



**UNITED STATES
VIRGIN ISLANDS**
st CROIX st JOHN st THOMAS

Phone: +1 340-774-8784

U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism
P.O. Box 6400
St. Thomas, USVI 00804

TESTIMONY OF SHAMARI I. HAYNES

Deputy Commissioner, Virgin Islands Department of Tourism

IN HONOUR OF MS. JANEISHA JOHN

35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

BILL NO. 36-0149

PROPOSED BY: Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection

Chairman Senator Avery L. Lewis, Honorable Senators, and fellow Virgin Islanders — good afternoon.

My name is Shamari I. Haynes, and I have the privilege of serving as Deputy Commissioner within the U. S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, where my work centers on cultural preservation, community engagement, and enhancing the visitor experience across our islands. Beyond public service, I am also a creative professional and brand strategist — but above all, I am someone who believes deeply in the power of culture, storytelling, and people. Those values lie at the heart of the woman we celebrate today.

When today's honoree reached out to ask if I would share a few words, her message — filled with humility, gratitude, and warmth — instantly reminded me why so many of us hold her in such high regard. It is both a privilege and a heartfelt honor to offer this testimony in recognition of someone who has carried the Virgin Islands with grace, purpose, and pride — Ms. Janeisha John.

I sit here not only as a tourism and cultural professional, but as a friend who has had the joy of witnessing Janeisha's evolution. And truthfully — if you didn't know Janeisha from Cingular Wireless, well... you probably don't *really* know Janeisha John. From those early days to the world stages she's graced, she has remained the same grounded, genuine, and kind-hearted Virgin Islander who has never forgotten home.

Janeisha's journey, like many of ours, is deeply rooted in family, faith, and community. She grew up in an environment that valued hard work, compassion, creativity, and service — a foundation that continues to guide her success today.



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Her accomplishments are nothing short of historic. Crowned Miss U.S. Virgin Islands in 2007, she went on to represent us at both Miss America (2008) and Miss Universe (2010) — becoming the first Virgin Islander to compete in both. Yet what has always stood out is not the title, but the purpose behind it. She didn't just wear a crown — she carried it with meaning, using her platform to uplift our stories, showcase our beauty, and elevate our cultural identity — reminding the world that the Virgin Islands is rich in talent, depth, and pride.

Since then, her journey has continued to expand. From modeling and acting to television hosting and production, Janeisha's career continues to flourish — all while carrying the spirit of St. Croix wherever she goes. Yet despite her achievements, she remains *our* Janeisha: approachable, humble, and proudly Crucian.

What I admire most is how she continues to use her success as a bridge back home. Every visit serves as a reconnection. She mentors, uplifts, collaborates with local creatives, and pours into the same community that once poured into her — not for recognition, but out of genuine love and gratitude. Her humility and authenticity make her more than a public figure — they make her a reflection of who we are as a people: resilient, creative, and deeply rooted.

Her story is one of representation and heart — a reminder that true success is not measured by how far you go, but by how often you turn back to lift others along the way. And Janeisha has done that time and again.

Through her artistry, professionalism, and cultural pride, she has become a true ambassador of the Virgin Islands — redefining how the world sees us, not as a small territory, but as a place overflowing with possibility, power, and purpose.

For our youth, she stands as proof that you can dream boldly, reach globally, and remain authentically Virgin Islander.

This resolution is more than an acknowledgment of her achievements — it is a celebration of her essence: her grace, humility, and unwavering commitment to inspire.

As someone who has dedicated my career to promoting Virgin Islands culture and people, I can say without hesitation that Janeisha John is one of our finest ambassadors — a woman of purpose, pride, and poise.



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Today, I proudly join this esteemed body in honoring and celebrating Ms. Janeisha John — a daughter of these Virgin Islands, a creative visionary, and a symbol of what it means to lead with both excellence and heart.

Thank you, Chairman Senator Avery Lewis, and the members of this esteem body, for allowing me the opportunity to share these remarks and pay tribute to one of our very best.

Respectfully submitted,
Shamari I. Haynes
Deputy Commissioner
U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism