

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Honors Christopher "Notorious B.I.G." Wallace

May 19, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams: How's everyone? Good to see you all.

[Crosstalk]

Doctor Ingrid Lewis-Martin, Chief Advisor to the Mayor:: Good afternoon. My name is Chaplain, Dr. Ingrid P. Lewis Martin, and I am the chief advisor to Mayor Eric Adams. It's indeed an honor to be here today as we celebrate posthumously what would've been the 50th birthday of our son of Brooklyn, Notorious B.I.G., Biggie Smalls. Without any further ado, it's indeed an honor, and a privilege for me to present to you, our mayor, Eric Adams.

Mayor Adams: Thank you, thank you and it's so – it's so fascinating when you think of Biggie that you believe that he only inspired those who listened to his music, but as I shared to all of the rappers during those days, they inspired all of us. Jumaane Williams and I often talk, we talk about it. So many of us that are in the industry, Tish represented the same communities. Now the attorney general, Jumaane is now the public advocate and many of them, they had a lot of different rappers. So they became public advocate and attorney general. But you know, I focus on Biggie so now I'm the mayor. You know what I'm saying?

Mayor Adams: So the energy is live when I'm downstairs, exercising, you hear Biggie music playing. When I am getting ready to deal with this media, I throw on Biggie, you know? So Biggie is just so much part of all of us. And so we transition in life. We go from the physical to the spiritual. We're not here forever. And the only thing that gives us mortality is what we do when we are alive. His mortality is real, because the music is still here. You go to different events and people continue to say, "Spread love the Brooklyn way."

Mayor Adams: He put Brooklyn on the map and no matter where you travel to, he loved Brooklyn and Brooklyn loves him. And so to his son, C.J. Wallace, his daughter, Tiana, and everyone that's here, the Junior Mafia that's present. The whole crew, everyone that's here. And so we just want to spend the day to lift up an icon in New York City and music. We know that he's one of the greatest rappers that has ever lived and his music continues to inspire so many who listen to it and play it. Here, back in the day, you hated to say the 5-0. But we're happy to say 5-0 today for brother Biggie Smalls and what he represent.

Mayor Adams: Son of Brooklyn, he changed music, the landscape of hip-hop. He was raised by a single mom. That's why so many of us could relate to it. Just the love his mother showed. But what he did, that I believe was so much more significant is that he was able to turn pain into purpose. He used his music to define what was happening in everyday life. Folks can criticize and you could look at it and you could say what should be there but one's reality is not everyone's reality. And the only way you could explore the reality of others is to allow them to express what they're feeling around mental health long before we were talking about mental health. Around poverty, around just making it, just going from the streets of Clinton Hill to Beverly Hills, to being able to move wherever he wanted to be. And it was just such a message.

Mayor Adams: I remember at his funeral, people lining the street to see his casket going by. And so many young people realized they can go from where they were to where they wanted to be because of what he was able to accomplish. So he was and remained the king of New York. That crown is so significant. Everyone realized that crown. 25 years later, he's still inspiring music. So many people follow him. Jay-Z, P-Diddy, Lil Kim, Junior Mafia. So many people are still following what he's doing and what he has done in the energy of spirit of those like Marvin Gaye and Al Green and Teddy Pendergrass, how people continue to remake their sounds. That's what they're doing with our legend brother, Biggie Smalls. So to Tiana and C.J., the son and daughter, to the Christopher Wallace Memorial foundation, continues to continue that life in a real way. So we say, thank you.

Mayor Adams: I'm just happy that we are able to do this now. I'm so glad the 50th celebration is happening this year. I would not want it to happen next year and someone else is in City Hall doing this. I'm supposed to be doing this as a son of the music of Biggie Smalls. This was our moment to get it done, thank you.

Dr. Martin: So as you can see, Biggie Smalls is truly an icon. All of the elected officials from the top executive in New York City, the public advocate and our attorney general all grew up on Biggie Smalls. As a mother, we have to pay homage to his mom, Mrs. Wallace for lending her son to us.

Dr. Martin: As a mother, we understand the pain that Mrs. Wallace felt when her son was taken away from her unexpectedly. To his son, C.J., who is 25 years old. He is actually six months older than his father lived to be. I think about six months, maybe three months, I made an error. Biggie was 24 years old and nine months when he was killed. 25 years later, we are still talking about the heroes of gun violence. So we appeal to all of you young people who know his music and who love his legacy, and who want Biggie to remain as iconic as he is, to lay the guns down. To lay the guns down.

Dr. Martin: This is truly a bittersweet moment, a moment when we acknowledge his greatness, but posthumously, we know that he is here with us in spirit, but he should be with us yet alive. So I had to say those words for my baby, C.J., who has meant so much to all of us for ensuring that his father's legacy has stayed alive. So without any further ado, I introduced to you, C.J. Wallace, son of the Notorious Biggie Smalls.

C.J. Wallace: Thank you so much. Thank you, Ingrid. I just want to say thank you everybody, thank you, Ingrid, obviously. Thank you, Fred. Thank you, Eric. Appreciate you guys so much. This is a huge moment for the family. We wouldn't be able to be here without you guys and just everything. Continuing to keep the legacy alive. I wouldn't be doing anything else with my life. Ever since I was 14, 15, when I really had to realize how important this family legacy was, I made it my life.

Wallace: This is all I can do. I can't go a day without thinking about who my father is and the impact that he was able to make and it inspires me to continue to do the same thing in my own way, but continue to obviously keep Brooklyn first, keep New York first. I do live in LA, but my ties are here, forever. I know I'm being told to get back out here as soon as possible. But yeah, man, this is a lot for me to really process and take in. I wish my sister was here obviously to be here, she couldn't make it. Just want to thank you guys. Thank you so much, thank you.

Mayor Adams: So this proclamation is from the Office of the Mayor and I'm going to read the last paragraph where I think it really personifies, "Whereas it is impossible to overstate Christopher Wallace's titanic impact on the hip-hop genre and his role in

music history. Though his career was brief, ending far too soon, Biggie continues to be an inspiration to many in our city and far beyond.

Mayor Adams: “He has earned his unquestioned status as a music legend as well as an actor, artist, poet, and teacher. But it was the bottomless well of love he had for his family, especially his mother, daughter, dream, Wallace's son, Christopher, C.J., affectionately called C.J., for which he is most remembered by those who knew him best. Biggie leaves behind an immensely powerful legacy and it gives me great pleasure to recognize his achievements, his lustrous career and incredible life.

Mayor Adams: “Today, I'm proud to join the family, loved ones and millions of devoted fans in celebrating the 50th birthday of the late Christopher Wallace, A.K.A. Biggie. Now therefore I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York, do hereby proclaim Saturday, May 21st, 2022 in the City of New York as Big Day.”

Mayor Adams: I bet you this is the first time Biggie was played in City Hall.

Wallace: Thank you so much. Wow. Good to see you man.

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