

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dignitaries Laud Life And Legacy of D. Hamilton Jackson

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ST. CROIX -- D. Hamilton Jackson Day, also referred to as Liberty Day or Bull and Bread Day, fell on Sunday, so Governor Kenneth Mapp [signed a proclamation last month](#) making today the official holiday for Bull and Bread activities, traditionally held at the D. Hamilton Jackson Park in Estate Grove Place.

"D. Hamilton Jackson Day provides the territory with an opportunity to celebrate and honor contributions and accomplishments of this fine Virgin Islander and to preserve the history of the Virgin Islands and specifically St. Croix," said the governor. He also thanked the 31st Legislature for passing bill No. 31-0230 and the Grove Place Community along with the Grove Place Action Committee for keeping the spirit and

lessons of D Hamilton Jackson alive.

Other dignitaries joined the governor in commemorating Mr. Jackson's legacy.

"D. Hamilton Jackson's life's work established a lasting legacy of the tireless promotion of human rights and civil liberties and the protection of free speech that should never be forgotten which must be protected by this and future generations," said Sen. Janette Millin Young.

"As we observe D. Hamilton Jackson Day or Liberty Day this weekend and we go out to Estate Grove Place on Monday, I want our residents to remember that Jackson was an outstanding labor leader, banker and community activist and that he published the first V.I. newspaper that did not bear the Danish government seal. I, however, also want them to reflect on how they too, can rise above the norm and make social changes in the community that will outlast their short time here on earth," added Sen. Kenneth Gittens.

And Senate President Neville James highlighted Mr. Jackson's passionate fight against injustice.

"D Hamilton Jackson witnessed the poor conditions and depressing elements in which his people were exposed to and made a commitment to himself to fight for the improvement of the social, economic, and political development of this territory. He is an influential icon, a Crucian we should all want to emulate, and someone whose story of courage and leadership should be shared often with young people in this community," Sen. James said.

According Wikipedia, citing Mr. Jackson's biography, the iconic leader, (1884-1946) was a civil rights leader in the U.S. Virgin Islands. At the time of his birth, the territory was under the rule of Danish West Indies, and Mr. Jackson was an important figure in the struggle for increased civil liberties and workers' rights on the islands.

He petitioned for freedom of the press, was involved in the territory's labor movement, and, when the Danish West Indies became the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917, he lobbied for citizenship for the islanders.

Jackson worked as an educator and later a bookkeeper before becoming involved in the politics of the Danish West Indies. He traveled to Denmark and successfully petitioned for the repeal of a 1779 law which prohibited independent newspapers and enforced strict censorship on all publications in the territory.

Upon returning home, he established the first free newspaper, The Herald. The date of this event, November 1, is celebrated as an annual public holiday.

With the help of Ralph Bough, Jackson organized the first labor union in the Danish West Indies in 1913.