

BILL NO. 29-0441

Twenty-Ninth Legislature Of The Virgin Islands

October 19, 2012

A Resolution to honor and commend Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan

PROPOSED BY: Senator Usie R. Richards

1 **WHEREAS**, Yosef Alfredo Antonio ben-Jochannan, born as Alfredo Antonio Johannes in
2 Frederiksted, St. Croix in the Virgin Islands on December 31, 1918 to Julia and Krasten Johannes, a
3 Puerto Rican mother and Ethiopian father of the Falasha Hebrew community; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Yosef ben-Jochannan was reared and educated in St. Croix, Virgin Islands with
5 Jochannan, Hohannes and Cornelius family members still residing on the isle of St. Croix, with a major
6 concentration in Estate La Vallee; and

7 **WHEREAS**, “Dr. Ben”, as he is affectionately known, was reared up and began his education on
8 St. Croix and later traveled to Puerto Rico, Cuba and Spain, where he earned a Bachelor of Science
9 Degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, a Masters Degree in Architectural
10 Engineering and a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthroplogy from the University of Havana, Cuba, a Ph.D. in

1 Moorish History from the University of Barcelona, Spain and honorary doctorates in law, applied
2 engineering and social sciences from highly regarded educational institutions globally; and

3 **WHEREAS**, while in Puerto Rico, Dr. Ben was influenced by the brilliant Puerto Rican
4 nationalist Pedro Albizu Campos and became involved in protests for Puerto Rican self-determination;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben was appointed chair of UNESCO’s African Studies Committee from 1945
7 to 1970 and also served as an advisor to Malcolm X; and

8 **WHEREAS**, this distinguished scholar served as adjunct professor of History and Egyptology at
9 Cornell University’s Africana Studies Research Center from 1976 to 1987, Assistant Professor of
10 History and Religion at Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York, Adjunct Professor of History and
11 Black Studies at Malcolm-King College in Harlem, Adjunct Associate Professor of Black Studies at
12 State University of Rutgers, in Newark, New Jersey, and has lectured at City College in New York and
13 at many other institutions of higher learning in the United States, and throughout the world, most
14 recently as a Senior Lecturer at Al Azhar University in Egypt; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has conducted extensive research all over the world into the history of
16 African people including archaeological excavations in Egypt and uncovered many instances of evidence
17 verifying early African accomplishments in a wide number of fields; and

18 **WHEREAS**, along with his associate, George E. Simmonds, of Frederiksted, St. Croix, Dr. Ben
19 started Alkebu-lan Foundation, Inc., and Alkebu-lan Books and Educational Material Associated, the
20 latter being the publishing company of innumerable pamphlets, manuscripts, scholarly papers and books
21 this prolific and illustrious African author has written about African people and their cultures; and

22 **WHEREAS**, some of his major published works are: *Black Man of the Nile and His Family*
23 (1970, 1972, 1989), *Africa: Mother of “Western Civilization”* (1971, 1988), *African Origins of the*

1 Major “Western Religions” (1970, 1991), *We the Black Jews: “White Jewish Race” Myth* – Volumes I
2 & II (1949, 1983, 1993), *The Need for a Black Bible* (1974, 2002), *The Myth of Genesis and Exodus and*
3 *the exclusion of their African Origins* (1974, 2002), *A Chronology of the Bible: Challenge to the*
4 *Standard Version* (1972, 1995), *Our Black Seminarians and Black Clergy Without a Black Theology*
5 (1978, 1998), *Cultural Genocide in the Black and African Studies Curriculum* (1972, 2004),
6 *Understanding the African Philosophical Concept Behind the “Diagram of the Law of Opposites”*
7 (1975, 2005), *The Black Man’s North and East Africa* – coauthored by George E. Simmonds (1971,
8 2005), *The Rape of Africa and The Crisis in Angola* (1958), *Africa: The Land, The People, The Culture*
9 (1969), and numerous other publications; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben’s focus has been on the entire Nile Valley region in Africa, and he has
11 conducted many educational tours to Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda, for which many scholars,
12 students and laypersons, both young and old, respectfully revere him as the “20th century Father of
13 Afrakan Civilization and Egyptology”; and

14 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has been a fearless fighter for over sixty years, uncovering, correcting and
15 informing others about the distortions and hidden facts about African people and their contributions to
16 world culture; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben is an expert, informed and spellbinding speaker in the African Griot
18 tradition of the “Street Corner” Lecturers of Harlem (one of the most famous being Hubert Harrison of
19 St. Croix), who combines humor with an amazing ability to recall minute facts when telling the story of
20 African people, passionately without mincing words; and

21 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has started several organizations in New York and in other states, to
22 develop young men who will continue his work in the United States and throughout the world; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben never forgot his early upbringing in the Virgin Islands, and willingly
2 returns whenever requested to share his extensive knowledge with Virgin Islanders; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the following quotations from Dr. Ben provide a minute glimpse into the essence
4 and impetus behind his life’s work:

5 • “It is only when you have your own house (nation) that you can demand anything, because you
6 don’t even need to demand anything, you do it. It is only when you have your own nation that
7 you can decide the value and judgment of beauty.” (London Lecture: March 1986).

