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## Lawmakers Advance Bill to Honor Sonya Hough, Creator of the Crucian Hook Bracelet

Senators praised Hough’s cultural impact as a self-taught artist whose handcrafted hook bracelet became a global symbol of Virgin Islands identity. Though introduced posthumously, the resolution moved forward with unanimous committee support.

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The late Sonya Hough pictured outside Sonya Ltd., the jewelry store she founded on Company Street in Christiansted, St. Croix.

“It is more than just a piece of jewelry. It is a statement of identity,” said Senator Kenneth Gittens as he sought the concurrence of his colleagues in honoring the late Sonya Hough, the creator of the Crucian Hook bracelet.

Senator Gittens introduced Bill 36-0029 to the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection on Tuesday. He described the opportunity to honor Hough as “bittersweet.” “Mrs. Hough passed away on March 9th of this year, just days after this resolution was actually released to my office,” he shared. “I deeply regret that we were unable to bring this resolution to the floor sooner.”

Nonetheless, Senator Gittens was pleased to move the legislation to celebrate Ms. Hough posthumously. “If you see someone wearing a hook bracelet anywhere in the world, there's a strong chance they visited the Virgin Islands,” he noted. Highlighting the strong identification of the bracelet with the Big Island, the lawmaker recounted sitting in an establishment in Washington D.C. when he was approached by a stranger. “A lady from out of nowhere asked 'are you from St. Croix?’” When asked how she could tell, she responded “when you stretched your hands, I saw your bracelet.”

Ms. Hough, born in California, moved to St. Croix in the 1960s. Her family opened a storefront in Christiansted, now known as Sonya Ltd, on Company Street. A self-taught artist, Ms. Hough would eventually create the Hook Bracelet handwrought, ensuring no two are alike. “The Crucian Hook Bracelet has become a powerful symbol of the cultural and artistic spirit of the Virgin Islands. It has elevated the profile of our territory globally and has instilled a deep sense of pride among Virgin Islanders,” Senator Gittens declared. “Her influence can be seen in the many local artisans who followed in her footsteps, inspired by her craftsmanship and vision.”

“What comforts me is that her legacy will definitely live on through her remarkable handcrafted work,” said the bill’s sponsor.

“I know of the efforts made by Senator Gittens, our vice president, in bringing this bill forward well before Ms. Sonya had passed away,” noted Senator Novelle Francis, pledging his support for the resolution. “I sympathize with the fact that that is a little bit late, but nonetheless, better late than never.”

“This lady was the catalyst for all of the other Crucian-crafted bracelets that have come out of our big island of St. Croix,” Senator Carla Joseph recalled.

Though no one was present to testify in additional support of Bill 36-0029, lawmakers did not hesitate to forward the proposed legislation to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further action.