



TESTIMONY OF PRESIDENT DAVID HALL
UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION

35TH LEGISLATURE
OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

EARLE B. OTTLEY LEGISLATIVE HALL

ST. THOMAS

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Joseph and members of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, and other members of the 35th Legislature present, other testifiers, members of the press, persons in the viewing and listening audience, ladies and gentlemen, My name is David Hall, President of the University of the Virgin Islands, and it is indeed an honor for me to appear before this Committee to provide testimony in support of Bill 35-0123, which seeks to honor Dr. Alfred O. Heath, who has contributed greatly to the people of the Virgin Islands.

My testimony will focus specifically on his contributions to the University of the Virgin Islands. His presence, insights, and service have made a tremendous difference in the quality and stature of UVI, and I am honored for the opportunity to highlight his invaluable contributions.

Dr. Heath served as a member of the Board of Trustees starting in 1978 and served continuously for 18 years and did so with distinction. Thereafter, he continued to serve the University in various capacities including on other Board Committees and has served on the Foundation for the University of the Virgin Islands since 1986. When I became President fourteen years ago, he was no longer on the Board of Trustees but was Chairman of the Foundation. The Foundation is critical to the University's success because it makes contributions to the operating budget from the endowment that it oversees. Dr. Heath as its leader was an unwavering supporter of UVI. I was amazed by the amount of genuine respect and deference that Foundation members provided to him. Though I did not know him and his history at that time, I could tell that this was a man who had helped shaped history as he lived. Fourteen years later, he still is a member of the Foundation Board though his health has slowed down his participation.

Dr. Heath is the only former Board of Trustees or Foundation Board member for whom there is a named lecture series. The Alfred O. Heath Distinguished Lecture Series has been one of the premier lecture series at the University and it has permitted us to attract world renowned speakers such as Susan L. Taylor, Charles Ogletree, Dr. Joyce Payne, Charles Dutton and many others. It was a joy to see these famous individuals feeling honored to meet and chat with Dr. Heath.

His generosity of heart led him to make consistent contributions to the University over the years. He was a donor and served as co-chair of the University's Capital Campaign that raised over \$25 Million.

Dr. Heath was a consistent supporter of our Medical School project. Local physicians respect him and he was an advocate for the values that undergird the medical school and a living symbol of what type of physicians the medical school will produce.

Universities tell their alumni what they expect in exchange for the degree they received is their time, talent and treasure. Dr. Alfred Heath did not attend or graduate from UVI, but he has given more of his time, talent and treasures to the University than any other alumni. In recognition of his exemplary service to the Board of Trustees and UVI, Dr. Heath was granted the status of Trustee Emeritus by the Board of Trustees in 1997. Additionally, in further recognition of his distinguished service and contributions to the University and the Territory, we bestowed upon him an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 2012.

Finally, what makes Dr. Heath such an outstanding person is his unique combination of service locally and internationally. For over six decades, Dr. Heath opened his doors to any person who needed medical assistance, myself included, regardless of time or situation they faced. His "bedside manner" is that of a caring, thoughtful, and knowledgeable physician who made you feel whole and noticed. Dr. Heath's dedication extended beyond our local community, as he also offered his services internationally. His selflessness and compassion were evident in his frequent trips to Haiti, where he volunteered his expertise and resources to help those with

limited access to medical care. He went there often at his own expense to serve countless individuals in need.

Through his efforts, Dr. Heath positively impacted the lives of countless individuals, embodying the true essence of a caring and altruistic physician. At the core of the University's mission is a deep sense of being of service to the people of the Virgin Islands. Dr. Heath embodies that value and the University is so proud to be associated with him in a genuine and authentic manner. For the reasons above, and countless others, I unequivocally support Bill 35-0123.

Thank you for permitting me to provide testimony for this well-deserving person and pillar of our community.