

Speaker 1 (00:09):

I love to pick songs for our speak. So that was Gladys Knight is a landmark, the keeper of my heart. So it's 50 years in the future. I'm 60 today. So I'll be 110 still alive rocking in a rocking chair. Reflecting, reflecting as history is writing what we did on our watch. So how will history record us? The chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente died. Suddenly Bernard Tyson died in his sleep early Sunday morning. And a statement. Kaiser says Tyson was an outstanding leader, a visionary and champion for high quality affordable healthcare for all01:30

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And this is Tanya Odom. I am a volunteer with the American heart association and my day job is actually working in the field of diversity equity and inclusion globally for the last two decades plus, and it's my privilege to be a part of this podcast series honoring the life of Bernard Tyson. So today we have with us, Denise Bradley Tyson, the wife of Bernard J Tyson. Who's going to share some of her thoughts and her reflections about Bernard Tyson and the work and legacy that he's left behind. Hi Denise, thank you for being here and sharing some of your thoughts and memories with us all. Um, the world, new Bernard Tyson is a dynamic CEO leader of millions of people. And as a social change agent, as his wife of 10 years, you knew him even beyond that and beyond what we knew him to be. Can you tell us a little bit about your world together, who he was to you and why the American heart associations Bernard J Tyson impact fund, which as we all know, and for people listening is a national fund with a local investment focus, supporting and investing in evidence-based locally led solutions that are breaking down the social and economic barriers to health equity. Can you just tell us about your relationship with him and also why this fund is so important for James Tyson? My dearly beloved late has been,

Speaker 1 (03:00):

He was my friend before he became my boyfriend and my fiance and then my husband. But even when he proposed to me, first thing he did is he shared it with his three sons in terms of engaging them in the

he spoke, listening to a Jay JZ and NAS and his, uh, rap music, which I sometimes had to ask him to turn down a bit.

Speaker 1 (04:59):

Yeah, there are just so many things I love the way people admired and looked up to him and how he didn't take that for granted and how he never forgot where he came from in terms of where he grew up to his route, to the, uh, CEO and chairman seat within Kaiser, that whenever he walked into Kaiser, he spoke to the people on the janitorial staff or the people in the records department, the same way he spoke to the doctors and the, um, presidents of his territories, where Kaiser had facilities, the love he shared with his colleagues and his peers, whether they were in the business council to the executive leadership council, to the corporate directors council, to, you know, his, uh, boys groups. He was a good man, good person who gave us the best that he had up until his pa.3 (s)-46 p HNththtl to to 1 ioccu,,s pwhcu most poful speeches.

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the couple dumb or the couple work, what was yours? And can you share a little bit more about your love story with Bernard Tyson?

Speaker 1 ([09:22](#)):

One of the things that was key to my and Bernard's relationship that we were both grounded in faith and our faith and spiritual connection and prayerful times together were sort of the ties that bonded us, but also keeping a lens of hope in terms of, you know, being deeply pain by human suffering and thinking about how we together could do our part to, to change outcomes. That really was so part of

Bernard Tyson made it okay for us to discuss some difficult issues. And he modeled discussing difficult issues as an example, mental health, which we'll address more in one of our upcoming episodes,

Speaker 1 ([13:29](#)):

Him being a pioneer in healthcare. He took the mask off of the mental health issue because I think for many of us particularly being an African American, you know, we are taught to be strong and we, you know, we internalize a lot and you don't know the ways in which that manifests itself. If you're not having a conversation about being willing to be open and be vulnerable about I'm struggling with this issue, I could use some help or guidance that he really made it okay for us to have those conversations. And I think one of the sort of most, um, sort of shocking statistics he shared with me when he was undertaking this work was around just how many youth we lose teenage youth and girls in particular to suicide. And we're not often sort of tune to paying attention to the signs where someone may be having an issue in terms of just not being communicative, swings out, you know, bursts to, um, job performance, dropping off to substance abuse.

Speaker 1 ([14:51](#)):

That all those for me are sort of a function in terms of being mentally unwell. And he really, and truly, um, made it okay to talk about it. One of the most that put an exclamation point on it, for me, with him having that conversation was having the opportunity to hear him be on stage with, at Davos at the world economic forum. And he was a panelist among others with the prime minister of wfp-3 (h)2.01 Tw 11.0ath Zfo ucetrmwfp

I'm sure there are many different accomplishments and things that Bernard Tyson was very proud of. And that you're very proud of if you had to choose one, what do you think would be Bernard's proudest moment or accomplishment?

Speaker 1 ([17:46](#)):

And how many have asked me? What, what Bernard proudest moment being in his life and, you know, he had so many from his family, you know, starting with his sons, to me, our relationship to his Kaiser Permanente family. But I think the one thing that Bernard may have been proudest about that he didn't have the opportunity to realize, even though he had worked on it for 10 years, was the Kaiser Permanente Bernard J Tyson school of medicine. The board made the decision after Bernard's passing to change the name of the medical school from just the Kaiser Permanente medical school to the Kaiser Permanente, Bernard J Tyson school of medicine. Cause I think that that sort of represents sort of a culmination of all of his work in terms of looking at the disparities that he talked about. So often the social determinants of health and the disparities that are related to that to rethinking how doctors are trained.

Speaker 1 ([18:53](#)):

And so he led Kaiser Permanente in creating a forward-thinking medical school that represented an emphasis on health equity for all, and a culture of inclusion that encourages diverse perspectives and backgrounds. So for him, it was about those students. The first class just entered and I have the opportunity to meet a few of them with the unveiling of his portrait done by a young African-American artists that graces the entry of the medical school. First class of 50, just matriculated the mission that Bernard helped to outline for the school where those students are being trained to be advocates for not only their patients, but for their communities, how to prepare healthy foods, regardless of what kind of food you had access to an Alice Waters, if claimed chef even advised, um, setting up at the kitchen where these medical students who by the way are, are getting their medical school training for free, because we're not recognize that one of the things that for him, it's having a more diverse medical score doctor community is the fact that kids of color, often they get into medical school, but they don't have the financial resources to complete their education.

Speaker 1 ([20:22](#)):

It's, it's already established as one of the top five or seven medical schools in the country. And it just opened while Bernard didn't live to see the schools opening that I think that that would be one of his proudest moments. It wasn't so much about the naming of the school for him, but I think it was the fact that the school existed in was going to be opening in of again, just how selfless for not wise and caring about all of us,

Speaker 2 ([20:52](#)):

What a great memory to think about the ribbon cutting for the medical school, and to think about the fact that these students are starting on their path to being doctors, as you said, and not just in this building named for Bernard Tyson, but they're really following a legacy of someone who's made such a difference in the lives of so many people and how to impact in the sort of health care, the way we think about healthcare and the way we think about wellness, you must be so proud of this amazing legacy.

Speaker 1 ([21:23](#)):

I cried when I heard that they were going to name the school in his honor,

Speaker 2 ([21:30](#)):

share, tell a friend and leave us a review. Your next episode is on the way stay tuned. As we discussed Bernard's impact on how equity impacts having a seat at the table. [inaudible].