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MAIN MC

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COMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST RAIDERS C.C GREEN

I had the privilege to set with C.C Greene, Commissioner of the Northwest Raiders. The program consists of 6 football teams and 6 cheer squads. He had a group of 15 kids that did not make it at other organizations. They play at Lonnie Young Recreation Center. He started as a player for the organization beginning 1981 and concluding play in 1987. In 2001, after starting a family, he decided to return to the organization and get involved as a coach and parent.



By Latryse McDowell, Freelance
Photos Courtesy of NW Raiders

When you began the season, I know your goal is always to win a championship, but what are some of the things that you did as a coach in the pre-season, to prepare?

The goal in this arena is not to worry about winning a championship it's to teach the young men about the philosophy of life. Winning is second it's more about academics and winning over the battles of life in society. I prepare by always staying in the mind frame as being more of a mentor setting an example for this kids and representing the team as the best coach I can be and I remain in a humble positioning for whatever may come our way. I try to save each and every kid who steps on the field teaching these kids the mentality of the many different adversity in this life.

What was your toughest game of a regular season; who was it against? What made it tough? And what did you and your team learns from that game?

Nicetown Titans was the toughest game it was 40 – 0. The kids didn't believe in themselves especially when they were at their breaking point when we got slaughtered. Well I asked the team to define who they really are some kids wanted to be dropped from the team. So I just keep them grounded and remind them that they are great and hard work pays off just keep going no matter what comes in their path. Because those who don't get chosen first get a call from us to be welcomed in and there circumstance doesn't matter we work with them to bring these kids up to speed. The children learned

that night, not every battle happens as a win on the first time may take a few but it will be a defeat on our side as long as you listen for the play and move with agility we can accomplish so much. With no child left behind

Is there any play that you look back on as the most memorable of the season? Who was it against? And what made the play memorable?

When the kids went to Florida to win 4 national titles! It's a blessing to have a good group of coaches Who, I and the team can bounce off of to get everything in order and stay focused. We played against the Monarchs; they weren't able to move the ball in the second half with of course there being 4 quarters. The championship game the kids performed but That Friday Night before the game we went over the whiteboard identifying different plays trying to trigger them to play better on the field. By showing them there mistakes on the board and drilling them on where they could play better by just keeping close to the play we came up with. My right hand man is Coach Anthony he shows up every time and gives everything he has to make sure our team is ready willing and able to make results happen with giving their very best. Coach Damon is my motivational speaker he gets the kids to be in the right mind set before and after the games. We also teach sportsmanship whether we win or lose you will be part of a team and represent yourself and us in the right way.

Who has been your stand out players on the of-

fense and defense? Can you tell me something about them?

The first kid who come time mind is Anwar he is 11 years old 4.10 in height about 90pounds in weight . He good to be on offense and defense he is a stand out kid he brings his A game every time. My quarterback is Quameer Ruff he is very talented as well. I have another player who is a girl her name is Azimah King she 10 years old number 25 on my junior pre-league. She is an "A+" student, she qualified for Pop Warner National Scholastic Athlete as well as a black belt in martial arts, as well as a Girl Scout. This young lady has a long resume already.

I also have Shaylah Smith who started out as a guard, and went on to be a quarterback on my team. She is also Pop Warner National Scholastic Athlete.

We all know this is a Volunteer Work what you guys do in youth football, so why do you coach youth football? What do you hope kids learn from this experience?

I really started this from believing in there needed to be ways from taking gangs off the street. The kids need to be focused on whether they are the best layer or just don't have what it takes in others eyes' as being the best still need a place to call home when maybe life isn't what they may have wanted it to be. These days age doesn't define hardship it can come at any age and I want everyone to get time, attention, love and a sense of family from my league. I plan on keeping this kid's lead in the right direction no matter what comes my way or there's like I said before no child left behind. One thing I realize this is more than volunteer job after getting to know the kids and their parents they become an extended part of my family and am that for them.

Roster:

Askia Jones, Anwar Margrass
Gary Nelson, Quameer Ruff
Nasir Holly, Cameron Garrick
Tavon Devero, Quran Love-Powell
Sahmir Brown, Brandon William's
Kariff Parker-Moore, Jayden Reed
Nakhai Bagwell, Azimah King
Zahir Denis, Dior Brown
Lamont Norman, Xavier Wise
Joshua Hanna, Jak"ki Geer
Tyrell Harris

ROCHELLE BILAL: THE NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN



By Rochelle Bilal
Article/Photos Courtesy of Main Course PHL

As a lifelong resident and Democratic voter in Philadelphia, I felt the call to serve – to restart my many years of activism, leadership and management skills – by entering the 2019 Philadelphia Sheriff’s race.

Upon retirement as a 27-year veteran of the Philadelphia Police Department, serving in the roles of patrol and in the special victims unit, where I stood for victims and with their families during unbearable hardship, I thought I would finally take a break from public service and focus on retirement: paint some fruit, play some golf, and do some traveling. Well, I was wrong. My passion for effective government

wouldn’t allow me to just relax – I *knew* I could make a difference in the lives of residents across this city. And so, I put my name on the ballot, knowing full well the pitfalls and politics that would come with that announcement.

The Sheriff’s Office focuses on three critical areas: protection of courts and city officials; transport of prisoners; and, of course, the sheriff sales. These three areas and the budget/leadership that corresponds to their needs are the basis of why many groups and individuals believe it’s time for the office to be dismantled.

This is a bad idea. The Sheriff’s Office’s main function is to remove property from residents, either for delinquent taxes or mortgage defaults. Property ownership is carefully regulated. It’s one of the fundamental rights protected by our Founding Fathers in the Bill of Rights, written and signed in this very city. The Fourth Amendment protects people’s rights against an unreasonable government search and seizure of property.

If that power were to be abused, or recklessly applied, imagine the consequences. Imagine people whose properties are unfairly taken or policies that make it impossible for them to fight back. What would happen then? People deserve to have someone who can be held accountable. Someone who – if

residents feel is unfairly or illegally applying their power or acting in a way that is disrespectful to the citizens they are supposed to be serving – can be removed from office by vote. Elections ensure that the sheriff does not have unchecked and unregulated power. That is why we need this to be an elected position.

As sheriff, my first priority will be assessing how the current fiscal year \$26M budget is allocated – and where we can exercise better programming and practices to be a more cost-effective office. The first step will be to take a deep dive into the books. We will check for any misuse of public funds and determine the best practices to safeguard taxpayer dollars.

Since starting on the campaign trail, I’ve had the opportunity to listen to citizens’ frustration toward the office as it relates to serving residents. If entrusted by those citizens with the responsibility to lead the Sheriff’s Office, I will act on those concerns and restore the integrity and effectiveness of the office.

THE FASHION DISTRICT RICH WITH PHILLY FLAVOR



By: Tanya T. Morris
of Mom Your Business
Articles/Photos Courtesy of Main Course PHL

The 900,000 square feet of space features a robust lineup of dynamic stores including Nike, Columbia and H&M, but the Philly Flavor is what makes it great! Tiffany’s Bakery a hold over from The Gallery, Chickie’s & Pete’s headlines the back food court but the Uniquely Philly area focused on small businesses is what it’s all about. The District collaborated with The Enterprise Center, a local organization that seeks to better position high-

potential, minority and female entrepreneurs in the economy. The collaboration is a curated collection of local small businesses with authentic Philadelphia offerings to the District. The four inaugural tenants are:

American Hats LLC: a family-run business that utilizes high-quality materials to offer an assortment of hats to women and men.

Dolly’s Boutique: From daywear to formal attire, Dolly’s Boutique caters to working women.

The Sable Collective: A destination for locally sourced, female-owned brands in clothing, jewelry, housewares and body care.

South Fellini: The City’s go to place for quirky Philly-themed gear that appeals to both Philadelphians and tourist.

Another exciting way the mall is fostering its diversity is by leasing space to REC Philly, a start-up co-working and makerspace for artists and creatives. REC Philly started in a basement in North Philadelphia. The new facility will house recording studios, visual labs, a podcast studio, rehearsal space, production rooms, meditation rooms, private conference rooms, and a creative co-working and 200 person event space.

The District has a lot of art installations and other things unique to Philly, there are a lot more activities lined up for the weekend including fashion show so go check it out.

MAIN COURSE: ENDING LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE



By Karen Eckstein-Sarkissian
Articles/Photos Courtesy of Main Course PHL

In 2017, Pennsylvania State Senator Sharif Street and State Representative Jason Dawkins introduced bills that would abolish prisons sentences of life without parole. State legislators nationwide are introducing similar bills. The issue isn't limited to Pennsylvania. It's a complicated nationwide issue that requires understanding of sentencing laws, political history, the Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, racial disparity, and multiple viewpoints.

