

COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, HISTORIC
PRESERVATION, YOUTH AND RECREATION

BILL NO. 31-0025

Thirty-first Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 17, 2015

An Act naming the baseball field at the D.C. Canegata Ballpark and Recreational Facility
“The Valmy Thomas Baseball Field”

PROPOSED BY: Senator Sammuel Sanes

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

2 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was born in 1929 in Santurce, San Juan, Puerto
3 Rico, and grew up in the “Water Gut” neighborhood on St. Croix; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was driven by his love for baseball and received his
5 first big break during his military training while stationed in Puerto Rico; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas played with the Santurce Crabbers for thirteen years
7 before moving on to major league baseball; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in the Spring of 1957, during spring training, Valmy Thomas sealed
9 his roster spot late in camp during a game against the Cleveland Indians; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was the first Virgin Islander to play major league
2 baseball, and was signed to the New York Giants on April 16, 1957; and

3 **WHEREAS**, during his first season, Valmy Thomas started more games than any
4 other catcher for the Giants; and

5 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas played with the San Francisco Giants in 1958, the
6 Philadelphia Phillies in 1959, the Baltimore Orioles in 1960, and the Cleveland Indians in
7 1961; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was eventually invited to teach baseball in Sudan,
9 Africa, but declined the offer and subsequently returned to the Virgin Islands where he
10 committed himself to molding the lives of young sports-minded Virgin Islanders; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas initiated several sports programs including a boxing
12 program, the Puerto Rico Virgin Islands Amateur boxing program; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was instrumental in bringing to the Territory
14 outstanding personalities in the world of sports and music, including Muhammad Ali,
15 Jimmy Ellis, Sugar Ray Robinson, the King and His Court of Softball, the Harlem Globe
16 Trotters, members of the New York Yankees, Lionel Hampton, Louis Armstrong and
17 others; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was actively involved with sports-related
19 organizations, as the president of the Horse Racing Association on St. Croix, a founding
20 member of the local Olympic Organization, a member of the International Baseball
21 League, and founder of the Little League Series; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was a consultant with the Bureau of Recreation for
23 six years, setting up many baseball events which included Red Sox versus Yankees

1 exhibition games in Frederiksted, and clinics with the likes of Hank Aaron and Lou
2 Brock; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas served as Commissioner of Conservation and
4 Cultural Affairs on St. Croix, where he oversaw all recreational programs on the island of
5 St. Croix; and

6 **WHEREAS**, for more than four decades, Valmy Thomas owned the United
7 Sporting Goods store in Christiansted; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Valmy Thomas was an outspoken person who advocated good
9 government and a viable and stable economy, and often let his views on the issues
10 affecting the Territory be known through the radio and other media; and

11 **WHEREAS**, in the mid-1990's Valmy Thomas ran for a seat in the Virgin
12 Islands Legislature; Now, Therefore,

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

14 **SECTION 1.** In recognition and appreciation of his contributions to the people
15 of the Virgin Islands, particularly the youth sports community, the Legislature of the
16 Virgin Islands names the baseball field at the D.C. Canegata Ballpark and Recreational
17 Facility "Valmy Thomas Baseball Field" in honor of Valmy Thomas, the first Virgin
18 Islander to play major league baseball.

19 **SECTION 2.** (a) The Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation shall cause to
20 be prepared a distinctive sign bearing the inscription, "Valmy Thomas Baseball Field",
21 and shall conspicuously and permanently affix such sign at the front of the baseball field
22 at the D.C. Canegata Ballpark and Recreational Facility.

1 (b) Upon installation of the sign, the Department Sports, Parks and Recreation
2 shall host a change of name ceremony.

3 **SECTION 3.** (a) The sum of \$5,000 is appropriated for the fiscal year ending
4 September 30, 2015, from the General Fund of the Virgin Islands to the Department of
5 Sports, Parks and Recreation for the purchase of a new scoreboard for the Valmy Thomas
6 Baseball Field, and to carry out the provisions of section 2 of this Act.

7 (b) The sum appropriated in subsection (a) remains available until expended.

8 **BILL SUMMARY**

9 This bill seeks to name the baseball field at the D.C. Canegata Ballpark and
10 Recreational Facility “The Valmy Thomas Baseball Field”.

11 Section 1 renames the baseball field.

12 Section 2 provides for the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation to install a
13 sign and host a name change ceremony.

14 Section 3 appropriates five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for a new scoreboard and to
15 carry out the provisions of the Act.

16

17

18

19 **BR15-0253/January 30, 2015/**

20

21

22