

A Hero to Many

By Christina Lee Hunt

Given his massive impact on so many individuals, we must join in recognizing the extraordinary life of a true legend, Darrell Freeman. A self-made millionaire, Darrell Freeman, served as a mentor and supporter for aspiring black entrepreneurs, dreamers, and countless others. Darrell was not only an extremely intelligent and a successful entrepreneur, but also an outstanding husband, father to four children, mentor to his community and all entrepreneurs, and a true inspiration to so many people.

Darrell had many amazing qualities, but something that has inspired the community of entrepreneurs very much was his passion and drive to be successful. He had so many successes in his lifetime, but it surely was not an easy route for him. Freeman grew up in Chattanooga, TN, and then moved to the Nashville area with little to nothing as the first person in his family to attend college. "You can start with nothing and build value," Freeman said. "This is the typical American dream." Darrell's dreams and goals in life were not handed to him and definitely not achieved without many challenges and difficulties. However, with his perseverance, fire, and consistency, Freeman created an enormous success. He served as a light and inspiration in our community, but more specifically, for the people with the same dreams he once held. Along this journey, Darrell voiced, "If failure enters your mind, don't start your business. Failure was not an option for me. I was either going to make this work, or I was going to make this work." He had a passion and an immense focus to achieve his goals and be successful, which is one of the many reasons why so many people value, respect, and look up to him not only as an entrepreneur, investor, and mentor, but also as a motivator for anyone to take risks and make the leap to achieve their dreams.

Freeman founded an information technology solutions company, Zycron, in 1991, which would become one of Nashville's largest. Zycron is a Nashville entrepreneurial success story, launched from a very small one-employee office. Freeman truly started from nothing and created something beyond great, but that was only the beginning of Freeman's business ventures. Darrell also served as the co-owner of Pinnacle Construction Partners and was a co-founder of the Franklin-based Reliant Bank. Freeman did what some people would identify as the impossible and left behind a legacy that none will forget. Darrell serves as a prime example of the fact that you can start from anywhere and as long as you work hard and stay committed, you will achieve your goals. "It's easier to be it if you can see it... The people who lived in [North Nashville] never saw someone like me, dressed up, sometimes driving a Mercedes, running a company. That's the opportunity," Freeman said. Not only did Darrell achieve his dreams and pursue his goals, he saw a challenge to be something great and tackled that opportunity to be the best.

Freeman was not only a huge success himself, but he took it one step further in using his talent and resources to help anyone that he could. He worked tirelessly to increase educational

opportunities and to inspire other entrepreneurs. Freeman is a prominent Nashville entrepreneur, leader, motivator, and strived to make his family proud and work hard for them too. A man like Darrell Freeman is a man that we do not see around often. Darrell was undoubtedly a true one-of-a-kind that many will miss, but it is most important to continue his legacy and to recognize and honor his life and successes forever. Freeman is an individual that makes saying goodbye so hard. As Nashville's Chamber CEO, Ralph Schulz said, "He was a lion of a leader, and his impact will be felt for generations." Pursuing dreams and business ventures while lifting others up along the way will keep honor Darrell Freeman and carrying on his life's work.

Quotes:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/news/2022/06/30/darrell-freeman-in-his-words.html>