



CHUCK BROWN  
THE GODFATHER OF GO-GO  
AUGUST 22, 1936 - MAY 16, 2012







# Proclamation



## IN MEMORY OF CHUCK BROWN

MAY 31, 2012

WHEREAS, Washington, D.C. is mourning the loss of one of its own - a musical legend - Chuck Brown; and

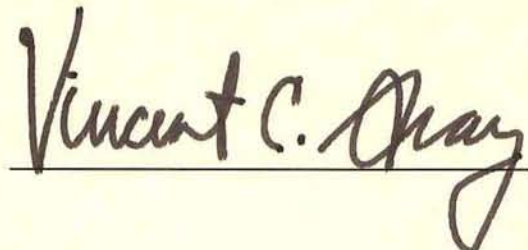
WHEREAS, Chuck Brown is known as the "Godfather of Go-Go" music and this distinctive sound incorporates funk, jazz, R&B, hip-hop and dancehall beats; and

WHEREAS, Chuck played his guitar, sang at backyard barbeques, and performed with various artists until his big break came when he recorded "Bustin Loose" which topped the R&B singles chart in 1978 for four weeks, followed by other hits to include "We Need Some Money," "Go-Go Swing," and "Run Joe;" and

WHEREAS, Chuck Brown was recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts with a "Lifetime Heritage Fellowship Award," the Federal Government's highest honor for folk and traditional arts, the National Visionary Leadership Project for his contributions in shaping American History, in 2009 a street naming "Chuck Brown Way" and a Grammy Nomination in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Washington, D.C. is proud of the legacy of Go-Go music and is honored to call Chuck Brown the District of Columbia's unofficial Ambassador of the music world:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, THE MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, do hereby call upon all the citizens of this great city to join me in remembering the contributions Chuck Brown made with the songs that connected with this city and his contributions to the music industry.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vincent C. Gray







# Council of the District of Columbia

## Resolution

CHAIRMAN BROWN

COUNCILMEMBER ALEXANDER	COUNCILMEMBER BARRY	COUNCILMEMBER BOWSER
COUNCILMEMBER BROWN	COUNCILMEMBER CATANIA	COUNCILMEMBER CHEH
COUNCILMEMBER EVANS	COUNCILMEMBER GRAHAM	COUNCILMEMBER MCDUFFIE
COUNCILMEMBER MENDELSON	COUNCILMEMBER ORANGE	COUNCILMEMBER WELLS

### CHUCK BROWN RECOGNITION RESOLUTION OF 2012

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN WAS BORN AUGUST 22, 1936 IN GASTON, NORTH CAROLINA; AND

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN RELOCATED TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AT AGE EIGHT;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN BEGAN HIS LONG MUSICAL CAREER IN THE EARLY 1960'S BY PERFORMING WITH JERRY BUTLER AND THE EARLS OF RHYTHM IN 1964;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN WAS A MEMBER OF LOS LATINOS WHERE HE GAINED EXPERIENCE WITH LATIN MUSIC;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN FORMED SOUL SEARCHERS IN 1966;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN, WITH SOUL SEARCHERS MADE A NUMBER OF HITS SUCH AS " WE THE PEOPLE" AND " BLOW YOUR WHISTLE";

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN'S MUSIC CONNECTED NATIONWIDE WHEN HIS SONG "BUSTIN' LOOSE" HIT NO. 1 ON BILLBOARD'S R&B CHARTS;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN RECEIVED THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF RECORDING ARTS AND SCIENCES BOARD OF GOVERNORS AWARD;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN IN 2005 PERFORMED HIS HIT SONG "BUSTIN LOOSE" LIVE DURING THE SEVENTH INNING STRETCH OF THE WASHINGTON NATIONALS' MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL OPENING DAY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN WAS NOMINATED FOR HIS FIRST GRAMMY AWARD IN 2011 FOR BEST RHYTHM-AND-BLUES PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCALS FOR "LOVE," A COLLABORATION WITH SINGER JILL SCOTT AND BASSIST MARCUS MILLER;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN RECEIVED THE LIFETIME HERITAGE AWARD FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS IN 2005;

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN HELPED LAUNCH THE CAREER OF THE LATE SINGER EVA CASSIDY, RECORDING AND RELEASING AN ALBUM OF DUETS, TITLED "THE OTHER SIDE";

WHEREAS, CHUCK BROWN HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS A NATIONAL TREASURE FOR HIS WELL-KNOWN RHYTHMIC SOUNDS AND ITS AFFECTS UPON MUSIC WORLDWIDE; AND

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, THAT THIS RESOLUTION MAY BE CITED AS THE "CHUCK BROWN RECOGNITION RESOLUTION OF 2012."

*This resolution shall take effect immediately.*

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

*I hereby Certify that this Resolution is true and adopted as stated herein.*

*Resolution Number:*

*Date:*

SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

# MIDNIGHT SUN... THE SUN WILL NEVER SET ON YOU CHUCK

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To The Godfather of Go-Go, my husband, Chuck Brown

Darling I'll always love you  
For the rest of my days  
I'll never part from the memories  
Of your loving ways  
The deep tones of your voice  
Is what I'll miss the most

I'll love you 4 ever

Your wife,  
Sweet Ja Ja

Chuck. You don't even have to say Brown. You just have to say Chuck and anybody who ever shared an experience with this giant of a man will come alive with emotion. I came late to the party. I didn't know Chuck when he played The Maverick Room. I worked in a record store when Go-Go Swing came out in 1986. But it always seemed to me that destiny brought us together. I was honored to work with my friend Chuck Brown for 22 years and manage him the past 12. While with Chuck, I was often greeted with "Hello officer" or "Are you lost?" But I was never more found. No matter what I or anyone could ever do for Chuck, you always got back more than you gave. We traveled around the world, and made new fans everywhere we went. Nothing was more important to him than his beautiful family and his fans. But his fans were more than just fans, they were his extended family. He raised them. Four generations of them. We had hopes of reaching the fifth generation, but another stage was calling. As Chuck entered the gates of heaven, I am certain a crowd of angels were yelling, "Wind Me Up, Chuck" and Mr. Brown flashed that million dollar gold toothed grin, with a tear of humility; always touched to his core whenever any good thing came his way. I think I speak for the entire city of Washington, DC and his fans around the world in saying, thank you Chuck Brown for coming our way, and giving us something and someone we could be proud of and call our



own. You leave a void that can never be filled, and a lifetime of memories that can never be taken away.

Thank you to Mrs. Brown and the entire Brown family - it is also an honor to know and love you. Thank you to all the musicians, speakers, city officials, and others who came together today to celebrate an American legend and musical innovator.

Thanks to all the volunteers and dedicated workers who pulled together to make this day happen. Thanks to all the Go-Go bands who continue to carry on the genre, a source of great pride for Chuck. Thanks to the Chuck Brown fans - we are all lifetime members. Thank you God, for blessing us with a true friend, father-figure, role model, gifted musician, party starter, and one of the coolest human beings to ever walk the face of this planet. Sho ya right.

Tom Goldfogle, Manager





# BUSTIN' LOOSE...

## Honorary Pall Bearers

Nekos Brown  
Wiley Brown  
Bill Thompson  
Danyale Landford  
Arthur Landford  
Larry Harrell  
Rufus Walton Jr

## Private Burial



# IN MEMORIAM: CHUCK BROWN

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We gather today to celebrate the home going of Chuck Brown, whose loss is grieved by generations of friends and fans. Although Chuck has undoubtedly lived a full life, replete with extraordinary accomplishments, as well as good works, he was more to us than an entertainer, a neighbor... he was an inspiration and a trailblazing example.

Chuck Brown's legacy includes, of course, the Go-Go rhythms he delighted us all with for decades, but equally so, the extraordinary way he lived. Chuck's example inspired and subtly guided generations of friends and fans. Chuck was an example of how one can overcome adversity with positivity, perseverance and hard work. Of how one should never give up on their dreams and, even when faced with tough times, strive to improve yourself. Chuck Brown treated others with love, respect and compassion. In an era that saw the rise of explicit, exploitative and violent themes in music and media, Chuck Brown channeled his love of the stage and his audience into creating a musical voice that was true to his heart... and we heard him, loud and clear.

Chuck Brown – “the Godfather of Go-Go” – got his musical beginnings singing hymns in church. Taught by his mother to play the accordion, tambourine and harmonica, Chuck's passion and talent for music were established at a very young age. His Mother, the late Lila Louise Brown, was convinced he'd one day be famous, and she told him so. Despite his musical inclinations (he learned piano also as a youth), it would be many years and hard knocks before Chuck would be able to live his musical dream.

