

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERAN
AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

07/12/2023-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 35-0101

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

June 12, 2023

A Resolution honoring and commending Dr. Olaf “Bronco” Hendricks for his tireless years of remarkable and invaluable contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the field of psychiatry, his advocacy for social justice for individuals with behavioral health and substance use issues, and for his music

PROPOSED BY: Senators Franklin D. Johnson and Donna A. Frett-Gregory
Co-sponsor: Carla J. Joseph

1 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Olaf "Bronco" Hendricks was born on St. Croix, Virgin Islands on
2 September 28, 1944, to Olaf B. Carlisle Hendricks and Bianca Sobotker Hendricks; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks grew up in Free Gut and attended kindergarden through 12th
4 grade at St. Mary's School in Christiansted, during a time when Free Gut was known as
5 “Upstreet” because the streets are literally located uphill from the main sections of town; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks enjoyed a nurturing, close-knit community and a childhood
7 filled with romps in the street, swims in the reservoir, storytelling and stilt-walkers. Although
8 many of the families have moved from the old neighborhood, this community was so close and
9 so special that their bonds have remained. Dr. Hendricks and his neighbors formed the group
10 the "Hillsiders" that met annually; and

1 **WHEREAS**, when he was between one and two years old, Dr. Hendricks contracted
2 polio and was transferred to Puerto Rico where he was placed in an iron lung for approximately
3 9 months. While recovering in Puerto Rico, he was exposed to the Spanish language and the
4 only way of communication; and

5 **WHEREAS**, during his high school years, Dr. Hendricks learned to play the saxophone
6 and owned several horses. He loved music and horseracing, but at a very young age he decided
7 to become a physician after he had an encounter with four-term Virgin Islands Senator Randall
8 “Doc” James, M.D., and Urika Moorehead, RN in public health; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks graduated from Howard University in Washington D.C.
10 with a bachelor’s degree in zoology in 1967, and a medical degree with a specialty in Psychiatry
11 in 1972, the same year Howard University conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws degree on
12 former Governor of the Virgin Islands, the late Melvin Herbert Evans; and

13 **WHEREAS**, immediately after completing his residency in 1974, Dr. Hendricks
14 returned to the Virgin Islands and provided psychiatric services for the Division of Mental
15 Health, the Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital, the Richmond Penitentiary, Anna's Hope
16 Detention Facility, now the Golden Grove Correctional Facility, and the Governor Juan F. Luis
17 Hospital. He also provided psychiatric services to almost all the public and private schools on
18 St. Croix and to many churches; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks served as Medical Director and Territorial Psychiatrist at the
20 Bureau of Corrections beginning in 1974, and the Director of Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug
21 Dependency Services for several years. He served as the only psychiatrist at the St. Croix
22 Hospital, now the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, from 1983 to 1996. He
23 served as Chief Medical Officer from 2007 to 2009, and remained a staff psychiatrist at the
24 hospital until 2011; and

1 **WHEREAS** throughout his career, Dr. Hendricks also worked on a rotational basis at
2 the St. Elizabeth Psychiatric hospital in Southeast, Washington, D.C., operated by the District
3 of Columbia Department of Behavioral Health, where he trained and volunteered for about six
4 years; and

5 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks was appointed Assistant Commissioner of Health and served
6 from 1991 thru 1993. In 1996, he was appointed interim Commissioner of Health by Governor
7 Roy L. Schneider.

8 **WHEREAS**, from 2007 to 2013, Dr. Hendricks was the psychiatrist at The Village
9 Rehabilitation Center on St. Croix, providing clinical services to persons with behavioral
10 disorders and persons with substance use issues and worked with the MISAH project
11 (Michael's Intensive Supported Housing Accord), providing homeless people with immediate
12 access to long-term, sustainable accommodations; and

13 **WHEREAS**, apart from his medical practice, Dr. Hendricks is a co-founder of the
14 Crucian Cultural Institute, the Hillsiders Association and the Crucian-Rican All-Ah-We
15 Organization. He was an original member of the board of governors of the Virgin Islands
16 Cultural Heritage Institute, where he served for more than eight years; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Hendricks played saxophone with the Quelbe band, Stanley and the
18 Ten Sleepless Knights, for more than forty years. He also spent time hosting the radio program
19 on WSTX, AM970“Common Cause”, where he discussed the beliefs, attitudes and values of
20 Virgin Islanders and other Caribbean people; and

21 **WHEREAS**, from 1961 to 2021, Dr. Hendricks bred and raised racehorses and
22 somewhere in that timeframe, between horseracing, practicing medicine, and playing music,
23 he found the time to marry his beautiful wife Mryl (Todmann), and together they raised four
24 children: Kemba (Deceased 1992), Kai, Kareena (Moses), and Rabiah (Foss);and