What is Life-Without-Parole?

When the court sentences an individual to life-without-parole (LWOP), it means that person will spend the rest of their life in prison without any ability to appeal the sentence. They will never get a chance to leave. They will die in prison.

How Does an Offender Receive LWOP?

Each state has its own laws, both criminal and civil, that all its cities, towns, and districts follow. If an offender commits a crime in one of its cities, towns, or districts, the court in that area, oversees their arrest, conviction, and incarceration. The state legislature establishes the laws and determines the rules and procedures that every jurisdiction follows. While each district and town may have its own set of rules and procedures, it nonetheless adheres to and follows the state's laws.

State legislators set forth sentencing guidelines for certain crimes. When an offender agrees to plead guilty or if the jury or judge finds them guilty of a that crime, the judge must follow those guidelines when imposing the sentence. The guidelines usually allow the judge to consider factors such as the offender's age and criminal background. Oftentimes, probation or parole officers and sometimes even independent agencies prepare presentencing reports that investigate the offender's background and other extenuating circumstances. In many cases, there is a sentencing hearing, even when an offender pleads guilty, and individuals who wish to speak on either the victim's or offender's behalf can do so freely. Even the offender is allowed to speak and the judge gets to observe their demeanor and consider whether they regret their crime. In other words, judges have discretion and some leeway when imposing sentences.

Mandatory sentences, on the other hand, are those in which the judge must impose regardless of any extenuating circumstances. There's no presentence report, no presentencing hearing, nothing to consider, and no leeway. The judge must impose the legislated sentence.

States usually impose LWOPs for habitual criminal behavior or as punishment for a serious offense, usually a capital murder, which is one that immediately subjects the offender to the death penalty. Capital murder typically involves a child, a police officer, or multiple victims. It can also include felony murder, which is an unintended killing that takes place during an intentional crime. For example, three people rob a bank. One robber shoots and kills a police officer. The state will charge the shooter with murder and the other two robbers with felony murder.

Rise of the LWOP

When Vice President George H.W. Bush ran for president against Massachusetts' Governor Michael Dukakis in 1988, his supporters funded an ad, now renowned as the "Willie Horton Ad," which focused on a convicted murderer who raped a woman and stabbed her partner after escaping prison while on a state sponsored prison furlough program. Massachusetts lawmakers later prohibited such programs and instead began more heavily implementing LWOP. Other states followed. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. Among other things, it established the "three strikes" rule, which imposed mandatory LWOP for federal offenders with three or more convictions for serious violent felonies or drug trafficking crimes. The bill also granted billions to states that passed "truth-in-sentencing" laws, which required inmates to serve at least eighty-five percent of their sentences.

Since elections in this nation began, candidates have vowed to get tougher on crime and criminals. Conservative and right-wing leaning individuals generally prefer harsh prison terms and their administrations typically focus on such policies. The public overall favors harsh prison sentences for serious criminals. such as those who commit rape, assault, and serial murder. That harsh offenders can earn good behavior credits and eventually qualify for parole even when sentenced to "life," can frustrate certain people, regardless of their political predisposition.

Violent crimes and drug abuse rates increased in the 1980s and even juveniles began committing more brutal crimes. The public fell for the ad's scheme. At certain moments during the 1988 presidential election, Governor Dukakis was ahead of Vice President Bush. Some claim by even seventeen points. That all changed after the "Willie Horton Ad" and many experts credit it for his ultimate landslide election. The "Willie Horton" ad, even by today's stand-

ards, is one of the most racially antagonistic political ads, as it so obviously promotes white fear of African Americans. (Ann Coulter calls it "Bush's finest 30seconds" and Trump, for his re-election is seeking an ad with similar effect). While President George H.W. Bush claimed he had nothing to do with the ad and that his PAC backed it, he nonetheless ran a "revolving door" ad that still played upon racial stereotypes.

The "Three Strikes" Rule

While the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act that Bill Clinton signed applied only to federal crimes, it encouraged states to pass their own mandatory "three strike" laws and impose LWOP. Those state rules eventually saw individuals serving life sentences for crimes such as shoplifting, simple assault, or other violations that would normally result in minimal sentences or even probation.