The Brown family lived in poverty. Chuck never knew his father and his mother supported her children by working as a housekeeper. The family relocated from North Carolina to the District when Chuck was 8. Shortly after arriving in Washington, Chuck gave up his schooling and made a career of working odd jobs. As a teen, Chuck started to succumb to the temptation of petty crime and found himself in a life altering mess. In the mid-1950s, he shot a man in self-defense and was convicted of aggravated assault; which charge was bumped up to murder when the victim later died.

Prison was a turning point for Chuck. While serving his eight-year sentence, he traded five cartons of cigarettes for another inmate's guitar. After his release, Chuck supported himself with a variety of jobs (bricklayer, truck driver, sparring partner) and he returned to his musical roots. First, playing guitar and singing at backyard barbecues across the area (his parole officer would not let him perform in clubs that served liquor); then later as part of local ensembles.



In 1964, he joined Jerry Butler and the Earls of Rhythm and, in 1965, a group called Los Latinos. Both local acts played top-40 hits at area nightclubs. In 1966, Chuck formed his group, the Soul Searchers (although, he originally considered taking the stage name “Chuck Brown, the Soul Searcher”).

With the Soul Searchers, Chuck scored minor hits in the early '70s — “We the People” and “Blow Your Whistle” — but eventually decided to emulate James Brown by trying to create his own sound. Inspired by the percussive feel of Grover Washington Jr.'s “Mister Magic” and rhythms that Chuck internalized as a child in church, he settled on Go-Go's loping, popping cadence.

Chuck was a guitarist fluent in jazz and blues who could toggle between gritty riffs and fluid solos. But he truly excelled behind the microphone, bringing a warm voice that he could punch up into a hot shout or tamp down into a sandpapery purr or a gentle croon as the drummer's conga



popped and rumbled along. He was gifted with amazing versatility and was equally comfortable performing Jazz, Blues, Country, Soul and Gospel.

Chuck Brown developed his commanding brand of funk in the mid-70s to compete with the dominance of disco. Like a DJ blending records, Chuck used nonstop percussion to stitch songs together and keep the crowd on the dance floor, resulting in marathon performances that went deep into the night. Chuck said the style got its name because “the music just goes and goes.”

In addition to being Go-Go’s principal architect, Chuck Brown remained the genre’s most charismatic figure. On stage, his spirited call-and-response routines became a hallmark of the music, reinforcing a sense of community that allowed the scene to thrive. As Go-Go became a point of pride for black Washingtonians, Chuck became one of the city’s most recognizable figures.

“No single type of music has been more identified with Washington than Go-Go, and no one has loomed so large within it as Chuck Brown,” former Washington Post pop music critic Richard Harrington wrote in 2001.

With his group the Soul Searchers, his signature hit “Bustin’ Loose” not only minted the Go-Go sound, it spent four weeks atop the R&B singles chart in 1979.

“Bustin’ Loose” was “the one record I had so much confidence in,” Chuck told *The Washington Post* in 2001. “I messed with it for two years, wrote a hundred lines of lyrics and only ended up using two lines... It was the only time in my career that I felt like it’s going to be a hit.”

It was Chuck Brown’s biggest single, but throughout the 1980s “We Need Some Money,” “Go-Go Swing” and “Run Joe” became local anthems, reinforced by radio support and the grueling performance schedule that put Chuck on area stages six nights a week.

The influence of jazz and pop standards could be heard in much of Chuck’s Go-Go material. Motifs from jazz staples “Moody’s Mood for Love” and “Harlem Nocturne” became a part of his “Go-Go Swing,” and Brown reshaped Louis Jordan’s calypso “Run Joe” into a Go-Go classic.

In turn, Go-Go would have its influence on jazz when trumpeter Miles Davis plucked longtime Soul Searchers drummer Ricky Wellman for one of his last touring bands. Many spotted Go-Go rhythms on Davis’s 1989 album “Amandla.” And while hip-hop raced past Go-Go in the ’80s, Chuck Brown eventually influenced that genre as well. He was sampled by various hip-hop artists, most notably in Nelly’s 2002 hit “Hot in Herre.”

While rap music exploded across the country, Go-Go dominated young black Washington. Chuck’s sound spawned a generation of bands who would



pull Go-Go into focus in the ’80s, with groups including Trouble Funk, Rare Essence and Experience Unlimited (also known as E.U.) following in Chuck Brown’s footsteps. Chuck was always the genre’s champion, but he was quick to acknowledge the importance of other band leaders, Andre “Whiteboy” Johnson of Rare Essence, “Big Tony” Fisher of Trouble Funk and the late Anthony “Lil Benny” Harley, among them.

