

Statement on Bill # 36-0121, an Act to rename the Peter Carl Limpricht Park the TSK Park in honor of the Ten Sleepless Knights quelbe band and making an appropriation to effectuate that change, sponsored by Senator Marise James. Submitted by Shelley M. Thomas

How do you reward a group of men who, without hesitation, unselfishly give back so much to their community? How can I show my appreciation to members of these U.S. Virgin Islands, who continuously promote our music, our dance, our culture, all over the world.

The Ten Sleepless Knights deserve a billion dollars' worth of kindness, appreciation and honor from those of us who live in the Virgin Islands, and those in the greater diaspora. Celebrating 55 years of music, fellowship and respect for each other is not an easy feat. The brotherhood that was formed in 1970, has withstood hurricanes, elections and technological advancements, and remains a constant, unstoppable, transforming part of our society.

I still have fond memories of them playing throughout St. Croix, from Crucian Moon, Farchette Night Club, Pucho, Birdland, Seven Flags, Clover Crest, Plantation, Villa Morales and Sheridan. That were the days when men danced with women, instead of holding up the wall while women dance with each other. TSK has fought and continue to fight against the tide of modernization, where reggae music has become a reflection of what the next generation desires. Imagine going to Jamaica and hearing quelbe in every home, party and bar. Never happen!

I come from a generation that proudly proclaims that we have made our contributions to the fabric of the world. Our guava, pineapple, guavaberry and coconut tart is us. Our kalaloo (spelled with a K), boiled fish and red peas soup is us. Quadrille every Friday night at St. Gerard's Hall. That is us.

And as I proudly thank Senator James and her Chief of Staff, Sonia Andrew, for taking this dream and running with it; it confirms to me that there are still people in our community that respect and acknowledge the traditions of our ancestors and take pride in holding on to the things that makes us Crucians. No surrender, no retreat, no compromise.

To all the members of TSK, you are our ambassadors, relentless in carrying on for future generations, even as they might not appreciate it now. You will be remembered for your commitment to your people. Thank you, always.