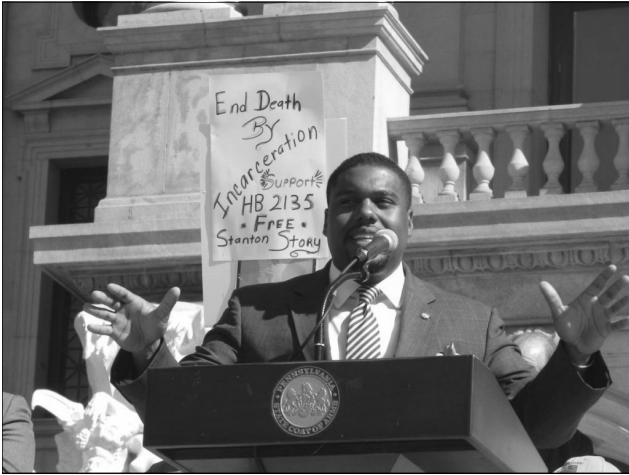
LWOP Statistics and Racial Disparity

Racial disparity in state and federal sentencing exists even with standard sentencing. African American male sentences are nearly twenty percent longer than white male sentences for similar offenses and African Americans and Latinos offenders face higher incarceration rates and are sentenced to much longer sentences than similarly situated white offenders. Simply recall Brock Turner's six-month sentence for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman. Turner actually served only three-months. The disparity grows deeper regarding LWOP. There are more African Americans serving LWOP than those serving parole eligible life sentences. According to the Sentencing Project, as of 2012, out of the 159,520 people serving life sentences, 49,081 were serving LWOP (thirty-five percent). Such represented an 11.8% rise since 2008.

According to the National Center for Youth Law, in 2006, there were more than 2,000 offenders serving LWOP for crimes they committed while they were under eighteen years of age. About twenty-six percent of juveniles are sentenced to LWOP for felony murder and fifty-nine percent of juveniles receive LWOP for first-time offenses. At the time, courts nationwide sentenced African American juveniles to LWOP ten times more than white juveniles. In California alone, of the 180 inmates sentenced to LWOP for crimes they committed before they were age eighteen, 158 were African American.

In twenty-six states, anyone convicted of first-degree murder is sentenced to LWOP, even a juvenile. In Pennsylvania, anyone convicted of first or second-degree murder is automatically sentenced to LWOP, including juveniles.

Pennsylvania has the most inmates serving LWOP for crimes they committed as juveniles than any other state (more than 450)



If an individual wants to appeal their matter, they must first go through the state courts. Then, once they've exhausted all their state appeals, they can seek remedy through the federal courts, provided Constitutional laws apply. As the Constitution is the nation's supreme law, all states must comply.

Senator Dawkins speaking about Senate Bill 942 – Ending Life Without Parole

The United State Supreme Court decision in *Miller v. Alabama* 567 U.S. 460 (2012) held that mandatory LWOP imposed on juvenile defendants violated the Constitution's Eighth Amendment's protection against cruel and unusual punishment. It consolidated two similar matters: the title case and *Jackson v. Hobbs*, an Arkansas case, involving two individuals who committed crimes when they were fourteen years old. Evan Miller and a friend smoked marijuana and drank alcohol with a neighbor. They then robbed and beat the neighbor with a baseball bat and set fire to his trailer to destroy evidence. The neighbor died as a result of the fire and his injuries. Alabama tried Miller as an adult and when a jury found him guilty, the court enforced a mandatory LWOP.

Kuntrell Jackson was also fourteen years old when he and two other teenagers robbed a video store. Jackson initially remained outside but entered shortly before one of his friends shot and killed the store clerk. Arkansas charged Jackson as an adult with capital felony and imposed a mandated LWOP.

Justice Elena Kagan, who wrote the Supreme Court decision noted, "mandatory life without parole for a juvenile precludes consideration of his chronological age, immaturity, impetuosity, and failure to appreciate risks and consequences...it prevents taking into account the family and home environment that surrounds him...and from which he extricates himself...no matter how brutal or dysfunctional." The decision, however, failed to ban all juvenile, homicide LWOP and that the system must differentiate between momentary immaturity and uncommon "irreparable corruption."

Four years later, in *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, 577 U.S. ___ (2016), the United States Supreme Court considered whether Miller must be applied retroactively. When Henry Montgomery was seventeen, a truant officer caught him. When the officer frisked him, he shot and killed the officer. After his initial trial, the court sentenced him to

death, but he was retried because "public prejudice had prevented a fair trial." His second trial resulted in a LWOP, which did not allow a sentencing phase or the opportunity to introduce mitigating evidence. Justice Kennedy, who wrote the decision, determined that the Constitution required retroactive application of Miller's prohibition and mandatory LWOP sentences for juveniles violated the Eighth Amendment. While he did not oppose LWOP for juveniles, he said that the require individualized sentencing and determined that all states must either re-sentence offenders given LWOP as minors or offer them parole. Montgomery is expected to impact up to 2,300 cases nationwide.