“These guys were the pioneers of Go-Go, and they each have their own distinct sound and identity,” Chuck told *The Washington Post* in 2001. “Everybody has something to offer.”

In 1992, Chuck Brown helped launch the career of the late singer Eva Cassidy, recording and releasing an album of duets, titled “The Other Side,” that confirmed his talent as an interpreter of standards.

Formal recognition came late in Chuck’s life. He was nominated for his first Grammy Award in 2011 when he was 74, for best rhythm-and-blues performance by a duo or group with vocals for “Love,” a collaboration with singer Jill Scott and bassist Marcus Miller.

In 2005, the National Endowment for the Arts presented Chuck Brown with a Lifetime Heritage Fellowship Award. And in 2009, the District



named a segment of Seventh Street NW “Chuck Brown Way”; it was a strip near the Howard Theatre where he used to shine shoes as a child.

He appeared in advertisements for the D.C. Lottery and The Washington Post and became the city’s unofficial mascot, known for his extroverted warmth and willingness to flash his gold-toothed smile for any fan hoping to join him for a snapshot. An appearance on U Street NW outside Ben’s Chili Bowl could stop traffic.



“I really appreciate that I can’t go nowhere without people hollering at me,” Chuck said in 2010. “I love being close to people.”

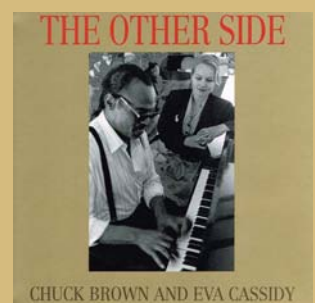
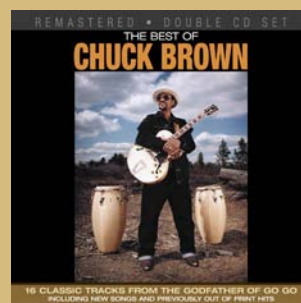
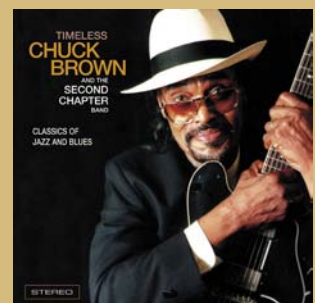
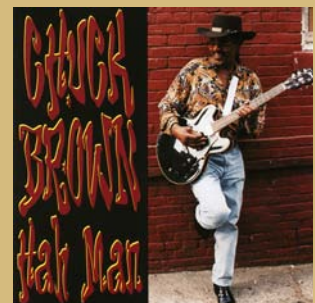
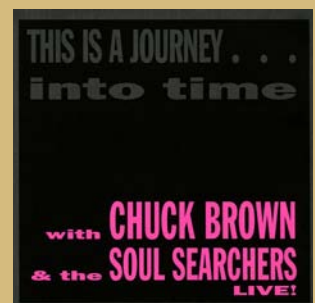
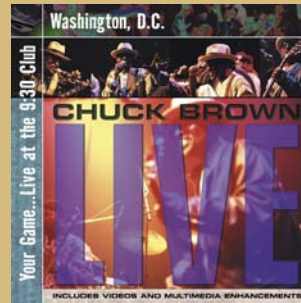
He performed less frequently in his final years but still took the stage regularly and would often comment on his golden years in rhyme. “I’m not retired because I’m not tired. I’m still getting hired, and I’m still inspired,” Chuck said in 2006. “As long as I can walk up on that stage, I want to make people happy. I want to make people dance.”

Charles Louis Brown was born August 22, 1936. He died May 16, 2012 after suffering complications from sepsis. He was 75.

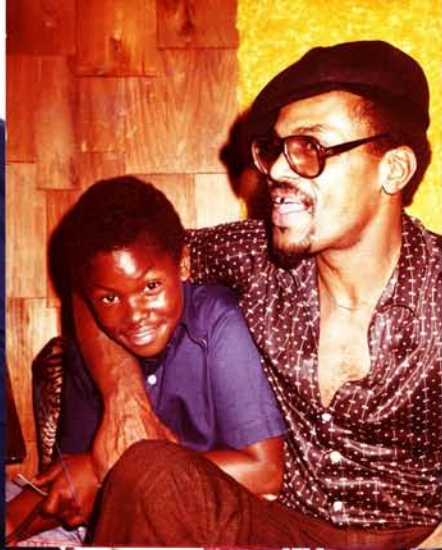
He is survived by his wife, Jocelyn Brown, his sons Wiley, Nekos, and Bill, and his daughter Takesa (KK).

