



THE FRIENDS OF CROWN HEIGHTS EDUCATIONAL CENTERS, INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vaughan P.A. Toney ***June 29, 1955 – September 4, 2023*** **Advocate, Chief Executive Officer & Ambassador-at-Large**

It is with profound sadness that *The Friends of Crown Heights Educational Centers, Inc.* (FOCH) announces the passing of its longtime President and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Vaughan Toney. Mr. Toney died on Monday, September 4th, 2023, following a fiercely fought battle against cancer. He was 68.

In a career spanning more than four decades of exemplary public service and advocacy in the fields of child care and early childhood education, legislative reform, community empowerment, and political activism, **Vaughan Toney** was the recipient of numerous awards and commendations celebrating his lifelong commitment and leadership in the service of others. In September 2022, he was formally accredited by the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as an Ambassador-at-Large in recognition of his outstanding service to the Vincentian diaspora.

Vaughan Peter Adrian Toney was born on June 29, 1955, in Calliaqua, a small town close to the southernmost point of St. Vincent. As a teenager, he migrated to New York in 1969 to join his mother, Ela, a professional nurse. Upon completing his secondary education, he enrolled as a student at the State University of New York (Albany), where he served as an elected member of the student governing body while concurrently working as a student intern in the office of then-State Assemblyman Angelo del Toro. His passion for service and aptitude for hard work gained him early attention; upon graduating from SUNY Albany in 1978 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, he was recruited directly to the staff of the New York State Assembly Education Committee, where he served with distinction as legislative assistant to Chairman Leonard Stavisky, a former professor of history and government. When Stavisky acceded to the New York State Senate six years later, Toney followed as senior staff analyst and special assistant to the Senator. For the young Vaughan Toney, it was an assignment he would later describe as “the pivotal experience and opportunity of a lifetime.”

In 1992, following the adoption of a new City Charter and an expanded, more representative New York City Council, Toney left Albany to serve as Chief-of-Staff to Council Member Una Clarke, the first Caribbean-born woman elected to the New York City legislature. Four years later, he moved on to accept the position of Chief-of-staff to the Rev. Dr. Lloyd Henry, representing the adjacent 45th

Council District in Central Brooklyn. In both capacities, he crafted the legislative strategy that brought tens of millions of dollars in capital investment and economic stimulus to the Flatbush, East Flatbush, and surrounding communities of Central Brooklyn. He was instrumental in brokering the public-private partnerships that led to the establishment of the Flatbush Business Improvement District and the creation of the Flatbush Triangle Junction Mall – a landmark commercial revitalization project that reinvigorated the entire Flatbush-Nostrand retail corridor and brought new life to the densely populated vicinity of nearby Brooklyn College. Amid these political engagements, Toney also pursued studies toward a Master’s degree in Public Administration at New York University. In 2001, he narrowly lost a historic election bid to represent the 45th District in the New York City Council.

For the past 22 years, Vaughan Toney served as President and Chief Executive Officer of [*The Friends of Crown Heights Educational Centers, Inc.*](#) (FOCH), a New York State-registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit, community-based organization in the City of New York. During that tenure, he presided over the largest expansion and diversification of the agency’s portfolio in its 46-year history. With a current network of 21 full-service Early Childhood Education Centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island, FOCH has evolved under Mr. Toney’s leadership to become the largest City-contracted, not-for-profit provider of subsidized child care and early education in the City of New York. In addition to its signature, Center-based Infant/Toddler, 3K, and Pre-K programs, the agency also operates an extensive Family Child Care Network serving hundreds of preschool children in dozens of affiliated provider homes in Brooklyn and Queens. Through separate contracts with the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), FOCH also administers multiple Elementary and Middle School Afterschool programs. Additionally, FOCH is a State-contracted sponsoring agency of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) -- a nutrition education and meal reimbursement program enabling providers to serve nutritious and safely prepared meals and snacks to children in licensed child-care settings.

In recognition of his lifelong leadership and advocacy in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education, Vaughan Toney was invited to serve as a Board Member of the Day Care Council of New York -- a membership organization of over 100 agencies that together operate more than 250 publicly and privately-funded child-care centers and family child-care programs in New York City. As a community leader and activist, he had previously served as a member of the Kings County Hospital Advisory Board. He was a founding member of the Caribbean American Political Organization, past President of the 42nd Assembly District Democratic Club, and a former member of the Carlos Lezama Archives and Caribbean Cultural Center. He was also an active member of numerous humanitarian and philanthropic organizations working to support the well-being and aspirations of his fellow Vincentian nationals both at home and throughout the diaspora.

The Management and Staff of *The Friends of Crown Heights Educational Centers, Inc.* (FOCH) extend their deepest sympathy to the family, relatives, and friends of Mr. Vaughan P.A. Toney.

Funeral arrangements will be announced as they are released by the family.