Back to Pennsylvania

Senator Street's bill (SB942) would allow an individual who received LWOP to become eligible for parole after serving fifteen years. One of his goals is to end LWOP, specifically for juveniles convicted under felony murder laws (Pennsylvania prisons house over 500 such inmates). He is also concerned about another category of murderers, the kind of which would normally be eligible for

parole due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. a battered wife who kills her abusive husband out of self-defense), but received mandatory LWOP. His bill does not create a right to parole, so it does not set free the most dangerous inmates. The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole would retain the power the review parole eligibility.

Senator Street also pointed out that it costs about \$42,000 per year just to house a prisoner and that the state spends about \$33 million a year just to maintain those serving LWOP felony murders. So, as prisoners age and their medical needs increase, the average per year cost will to about \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year.

Considering that that LWOP inmates are the least likely to recidivate, instituting parole for them offers tremendous taxpayer savings.

Two Sides to Every Story: LWOP as a Death Penalty Alternative

The death penalty has always been a contentious subject with people holding extreme views on either side. Many who morally oppose the death penalty consider LWOP a preferable choice. They believe it avoids the risk of executing innocent people.

A California coalition of wrongfully convicted individuals, law enforcement officials, and surviving members of murder victims twice attempted to convince voters to repeal the death penalty and replace it with LWOP.

Members felt the state's death penalty system was "costly and broken" and twice, in 2012 and 2016, launched a SAFE ("Savings, Accountability, and Full Enforcement") voter act to ensure no innocent person was ever executed. Both times, voters defeated the act, believing the death penalty should continue for the most heinous killers.

Death row inmates opposed the measure. LWOP eliminated their rights to appeal their sentences, which instantly deprived them of hope. One death row inmate wrote an op-ed and said that he'd rather

be executed than have his rights to appeal taken away.

Two Sides to Every Story: Survivors of Victims Support LWOP

Some families of murder victims like LWOP. For them, it forever imprisons the criminal who killed their loved one and eliminates the decades long appeals process that usually accompanies death sentences. In some cases, district attorneys agree to plea bargains, with victim's families support, that allow offenders to plead guilty to crimes with LWOP and avoid death penalties.

Two Sides to Every Story: The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, Joe Biden speaking about The

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.

History has not been kind to Bill Clinton or anyone else who supported the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, especially because of the racial disparities caused by the sentencing reforms, "three-strikes" rule, and racial issues during its enactment. Hillary Clinton suffered, too, for her use of the term "super predator." The act, however, deserves a second look. It also provided:

funding for programs to address crime prevention funding for drug treatment

funding for education and jobs grants to combat violence against women; fund state efforts to arrest and prosecute those who victimize women, offer rape prevention, counseling services, and the arrest of offenders in domestic violence cases, grants to make improvements to transit systems with surveillance lines and

emergency phone systems funding for handgun requirements to enable states to identify ineligible firearms purchasers and conduct interstate background checks on individuals who worked with children grants develop or improve the capability to analyze DNA in a forensic laboratory.

The media, politicians, and many others have asked everyone associated with this act, including Vice President Joe Biden, to apologize for this act.

The act, as all things, was part of its time. This doesn't excuse its impact or mean that the problem shouldn't be resolved. It means, as with all things, it should be considered individually, applying all extenuating circumstances. It took the Supreme Court nearly thirty years to figure that out.

One Other Case to Consider

Right now, society and opinion seem to be leaning toward abolishing LWOP and offering parole to offenders the courts imposed such sentences, especially those who committed crimes when they were juveniles. One case may cause some to pause, even if just for a moment.

Lee Boyd Malvo, better known as the D.C. or Beltway Sniper, was seventeen years old when he John Allen Muhammad shot and killed ten people and

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seriously wounded three others during the weeks between September 5, 2002 and October 22, 2002, in what Virginia officials called “one of the most notorious strings of terrorist acts in modern American history.” Muhammad received the death penalty for his crimes and died by lethal injection in 2009. Malvo pled guilty and received LWOP. Malvo appealed his case to the United States Supreme Court and, under Miller, claims his sentence deserves review. The Supreme Court agreed and, in March 2019, agreed to hear his case in its upcoming October session.