In addition to his family, friends and fans, Chuck leaves behind a still-standing genre that, as he once told MTV, embodied the highest of human emotions. “It’s about love, the communication between performer and audience,” Chuck Brown said of Go-Go. “When you’re on stage, the people put that love to you and you give it back. There’s no other music like it.”

*By Julia Kirkendall, featuring an adaptation and excerpts from Chris Richards’, The Washington Post, article “The Godfather of Go-Go’, Musician created the commanding funk that became D.C.’s signature sound and a source of pride.” (used with permission)*









# FROM THE FAMILY

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Charlie Brown Jr.

From Daddy's BabyGirl,  
Even tho I'm grown, I'm a kid at heart when it comes 2 U  
Thank God for U, making my dreams come true  
We been around the world  
Yes this is true  
I'm kind of blue  
But God has called for U  
Selfish and mad  
Cuz I never wanted U 2 Go  
I know U had 2 "Run Joe"  
But Daddy the beat goes on  
U were so legendary & true  
So here's 2 life, love, and Go-Go  
And here's 2 U

Love Daddy's Baby \$KK\$

Dad,  
There are no words that could really express my love, appreciation, and admiration towards you but I felt it was necessary to express my feelings the best way I can. You have been there for me for the last twenty nine years of my life through the good times and the bad times. No matter what was going on in my life you stood by me and showed me the unconditional love that a father is supposed to show to his children. I can remember watching you get up every morning and get on your knees and thank God for allowing you to see another day. That was lesson number one; you taught me the power of prayer. The way you always thanked God for everything that you had, showed me that I needed to have God in my life. You were a wonderful

husband to my mother which showed me something else; how to honor my wife and treat her the way she should be treated. In everything that you did you showed mom how much you loved her and I am grateful to have grown up in a household with two loving parents. As a father, I would have to say that you were the best. I know that all children say that about their fathers but, when I say the best I mean the BEST. You always encouraged us to go after our dreams and that we could accomplish anything in this world. I will always cherish all of the memories that I have with you from childhood to adulthood. I really enjoyed the time we spent together and am sad to see it come to an end. I am the man I am today because of you. I will miss hearing you say "I'm so proud of you son". Those words were so uplifting to know that throughout my life I made you proud. Not only were you a father to your children but you were also a father to my wife and a PaPa to my children, your grandchildren. I have never seen anyone love and forgive the way that you do. That was always your heart, no matter what anyone did you still loved them. Your humbleness has been an inspiration to watch over the years. So many people loved you as Chuck Brown "The Godfather of Go-Go" but to me you were my dad. I love you with all of my heart and I am at peace knowing that I WILL see you again.

Love,  
Your Son Bill

Daddy,  
My idol, my motivator, my hero,.... Words can't explain how much you mean to me. You were the best father anyone could ever ask for. You have always been there for me and so many others at the same time. You never stopped teaching and amazing people with your knowledge and drive to succeed. It was all very certainly God-given. God placed you on this earth to do all you have done but I am sad to see him take you back. I've always imagined you would be here forever. Though you won't be here physically, I know you will be in spirit through us and everyone you have touched and influenced. As you requested, me or Wiley's next son will be named after you. If Wiley beats me to it then I'll name my next son your nickname for me, "Zack" (lol), 'cause you say I look "Zackly" like you. I'm at peace because I know you are with the Lord and you wouldn't want your children to worry because we too are in His hands. Thank you for being who you were and molding me into the man I am today. I will forever be in debt to you and will continue to live by your teachings and sayings. My favorite has always been "Whatever you do big or small, do it well or don't do it at all." I will forever love and miss you Daddy.

