



Statement by

Premier, Honourable Natalio D. Wheatley

On the passing of

Mr. Charles S. Tobias MBE

11 November, 2025

The Virgin Islands mourns the loss of Mr. Charles S. Tobias MBE, a visionary entrepreneur, decorated veteran, and beloved member of our community whose legacy is woven into the very fabric of our tourism and cultural identity.

Mr. Tobias was not merely the founder of Pusser's Rum - he was a pioneer who helped shape the modern image of the Virgin Islands as a destination of charm, authenticity, and maritime heritage. His revival of the historic Royal Navy rum recipe in 1979 and the establishment of Pusser's Rum Ltd. brought global attention to our shores. Through his restaurants, retail shops, and branding, he created a signature experience that drew visitors from around the world and anchored the BVI as a premier sailing and hospitality destination.

His contributions to our economy were both visionary and enduring. By choosing to base *Pusser's* operations in the BVI, Mr. Tobias generated local employment, supported small businesses, and helped build a tourism ecosystem that continues to benefit our people. He was a staunch advocate for keeping the brand rooted in the Virgin Islands, even when offered more lucrative opportunities elsewhere. That loyalty speaks volumes about his love for these islands and his belief in our potential.

Beyond commerce, Mr. Tobias was a cultural ambassador. He infused *Pusser's* with stories of naval tradition, island hospitality, and community pride. His establishments became gathering places - where locals and visitors alike could share a meal, a memory, and a toast to the sea. He supported charitable causes, contributed to civic life, and never ceased to promote the Virgin Islands with passion and integrity.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Virgin Islands, I extend deepest condolences to Mr. Tobias's family, friends, and all who were touched by his remarkable life. We honor him not only for what he built, but for how he built it - with courage, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to the BVI. He was recognized and awarded for his many contributions as a Member Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2011.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire us to invest in our people, our culture, and our future.

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