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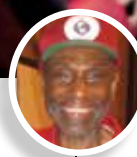
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BARBERSHOP TALK
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*There's No
Place Like*

Home



by **Robert L. Woodard**
The Wynnefield Barber

There's no place like home during the holidays. I can remember each day as a new episode of a story in my life. I was number two of 10 children born to James and Gloria Woodard. My parents were the most important people in my life. Every year around Christmas was like a dream coming true. My parents made sure we were all asleep before the guy in the red suit arrived. I also remember my oldest brother, James Woodard, Jr. Everyone in the neighborhood called him "Junie." He left home at age 19 and I never saw him again. My dad was a fight fan and he taught us all the skill of boxing. I learned the art of self-defense well. I was always a heavy kid and sometimes my friends called me "Fat Boy." Growing up, I never considered myself fat until I was called fat. Prior to that, I was just busy being a kid. Junie loved boxing, too. He was very good in the ring. In my neighborhood, you had to be prepared to square off whenever you had a dispute with someone. We would challenge each other to allow the best man to win. We called it a "Fair One," meaning, if you can't get along, get a fair one on. The rules were simple. Once the fight was over, the two fighters would shake hands agreeing the best man had won. Afterwards, you were

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still friends and usually wouldn't fight again.

Growing up in my neighborhood was quite an experience. It shaped and formed me in many ways. Our childhood is very important. We, as adults, should examine ourselves and never forget that little person that lives inside of us. My brother, Reverend Bernard Woodard, recently passed away. This experience made me recall and appreciate the wonderful times of growing up in South Philly at Woodard's Cleaners, 912 South 19th Street. My parents have since passed on, as did my sister, Mrs. Gloria Henderson. It seems that life never allows us to truly grow up because I am continually maturing, on a daily basis, as a child of God.

I remember going to sleep in the ghetto and waking up in Center City. Many of my neighborhood friends have lost their homes because of Gentrification. Hopefully, they will never lose their valuable memories of our community. In this diverse "City of Neighborhoods," everyone should have a place to come home to because there is no place like home.

Take the "RACE Test" today, for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org. **PRH**

Woodard's Barbershop, 5031 Diamond Street, is a member of the Philadelphia Row-Home (PRH) Business Network.