Your son,  
Nekos L.B.Brown

Daddy,

I will forever cherish every moment God blessed us to spend together. There wasn't a day that went by that you didn't tell me that you loved me. You always let me go with you, even when I was supposed to be in school. I remember you'd call me "Why-Why." You would let me stay up all night with you while you practiced and watched boxing or pool. When I was little, whenever I would whine or cry you would say "Be Macho! Be Tough!" and I would suck it up. That's something that will always stick with me. Every morning you would start your day with a glass of milk and you would do at least 100 push ups. There was even a time when you would do them upside down against the wall. You were always saying something funny. You would say "What's up Shorty, do you like top 40? I'll kick it witcha but you can't get naughty. We gonna do it like we did be-fo, then go downstairs like my man Riddick Bowe." There were times when I would mess up on something and you would say "I knew you was gonna do it before you did it." I used to wonder why you didn't stop me. I now realize that you wanted me to learn from my mistakes. Today I will live by the values you instilled in me, the lessons you taught me, and the character you helped me build. I will remember everything about you as if it were yesterday. I can't wait until I see you again when tomorrow comes. I know you will be watching over us and I know that you'll be able to make it not only to the home games, but the every game of mine now.

I love you Daddy, Your Son,  
Wiley Brown

My eyes are crying  
My heart is heavy  
My world is forever changed nothing in life will ever be the same  
I love that you are at peace & I love that you may now rest  
I want you to always know as a dad you were always the BEST!

Love,  
Sweet Cookie





# COMMENTS

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Although words seem to say so little,  
We hope they help in some way  
To ease the sense of loss that you're experiencing today.

Family and friends will mourn  
But things will be ok,

We've lost someone we love  
That's why we can relate.  
During this unhappy time let's celebrate  
And remember all the wonderful times  
that often came our way.

We have lost the Godfather of Go-Go,  
a father and a friend.  
But we will continue to rejoice until we meet again.

You are loved always Chuck,  
Benny & Melita Harley

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## It Is All About Love

From the time I relocated to Washington, D.C. from Mount Vernon, N.Y. over 40 years ago, Chuck Brown consistently provided a profound effect on my life. My first encounter was seeing and hearing him at the legendary LeGemma Ballroom. Listening to the Soul Searchers at that time was like hearing a record played. The sound was magnificent; the band was professional; and Chuck Brown was the reason it all came together seamlessly. Chuck became my role model. I watched and learned from how he carried himself in every aspect of the music industry—the artists, the record companies, the audience, the venues -- you name it. Chuck was far more than a musician; he was an authentic, caring, loving human being. He talked and sang about love; and he always walked the walk about love. He loved his hometown city. He loved people. Most importantly, he was the consummate positive example for us all. He did his best to put a smile on the hearts and faces of all his fans, and encourage each of the people he touched to strive for the highest potential in life. Chuck's legacy of Go-Go music is intact, but I know the legacy that means the most to him from now to eternity is all about love. From "We The People" to "It's Love" with Jill Scott expresses that sentiment better than anything written. In remembrance of Chuck Brown, we must love each other every day in every way.

Charles C. Stephenson, Jr.

Some people were blessed by the creator to do with their life exactly what they were put here to do, and that is how I would describe my friend Chuck Brown. I met Chuck wayback in 1968 when we were both new to the Washington music scene, and our friendship and mutual respect for each other stood the test of time. I have many fond memories from our working together at The Knights of Columbus Hall at Bryne Manor, The Masonic Temple and many other venues in the area, where Chuck and his Band would always come in and rock the house. Chuck was a fabulous friend and a magnificent entertainer, plus he was one of the coolest brothers I've ever met. R.I.P. Chuck and thanks so much for your contribution to our party pleasure.