8 • “So long as AFRICAN (Black) PEOPLE, anywhere, allow false interpretations about their
9 history and cultural heritage by other ethnic peoples to remain unchallenged, and not set same in
10 their TRUE and PROPER perspective, AFRICAN (Black) STUDIES will also remain the
11 meaningless and futile exercise that it is in most of the United States of America’s major
12 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING – secular and religious (Jewish, Christian and
13 Muslim). The TRUE HISTORY of any people can only be WRITTEN and TAUGHT by their
14 own knowledgeable SCRIBES and TEACHERS.” (*Africa: Mother of “Western Civilization*
15 *(1971)*).

16 • “THOSE WHO SHAPE OUR THINKING OF RIGHT AND WRONG also control the funds
17 that underwrite our BLACK and AFRICAN STUDIES CURRICULUM and DEPARTMENTS,
18 and even in so-called ‘NEGRO SCHOOLS’. And, as such, they are able to maintain their role as
19 ‘MASTERS OF CULTURAL GENOCIDE IN THE BLACK AFRICAN STUDIES
20 CURRICULUM.’” (*Cultural Genocide in the Black and African Studies Curriculum (1972,*
21 *2004)*).

22 • “For IT IS IN THE DOING OF THE IMPOSSIBLE which made the Blacks and Africa great for
23 hundreds of centuries and IT IS ONLY BY THE RECAPTURING AND RECREATION OF

1 NEW VALUES BY THE BLACK MAN will he free his mind, then his body, and lastly – his
2 power. The Black man must, therefore, return to his temples in Ethiopia and Egypt and read his
3 age-old reminders, which emphatically states to him and the world these prophetic words: ‘MAN
4 KNOW THYSELF.’” (*Black Man of the Nile and His Family* (1970, 1989)).

- 5 • During live presentations, when asked about retirement, Dr. Ben customarily replies: “I will
6 retire when the Gods of Mother Africa call me to the netherworld.”

7 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben is a true African National Treasure, being a scribe, master teacher, scholar,
8 researcher, lawyer, engineer and an authentic culture bearer in the African GRIOT tradition, who never
9 backed down from a fight to defend the legacy of African people; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has assisted many Africans at home in Nubia, Egypt and the United States
11 mainland to gain their higher education with emphasis in engineering, architecture, medical and social
12 sciences; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has assisted in building schools and health care facilities for the Nubians
14 in Africa and demonstrated his humanitarian efforts and qualities for the poor, homeless, disadvantaged
15 and oppressed; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has acquired and established an archive of over 10,000 historical books
17 and rare resources that preserve the writing and contributions of Africans to civilization; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Ben has volunteered and donated his educational resources and even a
19 collection of his literary resources to the people of the Virgin Islands and more directly to the University
20 of the Virgin Islands on several occasions; and

21 **WHEREAS**, this 360° GRAND MASTER AND HIGH PRIEST in the ancient AFRICAN
22 ORDER OF THE MYSTERIES SYSTEM, who spent his formative years on St. Croix, has never been

1 properly recognized and honored by the people of the Virgin Islands for the true import of his
2 accomplishments that include his bold and pioneering work spanning eight decades; Now, Therefore,

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

4 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the
5 Virgin Islands, honors and commends Dr. Yosef Alfredo Antonio ben-Jochannan for his unending
6 commitment, dedication and tireless struggle to champion the cause of African people throughout the
7 world by conducting research and presenting information which put the history and contributions of the
8 daughters and sons of Africa in their proper perspective according to Maat, the ancient Egyptian concept
9 of truth, balance, order, law, morality, and justice.

10 **SECTION 2.** In recognition and appreciation for his contributions to African people in the
11 Virgin Islands and everywhere, a perma plaque copy of this Resolution shall be prepared and presented
12 to Dr. Yosef Alfredo Antonio ben-Jochannan, in the event his health and resources for his travel to the
13 Virgin Islands are possible, or to a direct family member authorized to accept this honor on his behalf,
14 by the President of the Legislature or his designee at an appropriate ceremony.

15 **BILL SUMMARY**

16 This Resolution recognizes, honors and commends Dr. Yosef Alfredo Antonio ben-Jochannan
17 for his unending commitment, dedication and tireless struggle to champion the cause of African people
18 throughout the world, and his contributions to African people in the Virgin Islands and everywhere.

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22 BR11-0274/September 27, 2012/EEM/Reviewed by MMH

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