

Dr. Bert Petersen – Governor Bryan’s Nominee for the UVI Board of Trustees

Testimony

Submitted by Elaine Warren Jacobs

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The Honorable Diane T. Capehart, Chair of the Committee on Rules & Judiciary; all committee members present; other senators; listening and viewing audiences. Good morning, my name is Elaine Warren-Jacobs.

I am here today to speak on behalf of Bert, Dr. Bert Petersen, Governor Bryan’s nominee to the Board of Trustees of the University of the Virgin Islands. Dr. Petersen, then Bert, was a former student in my 12<sup>th</sup> Grade English class at the Ivana, Eudora Kean High School several years ago. As his former teacher, I invite you to imagine what this moment must mean for a teacher to speak on behalf of her student on this occasion. To be prideful is a given, but to witness his journey, even in small ways is hugely an inspiration and a hopefulness for what is and can be for the children and in essence, the people of the Virgin Islands of the United States of America.

Dr. Bert Petersen’s academic career jetted from our local public school system that set him, early, on a trajectory for academic successes at Johns Hopkins University, George Washington University, and Sloan-Kettering Hospital. His college education began at the then College of the Virgin Islands, CVI, as an Early Admissions student at the inception of that program. He took Chemistry and Calculus—typical premed courses—and distinguished himself with the highest-grade point average in both courses, in which regular college freshmen and other early admission students from public, private and parochial schools were enrolled.

His stellar achievements during and beyond the preparatory years (as a surgeon) in the medical field along with his inspiring involvements associated with furthering health care and its best treatment practices, are known to many nationally, internationally, regionally, and YES locally. A mere reading of who he is and what he has done in many and diverse places makes one’s chest swell with pride. The awards and honors he continues to receive are all wrapped in the recognition of his commitment to service and the elevation of our shared humanity. Let me tell you this: Bert, Dr. Bert Petersen is kind, gracious, and committed; and he understands what it is

to lead a life that brings value to others. Any leadership board, in my thinking, must find interest here.

Dr. Petersen's work as leader, as groundbreaker, as community advocate brings him here before this esteemed body of lawmakers.

Dr. Petersen brings with him the length and breadth of his life experience, his career achievements; his love for and commitment to this territory—his home, which shaped him. Governor Albert Bryan, in my estimation, made an excellent choice in his nomination of Dr. Bert Petersen. The nominee's assent to membership will be an assent in shaping the direction of the medical school at UVI. A bigger asset is the grounding he brings as a son of the soil whose roots are strong and deep, and who wishes to continue to impact the constant development of his home—our home.

In our community today, we can become overwhelmed by the negatives. Yet, every so often, a quality individual comes along to remind us that we also have positives—that we have value from which our university, our community, our Territory can leverage. Bert, Dr. Bert Petersen graces the top. Thank you.