

I am proud to testify in support of the Resolution to bestow the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor to Rena Brodhurst.

Rena Brodhurst father, Canute Brodhurst Sr., was the owner of the St. Croix Avis from 1940 to 1980. He and Ariel Melchior, who helped found the St. Thomas Daily News, and Dawson Creque purchased the Avis from the Johannes Brothers who originally published it as a Danish paper. Canute Brodhurst then bought out his partners and became the sole owner of the Avis.

Rena as a child, grew up at the Avis on a daily basis with her father every day. When she was young, she would deliver the Avis around St. Croix.

As Rena matured, she learned and took on more responsibilities and had an apprenticeship as she grew up as to how to be a journalist and the ins and outs of producing a paper such as the St. Croix Avis.

Canute Brodhurst unfortunately passed away when Rena was 18. She then consulted with the Board of Governors to appoint Fred Clark to run the day-to-day functions of the Avis and be the editor while Rena enrolled at Fairleigh Dickerson University where she earned a bachelor's degree in business management. She already was well versed in journalism and how a paper should be run but needed to learn the business side of it.

Rena then returned to St. Croix and took the helm of the St. Croix Avis as the Publisher and Editor.

She increased the size of the Avis from 18 to at least 32 pages, introduced color ink and changed from 2 units of printing press to 8 to allow more pages and color.

She increased local coverage including the judiciary, police, legislative, government house and Community events including yearly interviews with the person who grew the largest Tanya on St. Croix.

Through Rena Brodhurst, the Avis kept our cultural traditions alive with yearly stories about the Emancipation and how it occurred and the courage that it took. She reminded us yearly as to the importance of Contract Day as well as D. Hamilton Jackson Day, including the history of Queen Mary and the accomplishments of D. Hamilton Jackson.

She sponsored Virgin Islands Department of Energy's Kidwind Challenge, Crucian Rican all ah we Tramp and Breakfast with Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights, various student enrichment programs and the University of the Virgin Islands Caribbean Writers Canute A. Brodhurst prize for short fiction.

She shepherded the Avis for 44 years as an advocate for free speech and freedom of the press.

She stands on the backs of her parents Canute Brodhurst, Sr. and Maria E. pinder who imparted to her their wisdom along with their prayers that inspired her to serve our community on a daily basis.

She is surely deserving of being awarded the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor.