

# **Mr. & Mrs. Ray A. Clarke**

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## **TESTIMONY ON BILL NO. 35-0125**

### **An Act Posthumously Honoring the Late**

**Lt. Melbourne Clarke**

**September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Good afternoon, the Honorable Carla J. Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs, and Consumer Protection, Vice Chair, the Honorable Javan E. James, Sr., Honorable Committee Members – Honorable Senators, Kenneth L. Gittens, Samuel Carrion, Alma Francis-Heyliger, Ray Fonseca, and Milton E. Potter, non-Committee members, Central and Legislative Staff, fellow testifiers, visitors present, and members of the viewing and listening public.

I am Ray Anthony Clarke, eldest child and only son of the late Lt. Melbourne Clarke. First, on behalf of my wife LeAnne, son Ray II, and the entire Clarke family, let me take this opportunity to thank the Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens for honoring Daddy in this fashion. It certainly is a befitting way to honor one of the finest police officers to serve the people of St. Croix. Daddy began and ended his career at the old Patrick Sweeney Headquarters. Renaming Route 669, the “Police Lieutenant Melbourne Clarke Drive” warms our hearts, and for this, we thank you, Senator Gittens. I will have a big smile on my face every time I traverse this road from now on. But get rid of the speed bumps; like Daddy, I like to speed too....

Some of the key takeaways from Daddy’s twenty-five (25) year career with the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), are graduating at the top of his class as a member of the first K-9 Core for the Virgin Islands (honored by the late Delegate to Congress, Melvin Evans for the same), beginning and training the first K- 9 Core class on St. Thomas, achieving perfect scores on all exams for rank within the VIPD, among the first (1<sup>st</sup>) set of honorees for Tomorrow’s People (founder – Abdul Ali), establishing the first (1<sup>st</sup>) weekly special traffic report segment on Channel 8 with Eustace Browne as a part of the weekly newscast, and numerous awards for merit and valor. However, as a singer and musician, the biggest honor to me is Mighty

Pat's song about Daddy, fittingly named, "Officer Clarke." You know the song, "The say me name is Officer Clarke. Me bad like pit bull and me don't eat dubba!"

Daddy served with distinction and left a legacy that has lived on through the passage of time. Friends and people from all walks of life constantly remind me of Daddy's exploits as an officer and of course, the plethora of traffic tickets he issued. Truth be told, our mother, the late Janet Joyce Amaro-Clarke, was the victim of Daddy's "no-nonsense work ethic," one morning on her way to work. Yes, she was speeding, heard the siren, and pulled over. Low and behold, it was none other than her husband Melbourne Clarke. Daddy, in a very professional manner, exited the patrol car, requested the necessary items, and served Mommy with a speeding ticket! When asked why he gave his wife a ticket, Daddy replied, "If it were my Mother speeding, I would give her a ticket."

There's not a day that goes by, I don't miss Daddy. I miss his daily calls, his advice, his chastisement (which I must add was well deserved), and his overall aura. St. Croix just doesn't feel the same without him. Yet, every time I speak, look in the mirror, or just call out to my son, I can see and feel him in me. I would also like to thank a few officers who made Daddy's career with the VIPD a fruitful and meaningful one: Adelbert "Bert" Bryan, Deputy Chief Uston Cornelius, Anita Christian (deceased), Betty Wilson, Joseph "Drummer Boy" Graham, Herman Hendricks (deceased), Magnus Lovegren (deceased), Roosevelt Winkfield (deceased), Larry Oliver (deceased), James Rhymer, Sr. (deceased), Libertad Velasquez, Anton Christian (deceased), James "Jogeese" Parris, Franz "Buffy" Christian, and many more too numerous to mention...

Thank God for blessing me with my father, Melbourne Clarke, a man I continue to emulate but whose shoes I can never fill....

Thank you, and have a blessed afternoon!