

Testimony for Boyd “Boyzie” Todman

By Allison Allie Petrus

Good Day Senators and the listening and viewing audience. I count this a tremendous honor to be invited before this body to share words of support on behalf of Boyd “Boyzie” Todman.

Boyzie and I grew up in Oswald Harris Court, where we have known each other from childhood. We were one of the original “Housing Man”, as we labelled ourselves with pride back then. You have to understand, to be a Housing Man back then came with plenty of pride and a brotherhood marked by a social kinship that’s hard to explain.

Being a Housing Man back then was part of a fraternal order for which only those that were in it can understand the bond and all the nuances that came with that bond. It meant something totally different then than it means today. We played ball together, teased each other and gave each other nicknames that still holds to this day. Boyzie named me All-World after the Philadelphia 76ers World B Free, who shot every ball that touched his hand. He gave me that name after he (Boyzie) helped me score 87 points in a single basketball game to beat out Richie Welch to win the league’s scoring crown.

Sports played a major part of our daily lives. It defined who we were in every sense of the way. Boyzie and I played together on just about every Housing team – The Flyers, Intruders, Cymande Brothers, and the list goes on. We started out using milk cartons from St. Thomas Dairy as our basketball rim, where we would cut out the bottom of the milk carton and affixed it to a plywood backboard and dribble away on dirt floors behind Todman’s apartment. We played touch football in the streets and stickball against Building 5’s wall. We didn’t have much in financial resources, but we were rich with fun that emanated from our brotherhood. We would tease each other to no end. Back then it wouldn’t be cool to say this, but we truly loved each other beyond the love that siblings commonly share.

Fast forward to after I was elected in 1995 to be a part of this legislative body. The major part of my mission centered around developing programs for the youth in order to impart them with the same wholesome experiences we had growing up in Housing. The first person I thought of to assist in this mission was my childhood brother, Boyzie. I called him into my office and gave him the mission, which later resulted in the birth of Zero Tolerance Basketball.

Long after I left the Senate, Boyzie continued with Zero Tolerance Basketball. It became a passion of his, and he never let the fire dim. I admire him in so many ways. I remember meeting him in Orlando one time, and part of his trip’s mission was to prepare for his on-going fundraiser, which called for him to raise money to take teams of youth to the states to play in tournaments. I recalled receiving an awkward request from him. He called on me, All World, to assist him a bringing back a load of Crispy Cream donuts that he would sell to raise money for future trips to take kids abroad to play basketball. I learned Boyzie had arranged a special discount from Crispy Cream managers in Florida and even Puerto Rico from which he would purchase the donuts to sell locally for fundraisers. If that isn’t commitment, I don’t know what is.

Senator, this honor is truly fitting and appropriate for Boyzie. Boyzie, I salute you my brother. Continue your work, as our youth need your labor of love more now than ever. Our community is better because of you. Love you my brother.