

FOUR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTORS HONORED

Date : June 4, 2019

St. Croix--The

Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, and Agriculture chaired by Senator Myron D. Jackson, met Friday, May 31, 2019, in the Cardiac Center Conference Room, St. Croix and considered several proposed resolutions.

The resolutions

honored several outstanding musicians, a storyteller and culture bearer, and a contributor to a historic church in the Virgin Islands.

The first item

on the day's agenda was Bill No.33-0079, which is a resolution proposed by Senator Javan James. The resolution seeks to honor and commend Alwyn "Big Al" Baptiste, Sr., posthumously for his outstanding contribution to the music industry in the Virgin Islands.

The committee

heard from Deanroy Baptiste who said that Big Al was the oldest of ten (10) siblings. He added that he knew his brother was destined for greatness in the musical industry. Born on the Island of Antigua, Dean said when he joined his brother in 1979, he realized that he was very respected by the people of St. Croix. He added that his brother was also well respected in the Caribbean community in New York.

Other testifiers

joined in the honoring of Big Al were: Bernard Liburd, of St. Thomas who told of the collaboration efforts between him and Big Al which yielded the popular song, "Barna Jam" and Fitzroy Ogarro who became a Carnival Calyso King.

The next item on the agenda was Bill No. 33-0039 which is a resolution proposed by Senator James, commending Alwyn “Daddy Jones” Baptiste, Jr., for his outstanding contributions to the music industry in the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean.

Testifiers

participating in the honoring of Baptiste Jr., were Alwyn Baptiste, III, Henry Willock, Jr. and Alvin Burke, Jr.

Baptiste III

said his father was always around his grandfather whenever he was playing music, and he soon realized that his father would become like his grandfather—a master musician. Willock, Jr., said, “music is life and the universal language.” He pointed out that both him and Baptiste, Jr., met in elementary school at the age of 9-years old. Burke in his testimony said the modern calypso musical styles that are heard today, were revolutionized a long time ago by Daddy Jones.

Chairman, Sen.

Jackson said many of our arts and culture bearers have made sacrifice for what they do. He congratulated the testifiers for their insights on behalf of the honorees. He further stated that we need to establish an institution that foster the development and celebration of our arts and culture for future generations.

Bill No.33-0038

and Bill No.33-0039 were favorable approved and sent on to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration.

Bill No. 33-0057

a resolution posthumously honoring and commending Janice Pemberton Tutein for her tireless years of educating our youth and work as a storyteller and

cultural bearer.

Senator Jackson

characterized Tutein as a traditional crucian and Virgin Islands cultural bearer, who was also known as “Auntie Janice.”

The Senator further indicated that Tutein was also an educator and a noted master storyteller.

Testifiers who

recalled the life and times of this noted cultural bearer were Zoraida Jacobs, friend and fellow educator; Roy Pemberton (brother); Larry Larsen, friend and fellow educator; and Violet Harrigan Connor, ret-educator.

Many of the

testifiers spoke of “Auntie Janice” as a dedicated teacher who would go beyond the ordinary to make sure her students achieve their expectations. She was, they echoed, incorporated the cultural realities of the Virgin Islands within her teaching practices.

This Bill was

amended by Senator Jackson, whereas the store on the Agricultural Fair Ground, Estate Lower Love, St. Croix be named the “Auntie Janice Li'l Shop and the Homestead House, the “Auntie Janice” Pemberton Tutein Homestead House.”

The Bill was voted

out of the committee and sent to the Rule and Judiciary Committee for further consideration.

The last item on

the day's agenda was Bill No.33-0079, which is a resolution sponsored by

Senator Jackson. The resolution seeks to honor and commend Thelma Ruby Schade, Youngblood for her outstanding service and contributions to the Lutheran Church of the Virgin Islands.

Testifiers who spoke on behalf of Pastor Youngblood were: Pastor Gerald A. Williams, Lord God of Sabaoth Lutheran Church and Pastor Robert Wakefield, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

According to the testifiers Pastor Youngblood was a pioneer who made outstanding contributions to the church and the community throughout her ministry. She became the first black American-born fully trained Lutheran Deaconess.

The Bill was amended by Senator Jackson and thereafter was favorably approved by the committee and sent on to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for further consideration.

Senators at Friday's hearing were: Chairman, Senator Myron D. Jackson, Javan James, Sr., Alicia Barnes, Oakland Benta, Stedmann Hodge, Donna Frett-Gregory, and Novelle Francis, Jr.