

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hull Bay Road Poised for Renaming to Honor Trailblazing Sen. Lorraine L. Berry

Lawmakers advanced a bill to rename a North Side roadway after the late 12-term senator, with former colleagues, family members, and current senators citing her historic leadership, legislative impact, and lasting influence on women and public service.

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Former Senator Lorraine L. Berry. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Hull Bay Road on St. Thomas' North Side could soon be named Lorraine L. Berry Drive in honor of the history-making former senator.

Sponsored by Senator Avery Lewis, Bill 36-0220 seeks to honor and commend the 12-term senator posthumously for her “decades of outstanding public service.” Mr. Lewis presented the bill before the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection on Friday.

He characterized the late Senator Berry as a “woman of power, purpose and unwavering conviction.”

“At a time when women's voices were too often minimized, she stood firm, spoke boldly, and carved space, not only for herself but for every woman who would follow in her footsteps,” Senator Lewis said. He spoke highly of Sen. Berry’s “integrity, courage and compassion” and looked forward to her contributions being “permanently etched into the history of the Virgin Islands.”

Invited testifiers included former senator Roosevelt St. C. David. He served with Sen. Berry for “five unbroken terms” and told the committee that he “witnessed the love and caring she demonstrated for the people of the Virgin Islands, while simultaneously creating, developing and passing impactful legislation in hand.”

He reflected on the meaningful legislation that she authored, including a major austerity measure passed in the 22nd Legislature, at a time when the government was in “financial distress.”

For former Sen. David, Lorraine Berry was “a direct replica of former Prime Minister of England, Margaret Thatcher” and was “as courageous and as strong and undaunted as Dame Eugenia Charles of Dominica.”

Sen. Berry, he recalled, was the “first in many things.” Among her history-making accomplishments was her 1986 win as an independent senator immediately after losing her bid for governor in that year’s Democratic primary election. Ms. Berry also became the first senator to serve as president twice in the same term.

Ms. Berry is one of three women to serve as President of the Senate, joined by Ruby Rouss and Donna Frett-Gregory.

Former senator Clement Magras also supported the resolution and noted that Sen. Berry was a “brilliant and powerful politician.” She was “not afraid of any issues and would take on any challenge,” he said.

For Senator Berry’s niece, Crystal Bryan, renaming the road in Lorraine Berry’s name will “further honor her work and serve as a continual reminder of what can be achieved through passion, determination and love for the people of the Virgin Islands.”

There was no shortage of positive comments from committee members as well. Senator Carla Joseph called her a “great lady” who was “very committed to her base of people, women, children, from all walks of life.”

“She represented this territory well and deserves this honor,” Senator Franklin Johnson agreed.

Senator Ray Fonseca, meanwhile, advocated for the completion of the Hull Bay Vessel Launch Ramp, a much-delayed project. “I know if Lorraine Berry was here that project would have probably been finished by now,” he said.

Senator Alma Francis Heyliger shared that Ms. Berry was “one of the people that inspired me to want to become a senator, because I saw a woman that loved her community.”

Bill 36-0220 passed with ease and now proceeds to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary.

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