

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

05/20/2025-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 36-0029

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 27, 2025

A Resolution honoring and commending Sonya Hough, the creator of the St. Croix "Crucian" Hook Bracelet and proprietor of one of the first hand-wrought jewelry stores in St. Croix

PROPOSED BY: Senator Kenneth L. Gittens

Co-sponsor: Ray Fonseca

1 **WHEREAS**, Sonya Hough was born in San Diego, California in January 1930;

2 **WHEREAS**, she graduated from Hoover High School and completed two years of
3 college at the University of Southern California;

4 **WHEREAS**, Sonya had been recently divorced when she met David Hough and they
5 worked on an art project outside the City Hall in National City, California and fell in love in
6 the process;

7 **WHEREAS**, Sonya and David married and made a blended family with his two children
8 and her three children;

9 **WHEREAS**, they came to St. Croix for their honeymoon and fell in love with the island;

10 **WHEREAS**, David stayed in St. Croix and got a teaching job, and Sonya returned to
11 California to pack, to sell the house, and to return to St. Croix with the children;

12 **WHEREAS**, while David taught, Sonya opened a small shop to help make ends meet;

1 **WHEREAS**, David Hough's paintings line the shop, as well as their entire home;

2 **WHEREAS**, she coined herself a craftsperson and the children helped her to make
3 pictures, postcards, bowls, belts, and plant hangers, and she said some days, they only sold
4 three postcards;

5 **WHEREAS**, Sonya had no formal training in the craft and said it was mostly trial and
6 error;

7 **WHEREAS**, a trial judge, who is proficient in the craft and the daughter of a
8 watchmaker, helped Sonya develop her craft;

9 **WHEREAS**, she can now make jewelry just by looking at the customer's drawing and
10 does so upon request;

11 **WHEREAS**, David was not only a talented at painter, he also designed the Hurricane
12 Hugo Bracelet; it is a creatively shaped "H" bracelet to commemorate one of the worst
13 hurricanes to hit St. Croix and he also designed the Sugar Mill jewelry; that is painstakingly
14 created brick by brick;

15 **WHEREAS**, Diana Hough, David and Sonya's daughter, designed the Hurricane Wrong
16 Way Lenny Bracelet and Hurricane Isabel Bracelet, along with many other designs, carrying
17 on the family tradition;

18 **WHEREAS**, in 1964, she created the St. Croix Hook Bracelet, which idea was derived
19 from the unisex and the elephant hair designed jewelry of that time;

20 **WHEREAS**, in 1965, Sonya opened The Corner Shop, which is now called Sonya Ltd.,
21 and is located across from the Steeple Building, 2101 Company Street, Christiansted, St. Croix,
22 Virgin Islands;

1 **WHEREAS**, the St. Croix Hook Bracelet has become one of the most sought-after pieces
2 of jewelry in the Virgin Islands;

3 **WHEREAS**, her creation, the St. Croix Hook Bracelet, has topped customers lists as the
4 memento from their vacation on St. Croix and is an extremely popular gift for all occasions;

5 **WHEREAS**, each bracelet is hand-wrought and no two are exactly alike;

6 **WHEREAS**, the Hook Bracelet is so popular and distinguished, being worn downward
7 if one is single and upward if one is taken;

8 **WHEREAS**, it has become folklore, with people telling stories of how they spot the
9 bracelets all over the world and can tell if a person is from St. Croix or has visited the island;

10 **WHEREAS**, Sonya Hough has demonstrated exemplary creativity and dedication
11 through the creation of the St. Croix Hook Bracelet, a symbol that has come to represent the
12 cultural and artistic spirit of the Virgin Islands;

13 **WHEREAS**, the St. Croix Hook Bracelet has significantly contributed to the promotion
14 of the Virgin Islands, particularly St. Croix, enhancing its visibility and appeal in the global
15 tourism market;

16 **WHEREAS**, the design of the St. Croix Hook Bracelet is not only a testament to the rich
17 cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands, but also a celebration of the unique identity and
18 craftsmanship that define the Territory;

19 **WHEREAS**, Sonya Hough's work has fostered pride among the residents of the Virgin
20 Islands and has drawn attention from visitors, thereby supporting local businesses and the
21 tourism industry;

1 **WHEREAS**, through her efforts, Sonya Hough has exemplified the entrepreneurial spirit
2 and commitment to cultural preservation that are integral to the continued growth and
3 development of the Virgin Islands;

4 **WHEREAS**, with the success of the Hook Bracelet, the family has created over vast
5 number of differently designed bracelets, each having its own unique clasp;

6 **WHEREAS**, then and now, her business philosophy is the “customers are our gold” and
7 Sonya Ltd. has survived and thrived by treating each customer as an individual and that
8 philosophy has kept customers loyal, with most of her advertising is by word of mouth;

9 **WHEREAS**, after over 55 years in the business, Sonya has retired, but the legend and
10 the store live on; Now, Therefore,

11 ***Be it resolved by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

12 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
13 Islands, honors and commends Sonya Hough for her remarkable achievement in creating the
14 St. Croix Hook Bracelet. Her innovative work has brought recognition and admiration to the
15 Virgin Islands and has played a significant role in promoting St. Croix as a premier tourism
16 destination.

17 **SECTION 2.** The Legislature acknowledges the positive impact of the St. Croix Hook
18 Bracelet on the tourism industry and the local economy, and recognizes Sonya Hough’s role
19 and contribution in enhancing the cultural heritage and global presence of the Virgin Islands.

20 **SECTION 3.** The Legislature extends its sincere gratitude to Sonya Hough for her
21 dedication, creativity, and contribution to the Virgin Islands.

22 **SECTION 4.** In appreciation and recognition of her exceptional contributions to the
23 Virgin Islands, the President of the Legislature, or the President’s designee, shall have a perma

1 plaque copy of this Resolution prepared and presented to Sonya Hough, at an appropriate
2 ceremony held for that purpose.

3 **BILL SUMMARY**

4 This bill honors and commends Sonya Hough for her creation of the St. Croix Hook
5 Bracelet and her over 55 years of service as the longest standing jewelry store in St. Croix.

6 **BR25-0266/February 4, 2025/CBM**