

To Judge Perkins and the 7th District Circuit Court,

I was asked to prepare a statement for my only son Curtis Israel Gray, born on December 11, 2000. This simple request brings a keen awareness that I'm speaking for him because his voice was violently silenced on April 13, 2019. The voice of this legendary young man mattered to many families here in Flagler County Palm Coast, FL. Curtis used his voice to sing and belt out lyrics to old school hits and a wide genre of music, his voice had a command that was respected as Football Captain of Matanzas High School and by his fellow Bulldog Track & Field teammates at FPC Highschool. Curtis was a noted public speaker lending words of encouragement at United Methodist Church under Pastor Kevin James Church during Football Sunday, and for Youth Sunday at The Purpose Center under Dr's. Anthony and Candace house. His voice was used proficiently through volunteering with the Young Readers Book Club where he mentored the youth of Flagler County in reading for four years. His voice could be heard assisting the Mad Dogs little league Football Team encouraging the youth in their football practice. His deep baritone brought comfort to youth who contemplated suicide because they felt they were all alone in their suffering. His voice guided a youth who found himself suddenly homeless to our home on a cold winter night because Curtis knew I would offer the young man love and a place to grow. Curtis would from time to time visit the Sheriff's Department to communicate with the officers about various interests of concern and he left quite an impression on the attorneys and legal staff of Politis & Matovina as he would seek advice and guidance in litigation matters for his first ever car wreck. Curtis' voice was powerful, artful and at times humorous, full of laughter and mirth. His voice was kind and matter of fact as he advised others through life decisions. His voice had a simple, well known command to his peers to "Be Great". It is a motto he lived by and in his death died by. He spoke those very words to me 2 days before his voice was silenced forever: "Mom, promise me you will be great". I responded that I promised and he made me say the words over and over again until he was assured he could trust me with his last request. Those words are eternal and have been repeated earnestly by many adults and youth alike in Flagler County, "I will be Great".

Curtis's character was heralded for his character by multiple hundreds of citizens in our community to the News Pundits. He was memorialized by two high schools who chose to honor his legacy by changing the uniforms. Matanzas High School embellished their football helmets with #LLC8, FPC placed his silhouette of his last record breaking Triple jump on the back of every Jersey indefinitely for years to come. Curtis was known for his active community contributions including food drives to feed the poor, coaching little league and providing assistance to members of this community whether offering the elderly random acts of kindness, visiting the hospital or assisting many families across Palm Coast in moving. He was also fact-checked by Four Federal Government Agencies including Project Star, Project Aim, Project Phases and the Community Rehabilitation Center earning him the prestigious 2019 CHAMP AWARD for recognition of his contributions to positive mental health awareness and drug use prevention. His social media was vetted by these government agencies, while conducting extensive research on his character and community contributions. He was the only recipient in the entire State of Florida recognized in a 2019 Awards Banquet at the prestigious Jacksonville Jaguar Stadium hosted by the aforementioned Federal Agencies on May 29th. Tragically Curtis

never received that award in person due to his sudden death, instead on May 29th the first annual Long Live Curt Track & Field Scholarship was presented by me as he was being honored in Jacksonville. I had to receive that award for him as I've had to receive his diploma in his stead and as I now stand before you giving him voice because he can not speak on his own behalf.

Curtis' tragic and senseless death took his life at the age of 18 years old, and while the time for his life was shortened, he had already fulfilled his purpose thus doing more in a span of 18 years than some men will ever contribute and leave behind in the span of 80 years. His reach has been celebrated in Bogota, Columbia; Cebu Lights, Japan; Great Britain; China; Germany; Kampala, Uganda; Lagos, Nigeria; Kenya, Brazil, Honduras, and all across the United States.

While the realization of the impact of his life in this world is staggering, so is the impact of his loss. Through his death my body and mental health has taken a network of doctors, grief counselors, psychologists, mental health therapists and a psychiatrist to treat my mind and body. I have endured a small tear in my heart that some would describe as Broken Heart Syndrome, I have relentless acute pain in every part of my body from the burden of stress due to the infinite loss of my only son. I have been diagnosed with PTSD, Manic Depressive Disorder and Anxiety Disorder, and have undergone a series of surgeries for hemorrhaging rectal bleeding, two enlarged benign cysts in my back which grew due to the tremendous stress on my body. I had to rescue my daughter who suffered from an eating disorder due to severe trauma from the loss of her only sibling. It cost her her Scholarship to GSU (\$193,500 for four years, lost). She too has undergone therapy and must continue to do so. When a child is murdered there isn't a reset button to push to escape the immeasurable enormity of the loss. When an only male child is murdered, so is his seed, thus I will not have grandchildren from him, he won't be there for me as I grow older and he will never be an uncle, father, or grandfather, his generation was obliterated by a single bullet and I will never know his full potential. Curtis had plans to become a successful Hedge Fund Broker on Wall Street, he founded a peer-to-peer support group in which he encouraged positive mental health and financial literacy for young men, he felt that learning the stock market was a great tool to inspire hope for a better future. When my son died I committed to live by the promise I made just two days before he died. "I promise to BE GREAT son" and I will by God's grace. Curtis passed me a torch and I will carry it until God takes me home. His body is gone but his legacy will never die. #LLC, #LongLiveCurt.