



Julius Young, Jr.

A Tribute

Julius Young, Jr. shone his light from the moment he joined the Board of Directors Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston (BGCGH) in 2010 until his untimely death at the age of 49. His character, integrity and commitment to our youth were unparalleled.

Julius grew up as a "Club Kid" in California and understood the importance of having a safe space for children and teens both after-school and during the summer, along with staff and mentors who support BGCGH's core pillars and put members on a path for success. Notably, he was the first Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston Board Chairman to be a Club alum and the first to be a person of color. He was named to the position in 2020.

As Board Chairman, Julius' extraordinary leadership was on display amidst the unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston had to drastically reimagine and adapt its programming in the interest of safety for all Club members and staff. Julius' financial expertise proved invaluable in providing strategic guidance in revenue growth and financial management. He also provided vision for the local organization's 2025 Strategic Goals.

Additionally, under Julius' leadership, BGCGH's workforce readiness programs were advanced and expanded BGCGH's core pillars. An array of learning opportunities is available to Club members through our programs and partnerships with community businesses. Club member experiences include Club visits by local business professionals, trips to local businesses and trips to colleges and technical schools.

Recruitment of new board members of diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds was also a focus. Julius' efforts in promoting racial equity among Clubs and in their programming were evident in the #bethechangeyouwant2see initiative for teens. For example, in summer 2020, he led "Young & Black in Houston," with BGCGH Teen Members who engaged in courageous conversations in a town hall format. The conversations dealt with sharing their own experiences, race, gender, burdens, challenges, success, healing, activism, reflection and a discussion on being a teen and contributed to new ideas for Club programming.

In recognition of his leadership in social and racial justice, Julius Young was invited to join the BGCA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, a national initiative, where he served alongside BGCA's Board of Governors. This task force is charged with developing, monitoring and implementing strategies to create meaningful, action-oriented solutions for Clubs in addressing social injustice and racial inequities that impede success for kids and teens, focusing on black, brown and indigenous youth. His work with the DEI Task Force has impacted Houston-area Clubs, as well as those nationwide, by educating and empowering youth of color through programming, town halls and hands-on initiatives that will effect social change. Julius spoke on a national platform, helping Clubs to have "Courageous Conversations" with staff and among their Boards of Directors.

In an interview with Houston Business Journal in May 2020 Julius emphasized that Houstonians need to understand that our impact is nationwide. What happens in Houston lays the foundation for the future. Some of these Club kids are going to end up in other parts of the country, and Julius' participation in local, regional and national programs has helped to ensure that they are prepared to branch out and succeed whether they are in Texas, California or Washington, D.C.

In appreciation of the immense contributions of Julius Young to the organization and to our stakeholders, BGCGH named its Youth of the Year award after him in August 2021. It will now be called "The Julius Young Youth of the Year Award."

It is also fitting that Julius was recently notified that he would be the recipient of the 2021 Beacon of Hope and Opportunity Award from BGCA for the Southwest Region, an award created to recognize the service and commitment of a local board member. One of the definitions of beacon is "a source of light or inspiration." There is no better description of our Board Chairman, friend and mentor, whose passing has left us bereaved and sorrowful.

Julius has left a lasting imprint on Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston. We are thinking of Michelle and the children, along with all of Julius' friends and loved ones near and far. We offer our love and support. His legacy lives on, as we carry on his good work in assuring bright futures for our youth.