



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TYRONE COLLINS GYMNASIUM OFFICIALLY OPENS AT KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

Newly renovated athletic facility named after KHS alumnus who coached the boys basketball team to nearly 300 wins

Photo attached: The Collins family cuts the ribbon at the new Tyrone Collins Gymnasium

PATERSON – Educators, coaches, student-athletes, family members, and friends gathered together yesterday at Kennedy High School to officially open the Tyrone Collins Gymnasium, a newly renovated athletic facility.

Tyrone Collins was a Class of 1969 graduate of Kennedy High School, and an All-American basketball player who averaged 38.6 points per game. As a head coach, he led the Kennedy Knights basketball team to nearly 300 wins. Tragically, Collins lost his life in a drowning accident in 1996. The naming of the newly renovated gymnasium at Kennedy High School after Collins is a tribute to his legacy as a player, coach, and educator.

“We are very proud of this new facility for so many reasons. Most especially, we are proud of the legacy left behind by the person for whom this gymnasium is named,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “Tyrone Collins was our dear and valued friend, and all of his family, friends, and colleagues miss him very much. May this new gymnasium stand as an honor to his memory, as well as a challenge to all of us to do what he did – stay focused on doing everything possible to help our students and student-athletes achieve everything they can and be all that they can be.”

Many members of Collins’ family participated in the dedication ceremony at center court, including Collins’ widow, Karon, and his sons, Chris and Shawn (who teaches social studies at the Alonza Tambua Moody Academy). Shawn Collins's wife, Flavia, and their sons, Chris and Michael, and Flavia’s mother, Licia.

“We thank you for this honor,” said Shawn Collins, speaking on behalf of his family.

He and his brother, Chris, both played basketball for the Kennedy Knights when they were students. Speaking directly to the team, Shawn Collins noted the great Kennedy Knights players who preceded them including their father and Head Coach Tommie Paterson.

“I would never put the responsibility on you to win every game,” Collins said to the team. “But whoever comes into this court, you’ve got to play them hard. This is your court. Protect it and defend it.”

Assistant Superintendent David Cozart and Kennedy Athletic Supervisor Scott Durham presented the Collins family with a plaque commemorating Tyrone Collins’ legacy.

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Other dignitaries present at the event were Paterson Board of Education Commissioners Manuel Martinez, Jr., Valerie Freeman, and Della McCall. Also present were Kennedy Boys Basketball Head Coach Tommie Paterson, Paterson City Councilman and Kennedy High School ESL Teacher Forid Uddin, and Alonzo Tambua Moody.

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