

Testimony on Bill No. 35-0242

Submitted by Delvin D. Duggins, Sr.

Good day Honorable Carla J. Joesph, Chairperson of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, and all senators present, viewers and listening audience, my name is Delvin Delano Duggins Sr., and today I am here to provide testimony as a 40-year professional Disc-Jockey, Radio Personality and Event Promoter, here in the territory.

It gives me great pleasure and admiration to testify today in support of Bill No. 35-0242, "A Resolution honoring and commending Miguel Santos Jr., aka" DJ Poppy Pops", for his contributions in the field of music and in radio broadcasting of musical events and local social musical events and specifically contributing to the art of deejaying and the teaching of deejaying".

In the mid-eighties, after my residencies at the Ritz Cabaret, Hot Rock Café, Jimmy'z night club, Club Z night club and Studio 54, here on St. Thomas, I moved to Orlando, Florida to play a three-month residency at a club called "Bowties". While there, there was mentioned of an individual from the Virgin Islands rocking a club downtown. So, one evening I went down to the club to check him out. What I noticed was his mixes was great, he read the crowd well, but his voice as he engaged the crowd was remarkable. The city of Orlando at that time was a diverse city, with a large majority of patrons at the club being Hispanic, therefore the Miami sound that was big at that time along with "Pops" being bilingual worked really well for him. He had a different style from how I played, however, I was impressed with how he presented himself. We exchanged pleasantries, spoke briefly, then our paths never crossed until 2003.

Throughout the years leading up to 2003, I followed his career from afar. He had the radio airwaves on lock down. Isle 95, with "**Reggae Jam Session**" was a fan favorite throughout the entire Virgin Islands and neighboring islands. He knew exactly what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. Radio Personality is an Art Form! You must grasp the concept that you are entertaining individuals that you cannot see. It's like an illusion in your mind that you are bringing to life. Pops was a master of that illusion! He brought the radio to life everyday as he graced the airwaves with his million-dollar voice and creative mixes. Hands down, Pops is the best Radio Personality I've heard around these parts, since Andrew Shachove, aka "Funkyman".

Pops was also filling up the clubs, from Anguilla, Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke, St. Thomas, St. John, Atlanta, New York City, Puerto Rico, and other islands

& cities. He was also headlining major events with his DJ skills, plus hosting events, while proudly representing St. Croix wherever he traveled.

Sometime in 2003, Pops moved to St. Thomas and was working on 105.3 Jamz. I used to hear him on the radio, and I thought he added a boost to that station. One day, my childhood friend, from Bordeaux, Mr. Craig Wade, called me and told me that he wanted to talk to Pops and I. When we did have that meeting, Pops told me he wanted us to combine our talents and start an old school duo. He stated that we will create a radio show, called "Remember the Times", and we will be on air five days a week on 105.3Jamz. I thought the idea was great, however, the selection of me to be on the radio was extremely funny. Prior to this experience, I had never been on the radio, talked on a mic, much less, hosted a radio program. So, I thought both Craig and Pops were crazy. However, if you truly know Pops, he called me every day and kept saying, don't worry Delvin, I got you! I will teach you how to do it.

Well December 1, 2003, at 6:00pm, we launched the "Remember the Times Radio Show", on 105.3 FM. Needless to say, the show was a hit. The original concept was to entertain the listeners with an old school format, then just have a dialogue about the clubs and how the party scene was back in the day. That was it, just the radio show! A few days after the launch, Pops called me and said, a beverage distribution company called him and asked him for our team to host an old school event with a product they were pushing to the public. Hence, the "Destini Old School Boatride", January 2004. "Poppy Pops & DJ Delvin, one from St. Croix and one from St. Thomas, created a phenomenal DJ group, RTT Int'l, that to this day, cannot be matched. Because of all the new developments, we created an executive team that handled the day-to-day management of the organization. Mr. Craig Wade was a partner, Mr. Henville Pole, Sr, General Manager, Mr. Clifford Graham, Financial Advisor, Ms. Lynn Millin, Legal Advisor, Mr. William "Jr." Richardson, System Manager, Ms. Cindy-Lou Barthlett, Sales Manager, and our Bar Manager was my now deceased brother, Mr. Dexter Wilson. All these individuals contributed one way or another to the effectiveness of our organization.

Every month, RTT Int'l hosted an event to satisfy our contractual agreement with our beverage sponsors. All our events were packed to capacity! Then, Pops came with another great gimmick. He's going to partner with Subway and lose weight by just eating the sandwiches. He also wrote a song called, "Big Belly Poppy", which he recorded and preformed throughout the territory.

Everything was going really well for the organization, however, Pops started to feel homesick, so he moved back to St. Croix, early 2006 and left the group. Our organization continued to thrive; however, the DJ portion of the group became DJ Delvin & Friends, with DJ Commadore from the BVI, DJ Tony Tee, and DJ Pete,

filling in with the gigs when necessary and Emmett Provost, “Emmett P” became my co-host for the radio program.

Pops and I remained in contact as we continued with our careers and families until I heard he had a major medical emergency that created an enormous setback for him. At the same time of his ordeal, I was hospitalized for months in Largo Medical Center in Florida, where I couldn't walk, move freely, and was in a sepsis state. Eventually, Pops reached out to me, and we both spoke of our medical conditions. We both agreed that it is the grace of God that has us alive today.

In July of 2022, Pops reached out to me again, he wanted to do a “Remember the Times Reunion” both on St. Thomas & St. Croix. I was hesitant to do it because I haven't played a club gig since August 2, 2009. I explained to him that I have a mental block, where on that night while I was playing in Club Jaguar, my sister was calling me to let me know my mother was dying, but I didn't hear the phone. I told him the significance of the ordeal, but for Pops I did the St. Thomas leg of the gig, but I missed the St. Croix gig due to the flight's situation with the President of the United States being on St. Croix.

To date, Pops and I are very good. We speak often and whenever I travel to St. Croix and would call him to let him know I am breathing the same air as him. I always tell him that I am proud of his nonprofit organization, where he is currently teaching the youth of St. Croix the art of DJing and Radio Personality. He is also involved in his son's baseball team and is assisting other coaches in his district by teaching baseball to the children in his community.

In closing, many don't understand the skills required to be a DJ, much less a very skillful one. You must possess timing, music theory, the understanding of music structure, and music key, and have great interactive skills. You must understand personality trait to know how to make your crowd respond. DJing is an art form! Pops learned that art form and mastered it all in DJing, Radio Personality and Event Promotion. Senators, there were no computer to sync mixes, no beat counter or beat match, no DJ programs, we had mountains of records, no wave files, or crates. Therefore, we had to learn the knowledge and skills manually. So, when I tell you Pops is one of the best in the history of this Art Form, he is. He is the only person in the Virgin Islands, who's career in the clubs may be parallel to mines.

As such, I am asking all senators to support this resolution, honoring and commending Miguel Santos Jr., aka” DJ Poppy Pops”, for his contributions in the field of music and in radio broadcasting of musical events and local social musical events and specifically contributing to the art of deejaying and the teaching of deejaying. He is worthy of this recognition, he represented St. Croix with pride and dignity, but most importantly, he loves his community and the people of the Virgin Islands.