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Dr. Alfred O. Heath Celebrated as a 'Renaissance Man' at Legislative Ceremony

The 35th Legislature honored Dr. Heath's multifaceted contributions to the USVI with plans for a bronze statue and a forthcoming book. The ceremony included praise for his medical achievements, musical talents, and advocacy for local health initiatives

Senate / **Published On October 22, 2024 06:51 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **October 22, 2024**

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Rendering of bronze statue to be erected in honor of Dr. Alfred O. Heath. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

The exceptional contributions of Dr. Alfred O. Heath were formally celebrated at a Perma Plaque Ceremony hosted by the 35th Legislature on Monday, nearly a year after legislation for that purpose was passed.

Dr. Heath, who worked as a “physician, pharmacist, military general, commissioner, educator, pilot, accomplished musician, [and] philanthropist,” will be honored with a bronze statue erected in Education Park – next to a bust of Edith Williams as per Dr. Heath's request. Senator Marvin Blyden, in his capacity as Vice President of the Legislature, delivered the opening remarks for what he described as a “momentous occasion.”

“The extent and breadth of Dr. Heath's talent and his service will never be fully repaid,” Blyden remarked. He proclaimed that the medical practitioner “will leave a legacy in our territory.”

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Tregneza Roach called Dr. Heath a “renaissance man,” referencing his success not only in medicine, but music and aviation as well. “He is this really compassionate, decent and wonderful human being who was present in this community,” said Mr. Roach. He took the opportunity to remind the audience of Dr. Heath’s political ambitions during the 1994 election.

Though not present to receive the physical plaque, Dr. Heath thanked the Legislature for the “magnificent gift” by way of an audio recording. “I do appreciate this on behalf of my father, who has done so much for everyone,” said the honoree’s son, Alfred Heath Jr. “We had no idea all the accomplishments he did,” said the man’s son, wondering where his father found “time to do that.”

The physician’s contributions were lauded by Senator Ray Fonseca, primary sponsor of Act 8812, which sought to bestow honors on Dr. Heath. For Fonseca, the honoree is a “hero.” “Everything that he did, he did it to the best,” the lawmaker declared. Fonseca, chair of the Committee on Health, Hospitals, and Human Services, recounted how Dr. Heath encouraged him to take legislative action that would benefit Virgin Islanders managing diabetes and kidney failure.

When it came to the \$1.5 million needed to open a St. Thomas home for the Virgin Islands Diabetes Center for Excellence at the Schneider Regional Medical Center, Sen. Fonseca shared that Dr. Heath had encouraged him to “just ask your colleagues and the governor to approve this money.” It’s something that the lawmaker says he intends to do in short order. Aware of the need to secure an appropriate source of funding for the Center's recurring costs, he suggested that it is “money well spent.”

A date for the installation of the bronze statue honoring Dr. Alfred O. Health has not yet been announced. However, Sen. Fonseca apprised the public of a book being written to celebrate the contributions of Dr. Heath, and called on those who wish to contribute to the publication to contact his office.