstanding record of accomplishments as senator and vice president of the 17th, 18th and 20th legislatures, respectively, and that record speaks loudly and clearly for itself.

One of the things I admire about him is his good people skills-his ability to deal with anyone, anytime, on any level and on any subject, injecting his sense of humor. His always there sense of humor often quelled situations that could have escalated into something negative.

There are other observations and stories, but I’m sure by now you have a good a good idea why I am happy to speak on behalf of my dear friend, fellow mariner, lover of the arts and community servant, Captain Senator Bingley G. Richardson Sr..

Thank you for the time afforded ne to make this presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Captain Lawrence O. Benjamin, Ed.D