

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen:

It is indeed a privilege and honor to be addressing this August body. I want to thank the Honorable Senator Carla J. Joseph, chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs, and Consumer Protection. I would also like to thank the primary sponsor of bill no. 35-0195, a resolution honoring and commending Mr. Willard John for his many contributions to the youth and the culture of the Virgin Islands. The Honourable Senator Marise James created not only a legal document but also a testimony to the life and accomplishments of Mr. Willard John.

I've known Mr. Willard John for many years. As a matter of fact, our first encounter was at the Elena Christian Junior High School, where he was the principal. I was working for a facility that housed children with behavioral issues, and Mr. John was in the process of suspending one of my clients. I went to the school ready to defend my client, but at the end of the conversation with Mr. John, I wanted to add more days to the suspension. Mr. John was calm and collect throughout our conversation; he respectfully addressed the student and calmly stated the reason for the suspension.

This has always been Mr. John's M.O. Cool and collect, like Shaft but without the profanity. If you are wondering who Shaft is is you are definitely not from my generation.

The History of the Virgin Islands has demonstrated the immense impact of certain individuals on our society. Through their actions and leadership, they have significantly influenced the course of our future. These remarkable individuals have confronted adversity and become victorious, leaving behind enduring legacies that will continue to shape and inspire future generations.

David Hamilton Jackson, Honorable Ruby M. Rouss, Buddhoe, Queen Mary, Honourable Juan F. Luis, Frank Rudolph Crosswaith , Denmark Vesey, Tim Duncan. Pamela C. Richards Samuel.

Some of these names you are aware of, and there are some that I know you will Google later. I purposely listed them to acknowledge the diversity of talent and the need to educate our younger generations about the individuals who have not only contributed to our society but also to the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the future, many names will be mentioned, both in an educational setting and in many social events. Names that belong to individuals who help to create a better society for us, who improve our quality of life, and who ensure that our customs and traditions will continue for generations to come.

I can confidently say that Mr. Willard John's name will be prominently featured.

He is a man of integrity, an educator, a mentor, and, to me, a dear friend.

Thank you, honourable chair, for this opportunity, and may God bless us all.