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## RAPHUNE HILL RENAMED IN HONOR OF DOROTHY LOCKHART ELSKOE

**ST. THOMAS** – The long, winding roadway on St. Thomas, previously named Raphune Hill, was renamed in honor of culture-bearer, educator, and community activist, Dorothy “Dotsy” Lockhart Elskoe. The Office of the Governor, along with the Department of Public Works, hosted a road naming ceremony on February 15, 2022, to commemorate the honor.

The roadway will now serve as a reminder of Mrs. Elskoe’s numerous contributions to the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Elskoe was one of the original 10 organizers to revitalize the Territory’s carnival in 1952. She also held several positions in government agencies, civic organizations, and the Democratic Party.

Elskoe was honored for her cultural and civic involvement in 1994 by the 20th Legislature, and former Senator Myron Jackson, as a member of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, sponsored a bill to rename Raphune Hill, where she lived for 60 years, in her honor. Jackson, who was present as the Master of Ceremonies, shared that Raphune Hill received its name from the plantation that once sat where the renamed road now runs.

“Names mean something, they carry you,” said Myron Jackson. “It is very important that we recollect, remember and also pass on the traditions, stories, and history so they will not die, and that’s why we’re here today.”

Jackson’s remarks coincided with those of Department of Public Works’ Commissioner Derek Gabriel, who shared the importance of family and tradition. “Whether family, friends, part of the troupe, or you just stopped in for a meal, she made us all feel like family,” said Commissioner Gabriel. “And today, it is so fitting, as we gather under the proverbial tree—today a tent—to recognize one of our culture bearers.”

Present at the ceremony were members of her family, many friends and also political figures to include Gov. Albert Bryan Jr.; Lt. Gov. Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.; Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory; members of the 34th Legislature and former elected officials.

"If she was alive today, she would be truly humbled," said Lori Elskoe Rawlins, Elskoe's youngest daughter. "She encouraged her friends and family to be involved as much as they could. The preservation of culture was one of the many missions in the life of our mom—she was a proud Virgin Islander who would do anything to ensure that our culture and heritage would not be diminished or fall off the ravine."

Elskoe's husband of 71 years, Winthrop Elskoe, was not at the ceremony, but celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on Tuesday.

"The most heartwarming thing is that my dad, who is 100 years old today, lived to witness a road that he and our mom drove, lived and raised a family on for approximately six decades, is being named after his beloved wife," Elskoe Rawlins said.

Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. also extended his congratulations and appreciation for Mrs. Elskoe stating, "Elskoe and carnival were synonymous, but Mrs. Elskoe was more than that. She was also an educator, she was involved in the democratic party, she was involved in the League of Women's Voters, she made her presence at carnival...she was part of the community."

Lt. Gov. Roach encouraged all to look to the future and keep the culture alive as the Virgin Islands goes through a transition.

"These are the giants of the Virgin Islands," said Lt. Gov. Roach. "We are seeing so many of the elders marching through and leaving the work that's left, because work always remain to those who remain. And so, in her memory, I think each of us would continue to represent this very special place that we are privileged to call our home in a way that reflects how people like Mrs. Elskoe took care of it."

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