



PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Veronica Jenkins

(202) 430-9095

veronicamjenkins76@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GO-GO COMMUNITY MOURNS BYRON “BJ” JACKSON

(WASHINGTON, DC) September 12, 2016– A “Celebration of Life” for Byron “BJ” Jackson will be held at Reid Temple AME, 11400 Glenn Dale Blvd., Glenn Dale MD., on Wednesday, September 14, 2016. The viewing will take place from 9 AM – 11 AM, and the going home service will begin at 11 AM to conclude at 1 PM.

The Go-Go and music industry as a whole is mourning the untimely passing of Byron “BJ” Jackson, who succumbed to his battle with cancer this past Labor Day weekend.

“People like BJ, only God can do that, only God can give you that kind of gift”, says childhood friend and fellow band mate, Donnell “D. Floyd”, during an interview with WUSA News Channel 9.

Jackson’s friends and colleagues are struggling with their loss and are looking forward to celebrating his life and remembering him as a musical legend, who was loved and respected as a man, father and brother to many.

Donnell said, he and his friend “BJ”, had been running together for a long time. “I’ve known him since we were little kids in Maryland. He lived in Largo, and grew up in Landover. We were putting together an R&B band”. Floyd, who is the current band Leader of Team Familiar, (one of the top Go-Go Bands in the DMV area); who has also performed with the popular and nationally known Go-Go Band, Rare Essence, for almost 20 years...says Jackson, “was extremely easy-going, non-combative and non-confrontational. He was a brilliant musician, multi-talented!” Floyd said the pair went to school at Duke Ellington School of the Arts and were drawn together. “I gravitated to people like that,” Floyd recalls of Jackson’s musical abilities, and their mutual love of Go-Go and music in general. “He was so versatile. He switched over to keyboards when he was with Rare Essence and he loved to sing.”

Byron played drums, keyboard and bass guitar. “He sings very well too, he had this incredible talent,” said Floyd of his longtime friend. In addition to his playing ability, Floyd along with Jackson, wrote and produced a cache of songs that covered a variety of musical genres. Music was his life and BJ was most happy while performing on stage. Yet, despite his obvious talent, Jackson remained humble and down-to-earth. In his 30-year career, Jackson has played with not only Rare Essence and Team Familiar, but as well with Lalah Hathaway, Meshell Ndegeocello, Maxwell, Arrested Development, Ledisi, Rahsaan Patterson, Rachele Ferrell, along with several other well-known musicians and groups.

It was not until this past year that Floyd found out that “BJ” was ill. “The fact that Jackson worked doing what he loved despite his illness, is the best illustration of his resilience, his commitment and his total immersion in what he loved”, says Floyd. Jackson played three 45 minute sets with Team Familiar one week before his death, and then traveled to St. Louis to play a tour date with El DeBarge before spending his last week in the hospital. “By Saturday, it was pretty evident that he wasn’t going to make it”, states Floyd. “It’s been extremely hard”. He and his bandmates were so overcome with grief during the first of two shows on Sunday night, Floyd recalls how the band was so overcome with grief during the first two shows on Sunday night, they weren’t able to get through it. They stopped, cried and held each other as they openly mourned the loss of their brother. They did however finish the second show, just for “BJ”.

“He was unbelievable in all aspects”, Floyd says of his friend. “He had a great smile, never passed anybody without shaking their hand. He was very rare, very rare”.

If you would like more information concerning this release, please contact Veronica Jenkins at (202) 430-9095 or email at veronicamjenkins76@gmail.com.

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