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## Formal Road Naming Ceremony Held for Wayne “Facts Man” Adams, Benburin “Benny” Stephens, and Horace A. Callwood

Honorees celebrated for their significant contributions to the Virgin Islands community, with official renaming and unveiling of roads and bridges in their memory

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**Perma Plaque ceremony at the V.I. Legislature on Wednesday, July 10, 2024.**

“It is always the right time to celebrate Virgin Islanders who have made their mark in our community,” declared Senator Novelle Francis Jr. during Wednesday’s Perma Plaque Ceremony.?

The activity was part of the official road naming ceremony for three Virgin Islanders who have made notable contributions to the territory. Loved ones of Benburin “Benny” Stephens, Horace A. Callwood, and Wayne “Facts Man” Adams were all present to celebrate the recognition of their family members. “This honor today will stand as a testament to their exceptional record of history, education, bravery, public service and leadership,” Sen. Francis said.

Derek Gabriel, commissioner of the Department of Public Works, was also present ahead of the official road-naming unveiling portion of the ceremony. He told the audience that he was excited about formally honoring the three men, particularly Mr. Adams. “I am truly happy that we are naming this bridge after him, so it will no longer be the bridge to nowhere. It is finally the Wayne “Facts Man” Adams bridge. Speaking to the significance of affixing names to public transportation routes, Mr. Gabriel noted that “it gives us a chance to pause and celebrate their history and culture.” It’s a chance, he said, to teach children about the honorees. “It’s not just about a road naming, it’s not just about recognition,” stated Mr. Gabriel.?

First on Wednesday’s agenda was Horace A. Callwood, honored through Act 8706 for “dedicated service and commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands.” Senator Marvin Blyden was the primary sponsor of the [bill](#) to name North-South Street immediately east of the Windward passage in Mr. Callwood’s honor. During the ceremony, Sen. Blyden lauded the late senator’s contributions to the territory. Callwood, he said, was “instrumental in the empowerment of the black working class in the Virgin Islands.”

“He understood, in a way that is all too rare today, that it was not about him and it is not about us, but it is always, always about the people we serve,” Mr. Blyden noted. It was a sentiment shared by the late senator’s daughter, Chaneel Callwood-Daniels. “This means a lot to our family, to our friends, to our community,” she said. Ms. Callwood-Daniels, in an appeal to lawmakers as her father once was, advised that “the people are the reason that you’re here.”

Next was Benburin “Benny” Stephens, honored “posthumously for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children” through Act 8733, sponsored by Senator Ray Fonseca. Route 30 on the Bovoni Road is now renamed for Mr. Stephens. Speaking to the 1986 incident where Mr. Stephens saved the lives of Janice Daniel and her children, Sen. Fonseca admitted that it was the “moment that distinguished Mr. Benny Stephens and made him a hero in my eyes.” The honoree’s daughter, Beverly Samuels, expressed gratitude to the many individuals who signed onto the petition to honor her father, including residents of Bovoni.

The 35th Legislature then presented a perma plaque to the family of Wayne “Facts Man” Adams. Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger sponsored what is now Act 8789 “for articulating and bringing events of historic significance to the people of the Virgin Islands.” Though the bill was supported by all voting members of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection, it was initially [vetoed by Governor Albert Bryan](#), who said via then-acting Governor Kevin McCurdy that “the naming of roads, buildings, and bridges has typically been reserved for notable elected officials and renowned public servants.” Sen. Francis-Heyliger remained resolute and successfully overrode the veto. “He might not have been elected to anything, but he was the voice on the radio that shared our history. He expressed our culture in so many ways,” she said.

Dale Adams, brother to “Facts Man”, loudly declared his gratitude to members of the community who continuously rallied behind his brother despite his mental health challenges. “He had a drive to accomplish things. Whatever he set his mind to, he has followed through, and he accomplished that,” said Dale. In a message to the public, he called on the community to support those closest to

them, “and let them know that they, too, can accomplish whatever they set their mind to do.”

Following the Perma Plaque ceremony, the 35th Legislature, Department of Public Works, and families of the deceased honorees visited each roadway for the official renaming and unveiling.

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