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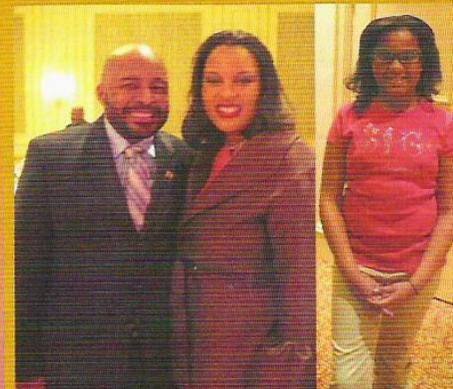
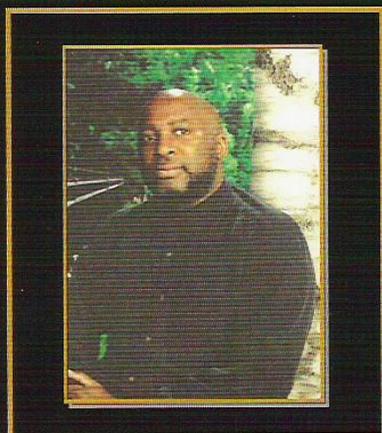
SMARTY PANTZ GIRLZ

WHEN BOXING & MENTORING CONNECT

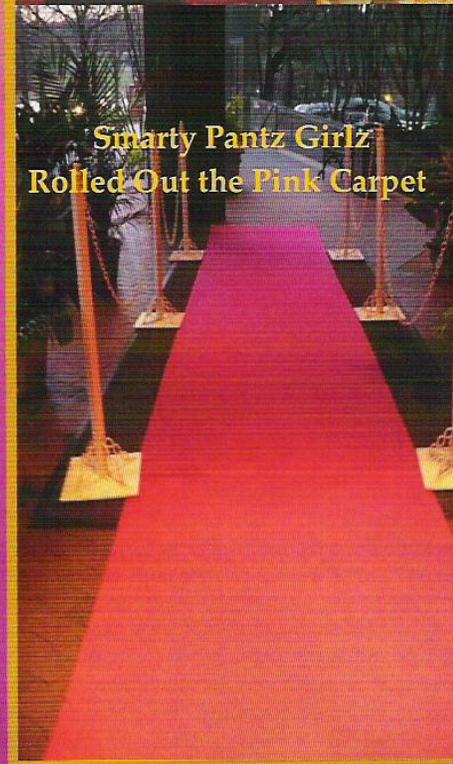


RETURNING TO A DREAM

WITH
EARL GREENWOOD



Smarty Pantz Girlz
Rolled Out the Pink Carpet



When Boxing & Mentoring Connect

Raymond Bettinelli, or Coach Ray as he prefers to be called, is both the Director and Head Coach of **Bettinelli's Community Boxing Academy (BCBA)**. Ray was born and raised in Bay Shore, NY. His love for the sport of boxing dates back to when he was 10 years old. His most memorable birthday was when he received a pair of Joe Fraizer boxing gloves. Ray has been instrumental in setting up a number of community based boxing gyms. He brings over 25 years of experience in training, management and boxing promotion to his organization.



BCBA is a non-profit organization that is devoted to doing good works in the community in which they operate. While their vision is to become a beacon, a light that will lead others to see the benefit of having a center like BCBA in their own community, their mission is to serve their community with a facility that is safe, clean and provides a positive environment where young people can go and feel a sense of belonging. They offer well-rounded programs designed to help young people meet the challenges that lie ahead of them so they won't feel the need to turn to crime, drugs or gang involvement. Their ultimate goal is to be known as a full-fledged community center where people can train to stay in shape and benefit from the programs they provide.

BCBA is a youth gym that is centered on boxing and academic achievement. Their boxing, Judo and Self Defense programs are intended to add structure, discipline and positive self-esteem to all who participate in them. They are in the process of building a computer learning center on their premises in an effort to offer local youth state-of-the-art computer courses. They will soon offer all graduates of their D.R.I.F.T. (Devotion, Respect, Integrity, Fairness and Temperance) youth program after school tutoring and Graduate Equivalency Diploma assistance (GED). Their programs are designed to educate, motivate and inspire youths to become equipped not only physically but academically as well. We invite you to check out Bettinelli's Community Boxing Academy at www.bcba.info and see all the wonderful things they are doing to make a difference in their community.

I was able to catch up with Coach Ray so he could share with me his passion for amateur boxing and how he turned his passion into an organization that serves youths. Here is what he had to say:

Sharla: What was the defining moment in your life that led you to start BCBA?

Coach Ray: Late in year 2001 I was brought on to run the boxing youth program at a very prominent PAL center here on Long Island. The man who hired me at the time was not serious about overseeing the youth program as much as he was in trying to develop his own professional boxing promotion company from the same location. This left the youth program with little chance of succeeding. I eventually resigned and moved on to help another associate set up a similar boxing center but not before I experienced what I consider "my defining moment".

One afternoon while at the center I heard a young boy (about 10 years old) just go off on two other older boys that were teasing him mercilessly. The young boy then went into this profanity laced tirade condemning his own mother, when I heard the commotion I was like, "WHAT IS GOING ON?!" I went out and grabbed the young boy by the arm, maybe harder than I should have, and told him to get in my office! I sat him down and scolded him for talking bad about his mother. He stood up and broke down crying, yelling "I don't care coach, I don't care, I hate my mamma, I hate her, she's a crack head!" At that point I questioned whether I was going to be able to handle this mentoring/coaching gig.

I told the young boy I was through with his foolishness. I said he was to sit in the office and think about what he said and only come out when he was ready to apologize. I then turned away from him and left him sobbing on the couch all by himself.

When I got back out to the gym floor a couple of other boys came over to tell me how his mother was actually a local crack addict and that he always gets teased about it at school. When I heard this I just stood there spinning as though I was hit by a sledge hammer. Here I am taking on the role of a mentor/coach and I just failed my first real test. I had left a young boy alone, sobbing in my office with no one to console him or counsel him. At that very moment coaching in this sport I love took on a whole new meaning.

I ran back to my office to find him sitting on the couch still sobbing. I immediately dropped to my knee and did my best not to breakdown as I tried to explain how unfair life can seem at times. To this day I have trouble reliving this experience. I get very emotional (as I'm getting now telling you about it). Anyway, from that point on I watched over that boy as best I could. I left that center a short time later but this event led to "my defining moment" and prompted me to open my own center.



Sharla: Did you or do you have a mentor of your own?

Coach Ray: Yes I did, my father was my mentor. My father instilled in me to work hard for the things I want in life. Before he opened his own business he held down many jobs. He took whatever job was needed to provide for our family. He worked very hard and I am all that I am today because of him. I also have a hero that made a huge impact on my life as well. His name is Muhammad Ali. What I especially like about Muhammad Ali is that he is approachable and funny unlike many fighters today. He truly loved the sport and made boxing fun and competitive.

Sharla: What did you learn from your father/mentor that is being modeled at BCBA today?

Coach Ray: In many ways our D.R.I.F.T (Devotion, Respect, Integrity, Fairness and Temperance) youth program is

based on my relationship with my father. My father demonstrated these character traits before me as a child and now that I have the opportunity I want to pay it forward one life at a time. There is the quote I like and is posted on our website it says: "A man or a woman is a matter of birth. Being a man or a woman who makes a difference is a matter of choice." - Byron Garrett ■



By Sharla Bell