

## Community News

# You Don't Have to Be a "Big Man" to Leave a Lasting Legacy

By Phil Warshauer  
Executive Director of the  
Foundation for the Charlotte  
Jewish Community, New Jersey  
native, and fan of Bruce  
Springsteen and the E Street  
Band

On the evening of June 18, my

life was jolted by a text message informing me of the death of Clarence Clemons, legendary saxophonist and the mountain of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, a week after he had suffered a stroke. Over that week I had prepared myself for the worst but,

was still stunned by the news.

Deep down inside I'm still a New Jersey guy and a devoted (ok, borderline obsessed) fan of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. My first exposure to the music of Bruce Springsteen and the saxophone of Clarence Clemons dates



"The Big Man," Clarence Clemons, and The Boss. Photo credit: Guy Aceto/Backstreets

back to 1975. The recently released Born to Run album was on the turntable (you know that device with a needle that played a vinyl circle with a hole in the middle) and the song "Tenth Avenue Freeze Out" was blaring throughout the house with its forceful saxophone introduction that was distinctively Clarence Clemons.

Over the years the music and sound of Bruce Springsteen and his legendary E Street Band has been a supportive friend, trusted companion and spiritual guide. Led by Springsteen, the band is a unique "band of brothers," who have developed a special relationship with each other and their fans. Their music and lyrics provide a special connection that links me with long time friends and is something I've shared with each of my four children. My wife and two older daughters have attended concert experiences with me and I regret that my younger son and daughter will not have that same experience of witnessing the original legendary E Street Band. Featured in the majority of these songs and stage-right at each of those 20 plus concerts was the easily identified saxophone of Clarence "Big Man" Clemons. I was and continue to be saddened by the loss of this musical icon.

Immediately following his death, while listening to my collection of recorded songs and live concert performances, I read many tributes by fans and fellow artists from around the world. My thoughts moved from sadness about the void left behind to the incredible life Clarence fit into his 69 years and the legacy left behind. What a way to live your life. Wouldn't each of us like to gain fame and fortune by doing something we love while providing comfort and pleasure to total strangers during our lifetimes and beyond? As William C. Rhoden stated in his New York Times column, "The Big Man is gone, but

he leaves a rich and timeless legacy." Isn't that something we each should strive for?

What better time than during this reflective time of year to remember those who made a difference in our lives and ask ourselves how we can make a difference in the lives of others. It is easier than you think. We each have the ability to create and leave a legacy of our own and inspire others to do the same. It may come in the form of a financial gift, as a dedicated lifelong volunteer or through the lessons passed down to your children. It can also be found in the organizations and programs that you helped to create, worked to strengthen and assisted to sustain.

"The quality of our lives is diminished every time we lose a great artist," said fellow band member Steven Van Zandt. "It's a different world without Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Curtis Mayfield, Brian Jones, and the rest. But like all of them, Clarence leaves us his work, which will continue to inspire us and motivate us, and future generations, forever."

As I listen to one of my favorite songs, "Jungleland," I am once again inspired by that dramatic two minute and seventeen second saxophone solo that is the song's most dramatic moment. It is Clarence's reminder to me that we all have work to do, people to inspire and future generations to serve.

For additional assistance in creating your own lasting legacy please contact Phil Warshauer at 704-973-4544 or pwarshauer@charlottejewishfoundation.org. ☆



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### Donating an Old Cell Phone Can Save a Life

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and used in the event of an emergency. Simply bring the cell phone and battery charger (in a bag or box, if possible) and bring it by the office for collection. For more information check www.shalombayit-nc.org. ☆