

Good morning Honorable Senator Avery Lewis, Chairman of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, other Senators of the 36th Legislature, listening and viewing audiences, family and friends.

Today it is my honor and privilege to speak briefly on the life of Janet Brow Phillips.

Some families are biological, brought together by DNA in a blood lineage that binds them together for all eternity. While others are brought together by mutual love, respect, and admiration for a person because of the value they bring to your life. Janet Brow is not my biological sister. We share no DNA. We share none of the trappings or associations that society would recognize as traditional definitions of family. But without question, Janet and I are family. My love for her as a big sister goes beyond words or human comprehension.

Proverbs 18:16 reads and I quote, “A man’s gift maketh room for him and bringeth him before great men”. As the operating pastor of the City of Refuge Church we encourage our members to stir up/birth and nurture the gift(s) that has been bestowed to them by God. God in his graciousness has granted many gifts to my sister Janet, two of which has made her an icon in this community: the gift of being an educator and the gift of cooking.

As a former educator I have seen Janet build the Parent University from nothing to something great. I had the distinct honor to be invited as a guest speaker at one of these gatherings and saw first hand the impact that the university made on the parents of the Virgin Islands. Her drive and determination to support parents in a world where parenting skills have changed and evolved is both noteworthy and commendable. Her work has helped to ensure that children receive the love, support, and positive discipline that is required in today’s society.

Now I would like to talk about one of the best cooks in the Virgin Islands bar none! Through being around Janet I have learned that the key to good cooking is in the preparation. I have seen the time and attention Janet puts forth to ensuring that the food is properly washed, prepped, and seasoned.

Janet believes that her customers must get what they pay for. She does not believe in giving her customers stale food, so all food is prepared fresh and delicious. She has stayed up 24 hours on numerous occasions to ensure her food is fresh and tasty. I have seen first hand her special way of preparing seasoned rice, roast pork, and crab and rice. No one else does it like Janet. Don't try to bribe me, it's a family secret.

Some cook for money, Janet cooks for love. Janet has never been about the money. As a family, my nieces Tishie, Ledequah, and I have always argued about prices with Janet. They would call and say, Auntie Mona please talk to mommy, her prices are too low. Most of the time I would get her to add maybe \$1.00 to a dish, but when she means that she is not changing it, we will all have to stand down. When Janet serves you a dish, it comes with mac and cheese, stuffing, rice, and coleslaw. If you ask you get red beans and provisions. We would say to her other cooks charge for sides. She would say, "I don't care, this is what I am doing". Where else do you get all of that with a meat for \$18 or \$20 dollars? Only from Janet!

Her heart is set in her craft. She does it to the best of her ability all the time, even placing her health in jeopardy. She puts her heart and soul into every dish. If she prepares a dish and it doesn't taste just right, she will not serve it. She is truly a culture bearer in the culinary arts of preparing native cuisines. You don't believe me, ask former Governor John DeJongh and present Governor Albert Bryan Jr. But I don't have to ask them, you in the room know exactly what I am talking about.

People are placed in your path during this journey we call life for a purpose. In the book of John 4:21 it reads, and I quote, "And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brothers and sisters." Janet, know that I love you and I am extremely proud of you and your accomplishments. Your name will go down in history as one of the greatest cooks the Virgin Islands has ever known. Make no mistake when one knows their gift it will make room for them. Your gift has made room for you and today we recognize and celebrate you for it.

Thank you and have a blessed morning.