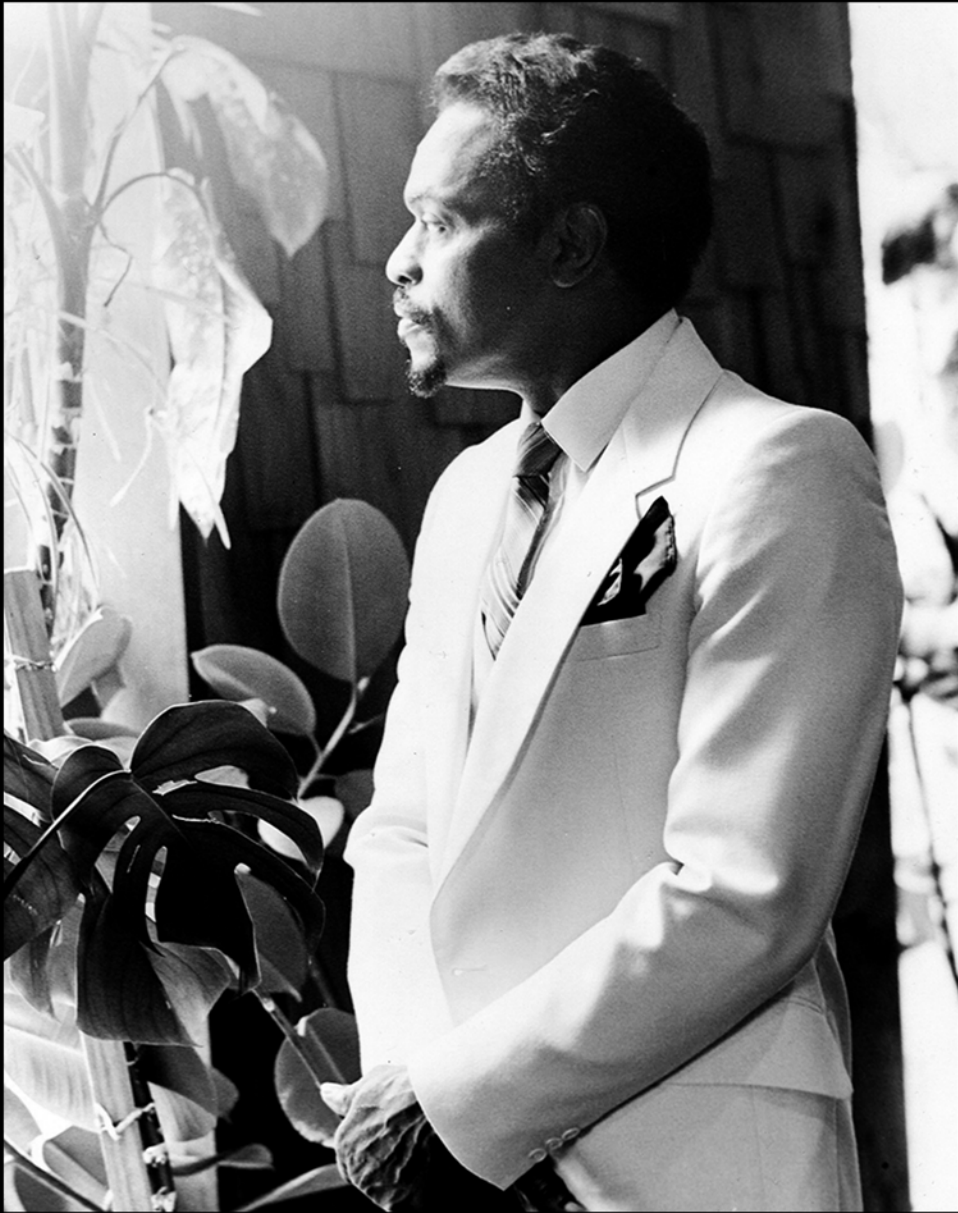
Love Ya Man, Sincerely,  
Bobby (The Mighty Burner) Bennett!

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We mourn the loss of our friend, our inspiration, the extraordinary Chuck Brown. Chuck was a part of the CD Enterprises' family for more than 40 years and there are no words that truly capture the void he leaves and the sorrow we feel. We at CD Enterprises know that our entire community mourns with us. We extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to Chuck Brown's family, friends and fans. May our countless memories provide us all strength and comfort during this sad time. Chuck Brown was the soul of D.C. His music, tremendous influence and legacy will live on. It is through celebrating his music, and loving one another, that we can best give tribute to our lost legend. It is through music that Chuck spoke to us all. Although Chuck cannot join us, he would be the first to insist that the show, the music, must go on.

God blessed us all through you Chuck. We love you!

Your CDE family – Darryll Brooks, Carol Kirkendall, Gerald Scott, Julia Kirkendall, John Richards and John Kirkendall











# THE CHUCK BROWN BAND:

Greg Boyer  
Brad Clements  
KK Donelson  
Donnell Floyd  
Kenneth Gross  
Maurice Hagans  
Frank "Scooby" Marshall  
Bryan Mills  
Cherie Mitchell  
Karlston Ross  
Marcus Young  
Greg "Googie" Burton  
Bobby Smoot  
Daryl Hunt  
Benjie Porecki  
Eric Parker  
Mark Walker  
Tim Steele  
Andre "Blues" Webb  
Skip Pruitt  
Kevin Prince  
Andrea Dumas



## VERY SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray  
and the Government of the  
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The Honorable Kwame R. Brown  
and the Council of the District  
of Columbia  
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
The Walter E. Washington  
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## THANK YOU

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Reverend Tony Lee  
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