

**35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

The Honorable

Carla J. Joseph

Chair of Committee

Testimony

Presented by

Dr. Nicole Craigwell-Syms

Esteemed Honorable Senator Carla J. Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection; Honorable Javan E. James, Sr., Vice Chair, distinguished Committee Members, esteemed non-committee members, and esteemed members of the viewing and listening audience, greetings.

I, Dr. Nicole Craigwell-Syms, Assistant Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Health (VIDoH), appear before you to present testimony regarding Bill No. 35-0107, an Act designed to posthumously honor and commend Ms. Fenella Cooper for her remarkable contributions to the realms of education, sports, and culture, and to designate the UVI tennis courts in her honor.

I unequivocally endorse the commemoration of the late Dr. Fenella A. Cooper's myriad contributions to the citizens of the Virgin Islands and the renaming of the tennis courts situated on the Orville E. Kean campus of the University of the Virgin Islands on St. Thomas as "The Fenella A. Cooper Tennis Complex." As a tennis player within the territory, I have personally witnessed the profound influence that not only the sport itself, but its luminaries can exert in shaping young athletes, fostering community spirit, well-being, and unity. The advantages of sports for the youth are extensive, and tennis, my personal favorite, offers myriad physical and mental benefits, rendering it a valuable pursuit for their growth, an ethos Dr. Cooper epitomized through her endeavors.

Bestowing Dr. Fenella Cooper's name upon the complex would constitute a fitting homage to her significant contributions to the sport of tennis and our community. She has played a pivotal role in advancing tennis at its grassroots, motivating numerous individuals to embrace the sport and pursue their passion for it. Her unwavering dedication, exemplary leadership, and sportsmanship epitomize the virtues we endeavor to instill within our community.

By christening the complex in honor of Dr. Cooper, we not only pay tribute to her legacy but also inspire future generations to emulate her exceptional example. It conveys a potent message that excellence, integrity, and service merit acknowledgment and reverence.

I implore the committee to give due consideration to this proposal with the utmost thoughtfulness and deliberation. The renaming of the tennis complex transcends mere symbolism; it presents an opportunity to commemorate our collective history, values, and aspirations as a community. I am firmly convinced that by honoring Fenella Anita Cooper in this manner, we shall bequeath a legacy that will enrich the lives of generations to come.

Thank you for your attentive consideration of this matter.