

Celebrating the Life of Khari Askia Miller

Saturday, March 24, 2012

10:30 AM Family Hour

11:00 AM Kappa Alpha Psi Homegoing

11:15 AM Memorial Service



*The Historic People's Community Church
8601 Woodward Avenue • Detroit, Michigan 48202*

Rev. Dr. Martin E. Bolton, Officiating

Obituary

A devoted husband, son, brother, uncle and friend to many...

Khari Askia Miller entered this physical world on April 14, 1971. He and his brother, Oronde, were both raised in Detroit, Michigan, by their wonderful and loving parents, Georgella and Dr. Ellword Miller.

Spending his early years at elementary and middle schools in Detroit, Khari later graduated from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School (c/o 1988), where he helped lead the tennis and swimming teams to multiple championships. Khari was an especially talented tennis player, who briefly considered a professional tennis career. Khari decided to attend Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida instead on a tennis scholarship, where he remained for several years. He returned to Detroit to complete his undergraduate studies, receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio, TV and Film Communications from Wayne State University in 1995.

Khari pursued a career in sales and marketing during his early years out of college with Ford Motor Company as well as spending numerous years as a sales manager with Lease Marketing. Khari then decided to turn his attention to public speaking, drawing upon his prior experiences in sales, marketing and communications, along with his unique insights on inspiration and personal motivation. Working with the internationally renown motivational speaker and life coach Anthony Robbins, Khari shared successful strategies with individuals, organizations and corporations to help them achieve their peak performance and realize their full potential. Khari would draw upon these skills again in his later sales and marketing career with Sprint PCS.

It was during his motivational speaking travel and touring that Khari was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma in March of 2000. After numerous regimens of chemotherapy and radiation treatments, including several experimental treatment studies, Khari eventually underwent two bone marrow transplants in which his brother was able to be the proud donor. The second transplant in particular contributed to Khari being able to enjoy a new Quality of Life that he remained very thankful for during his remaining years of life.

In an effort to more directly share his experiences and reflections on perseverance and triumph over adversity, Khari moved to Raleigh in 2006 to work with one of the nation's pioneering adoption agencies. It was shortly after moving to Raleigh that Khari met his wonderful wife Lynda. Khari spent his remaining several years sharing his gift of inspiration through motivational speaking and consulting, sharing a message of hope, perseverance and triumph over adversity with social service professionals, educators, foster and adoptive parents, and youth. Khari, along with his wife Lynda, also served as a therapeutic foster parent for several years in Wake County, North Carolina.

Khari enjoyed spending his time playing golf and contributing to the activities of the fraternity he so loved, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Joining the Detroit Alumni Chapter in 1996, Khari continued his service as a devoted member of the Raleigh Alumni Chapter where he also served as Keeper of Records. In all of his professional and personal endeavors, Khari always exemplified the pursuit of achievement in every field of human endeavor. He took advantage of every opportunity to pass this passion for achievement and excellence on to others, especially to youth through his support of the Kappa League and other youth development activities in the Raleigh area.

Khari transitioned from this physical life on Saturday, February 25, 2012, from complications related to his long and valiant fight with Hodgkins Lymphoma. He was preceded in death by his father, Dr. Ellword Miller, of Bingham Farms, MI. Khari leaves behind to cherish his wonderful memory his wife Lynda Rodriguez; his mother Georgella Miller; his brother Oronde Miller (Amina Watson); Mother-in-law Gwendolyn Clark; step-children José, Darius and Brandy Rodriguez; several aunts and uncles, Aunt Ruth Simms; Aunt May Lockhart; Aunt Pearl Corley; Uncle William and Aunt Vera Burgess; Aunt Rose Hurston; Uncle Claude and Aunt Shirley Burgess; Aunt Barbara Miller; and Uncle Jimmie and Aunt Louise Miller; a niece and nephew that Uncle Khari absolutely adored, Aya Nyela Miller and Damani Askia Miller; as well as a host of cousins and friends.

Khari will surely be missed, although his presence and bright light will continue to shine through all of us that love him and cherish his memory.

Khari Askia Miller April 14, 1971 — February 25, 2012

Order of Service

Organ Prelude

Church Organist

Hymn.

"Blessed Assurance"

The Prayer of Comfort

Rev. Dr. Martin E. Bolton

Musical Selection

Consolation Choir

Scripture

Rev. Dr. Martin E. Bolton

Reading of Obituary

Read Silently

Acknowledgement of Cards and Condolences

Daborah Jarvis

Reflections

(Please limit 2 minutes or less)

Musical Selection

Consolation Choir

Eulogy

Rev. Dr. Martin E. Bolton

Recessional

Church Organist

Organ Postlude

To Those I Love and Those Who Love Me

When I am gone, release me, let me go. I have so many things to see and do. You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears, be thankful for our beautiful years. Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near. And if you listen with your heart you'll hear all my love around you soft and clear. And then when you come this way alone I'll greet you with a smile and say "Welcome Home"

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St. John 11:25-26

Quality of Life

In February of 2006, after another twenty two, 7:30am sessions of Radiation, I made the decision to stop treatment. It wasn't really hard to make that decision to tell you the truth. There was only one other treatment available to me at that point and the odds of that treatment doing anything other than making me really sick everyday were minimal. So I made the decision that I was ready to move into my Quality of Life stage. This idea had come to me early on in my treatments. I knew that I did not want to die in the hospital or be heavily medicated when I died. So I created an idea in my mind that I called, Quality of Life. The concept is quite simple. Take very little medication, don't do any treatment and live life to the fullest while tolerating the B-symptoms that come with having Cancer.

Some five years later, I still am living in my Quality of Life stage. Recently, the B-symptoms that come with having active Hodgkins in my body have started to become a little harder to tolerate. I have always told myself that when the B-symptoms become too much to bear that I would have to start treatment again. So now I am debating with myself, "what is too much to bear?" I am handling the symptoms, but I also know that my body is experiencing some changes that I have not had to deal with since I was first diagnosed. To complicate things, there is finally another treatment coming to market in the next couple of months. I have actually lived long enough to see another treatment on the verge of being approved by the FDA. Wow! This treatment "appears" to be a much better option for me and if combined with another existing treatment, could, at best cure me. (if you believe doctors; but been there done that).

I love my life. In the last five years I have been able to get back to the activities that I enjoy and travel when I want to. My relationship with my family is better than it's ever been. I have found a woman who loves me unconditionally. I have been able to be active in the Fraternity I love. My mind is sharp and I am able to sustain conversations because I am not medicated. This has been the life that I have wanted all my life. I am apprehensive to jump back into treatment after it took me all of these years just to get here.

I am conflicted. I promised myself to continue treatment when my doctors said it was time combined with my B-symptoms becoming hard to bear. I am pretty sure I am knocking at that door right now, but I don't want to go back to that world. I am so happy right now and there was never a guarantee that I would ever get here. Chemo, radiation and another long term hospital stay (maybe as much as five weeks) is just not appealing to me. I really just want to wait until the last second possible and I don't think I'm there yet. (even if my doctors don't agree) I took a chance to experience my Quality of Life stage and now I don't want to leave it.

No matter what stage of life you're in, you still have to make decisions...

Repast in Fellowship Hall immediately following service

"When you are sorrowful look into your heart and you shall see that you are weeping for that which has been your delight." - Kahlil Gibran

By Khari Askia Miller - written July 29, 2011