

NORWOOD NEWS

King of the Bronx Celebrated at Woodlawn, 29th Anniversary of Passing of Miles Davis

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By **SÍLE MOLONEY**



On September 17, 2020, Mitch Rose, President, Chief Executive Officer and Trustee of The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy, was honored at the Kings of the Bronx 2020 Virtual Event, in collaboration with Schneps Media, the Bronx Times and the Bronx Times Reporter.

Photo courtesy of Woodlawn

After ten years of honoring powerful women, Kings of the Bronx 2020 marked an inaugural event to celebrate successful men who made an impact on their community. On Sept. 17, 2020, Mitch Rose, president, chief executive officer and trustee of The Woodlawn Cemetery and Conservancy, was honored at the Kings of the Bronx 2020 virtual event, in collaboration with Schneps Media, the Bronx Times and the Bronx Times Reporter. Rose was recognized along with other male honorees for their leadership, vision, community service and contributions to the Bronx.

Receiving his award, Rose said, “It is a great privilege to be honored among these distinguished men who are dedicated to improving the economy and quality of life for the residents of the Bronx. I wish to express my gratitude for this award and the opportunity to join this network of outstanding Bronx leaders.” He added, “At Woodlawn, we will continue to serve families and the community by providing job training and educational programs and sharing the beauty and serenity of our 400-acre site along with its extraordinary history.”

The Woodlawn Conservancy provides educational programs for students and the public, engaging a strong volunteer corps and works to present the extraordinary collection of monuments and plantings found on the 400-acre site of The Woodlawn Cemetery. In 2011, the conservancy received the designation of National Historic Landmark status by the National Park Service for having “the largest and finest collection of funerary art in the country.”

Rose has worked in the industry continuously for thirty years. He is past president of the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) and vice president of education on the Board of Directors for the International Cemetery Cremation Funeral Association (ICCF). He also serves as chair of the supplier committee on the New York State Association of Cemeteries (NYSAC) Board, and is a member of the government and legal affairs committee.

He received a bachelor of science in business administration from the University of Central Florida, an associate of science degree in funeral service from Ogeechee Tech Community College, and an associate of science degree in ornamental horticulture from Santa Fe Community College.

Founded in 1863, Woodlawn Cemetery it is still an active cemetery with new ongoing development, and is one of the largest cemeteries in New York City. It is the final resting place of many individuals who have made lasting contributions to American history. Its work preserves the legacies of these notable figures like Madam C.J. Walker, who created specialized hair products for African American hair care, and who was one of the first American women to become a self-made millionaire. She was also a social activist.

Other notable figures include suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alva Belmont, and Carrie Chapman Catt who were recently honored during the 19th amendment centenary celebrations, as reported by *Norwood News*. Esteemed musicians Miles Davis and Duke Ellington are also among the many legends buried at Woodlawn.

Monday, Sept. 28 marked the 29th anniversary of the passing of Davis (Miles Dewey Davis III), American jazz trumpeter, bandleader, and composer. He is among the most influential and acclaimed figures in the history of jazz and 20th-century music.



Grave site of Sir Miles Davis
Photo courtesy of The Woodlawn Cemetery & Conservancy

According to wikipedia, Davis adopted a variety of musical directions in a five-decade career that kept him at the forefront of many major stylistic developments in jazz.

Born in Alton Illinois on May 26, 1926 and raised in East St. Louis, Davis left to study at the Juilliard School in New York City, before dropping out and making his professional debut as a member of saxophonist Charlie Parker's bebop quintet from 1944 to 1948. Shortly after, he recorded the Birth of the Cool sessions for Capitol Records, which were instrumental to the development of cool jazz.

In the early 1950s, Davis recorded some of the earliest hard bop music while on the Prestige Records label, though he did so haphazardly due to a heroin addiction. After a widely acclaimed comeback performance at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1955, he signed a long-term contract with Columbia Records and recorded the 1957 album 'Round About Midnight.

It was his first work with saxophonist, John Coltrane, and bassist, Paul Chambers, key members of the sextet he led into the early 1960s. During this period, he alternated between orchestral jazz collaborations with arranger Gil Evans, such as the Spanish-influenced Sketches of Spain (1960), and band recordings, such as Milestones (1958) and Kind of Blue (1959). The latter recording remains one of the most popular jazz albums of all time, having sold over five million copies in the U.S.

In October 1986, Davis appeared on The Dick Cavett Show. He gave actor, Nicolas Cage, a lesson in the trumpet and also discussed the police and the racist attitudes held about him and his success.

In an article in The Fader, singer-songwriter John Legend talked about what Davis meant to him. "To our generation, Miles just represents cool," he said. "You look at the pictures and all the photography made him look like an icon who had his own unique thing and was so cool and comfortable in that thing. He was a trendsetter, and the images you see around him suggest that – the fashion and the quality of the photography and the music together project a classic sense of cool."

According to biography.com, Davis succumbed to pneumonia and respiratory failure, dying at the age of 65.

The Woodlawn Conservancy enhances its community, investing in the future by preserving the past. For more information, please visit www.Woodlawn.org.