

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

03/20/2024/REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR

02/27/2024-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 35-0107

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

July 18, 2023

An Act posthumously honoring and commending Ms. Fenella Cooper for her contributions to the fields of education, sports and culture, and naming the UVI tennis courts in her honor

PROPOSED BY: Senator Marvin A. Blyden

1 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Fenella Anita Cooper was born on April 6, 1950, to Maron Jones
2 Stanley Bratts and Norman Stanley Bratts in the village of Molineaux, on the island of St. Kitts,
3 where she attended Molineaux Elementary School; and

4 **WHEREAS**, when she was seventeen, Fenella’s family relocated to New York, NY,
5 where she attended Taft High School and then Bronx Community College; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Fenella married Vincent Cooper on March 20, 1975. Their union produced
7 two daughters: Maunda and Dara, and eight grandchildren: D’Ajahni, Sonayah, Majestik, Jael,
8 Bilal, Nailah, Adanya, and Caleb; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Fenella and Vincent moved to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands in 1977, where
10 Fenella attended what was then called the College of the Virgin Islands, earning a bachelor’s
11 degree in 1981, and a master’s degree in accounting in 1991; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Fenella, a lifelong learner, earned a PhD in Business Administration from
13 Argosy University in 2015, at the young age of 65, authorizing her to use the title Doctor; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper taught in the Virgin Islands public secondary and university
2 school systems for 34 years, from 1980 until her retirement in 2014. During her expansive career
3 she taught at the former Wayne Aspinall Junior High School, the Addelita Cancryn Junior High
4 School, the Charlotte Amalie High School, the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, and the
5 University of the Virgin Islands; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper, was a natural educator whose innovative, progressive and
7 versatile teaching style made learning enjoyable; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper, beloved by her students and colleagues alike, was the co-
9 director of the Virgin Islands Writing Project—a pioneering venture that helped teachers to
10 better impart writing skills to young people, and recognize the primary importance of teacher
11 knowledge, expertise, and leadership; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper, a lifelong tennis player, was a member of the Virgin Islands
13 Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the American Tennis Association
14 for over thirty years; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper was an active and successful tennis player and competitor on
16 local, regional and national levels, having been cited in the V.I. Daily News as the “Coca-Cola
17 Player of the Week” on countless occasions for her local tournament successes; and

18 **WHEREAS**, for four decades, Dr. Cooper helped to organize and conduct tennis
19 workshops for junior and adult players in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands,
20 and elsewhere in the Caribbean and in the mainland United States; and

21 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper was the very first coach of the University of the Virgin Islands
22 women’s tennis team; and

23 **WHEREAS**, as a frequent competitor in the American Tennis Association
24 Championships, she won numerous titles and runner-up trophies, including 2nd place in the

1 American Tennis Association 65 & Over Mixed Doubles Championship as recently as 2018;
2 and

3 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Cooper was recognized for her achievements and contributions to sports
4 in the territory by the African American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame in 2002, and, for her
5 dedication, leadership, and commitment to the Athletic Program at the University of the Virgin
6 Islands, she was inducted in to the Buccaneers’ Hall of Fame in 2021.; Now, Therefore;

7 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

8 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
9 Islands recognizes, honors and commends Dr. Fenella Anita Cooper posthumously for her
10 contributions to the Virgin Islands community, especially in the areas of education and sports.

11 **SECTION 2.** In commemoration of the late Dr. Cooper’s many contributions to the
12 people of the Virgin Islands, the tennis courts on the Orville E. Kean campus of the University
13 of the Virgin Islands on St. Thomas are renamed “The Fenella A. Cooper Tennis Complex”.

14 **SECTION 3.** The University of the Virgin Islands shall cause appropriate and
15 conspicuous signs to be erected at the Tennis Complex bearing the inscription “The Fenella A.
16 Cooper Tennis Complex”.

17 **BILL SUMMARY**

18 Section 1 honors and commends the late Dr. Fenella Anita Cooper for her contributions
19 to the Virgin Islands community, especially in the areas of education and sports.

20 Section 2 names the tennis courts on the Orville E. Kean campus of the University of the
21 Virgin Islands on St. Thomas “The Fenella A. Cooper Tennis Complex”.

22 Section 3 directs The University of the Virgin Islands to cause appropriate and
23 conspicuous signs to be erected bearing the inscription “The Fenella A. Cooper Tennis
24 Complex.”

25 **BR23-0159/June 21, 2023/HLF**