The Danger of Broad-Based Solutions to Problems
Malvo demonstrates, as history constantly teaches, that there is usually never one solution to a certain problem. What’s popular during the moment leads society to discuss resolutions. Those resolutions, however, have far-reaching consequences, which we cannot see or predict. And, what we think is important at the time, may be inconsequential later. If even just a tiny percentage of released LWOP inmates go on to commit violent crimes, some will no doubt consider offering them parole a mistake and we will be right back on the opposite side. History’s pendulum usually always swings back the other way.

UPTOWN STANDARD

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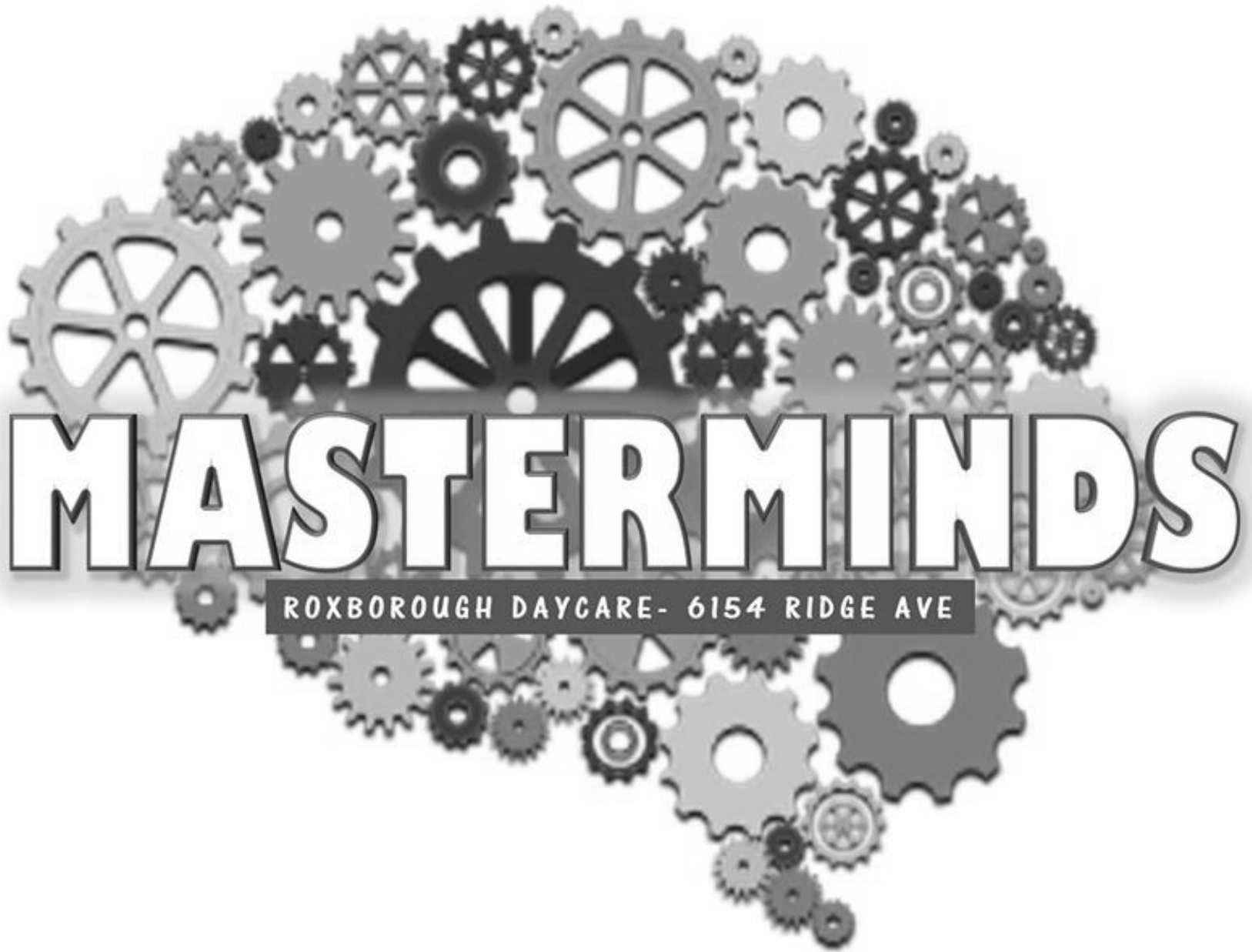


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