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Young Senators inducted into Go-Go Hall of Fame

By D Ball

Chuck Brown may be deemed the "Godfather of Go-Go," but true go-go historians may make mention of another DC band that was responsible for blazing the go-go trail.

In 1965, seven teenagers fused together their musical talents to form one of Chocolate City's earliest go-go bands – The Young Senators. Known as the "Emperors of Go-Go," Frank Hooker, Leroy Fleming, Wornell Jones, James Johnson, David Lecraft, Jimi Dougans, and the late Calvin Charity were from Uptown Northwest DC and played the local scene, which included spots like the Glenarden Town Hall, The Underground, and the Knights of Columbus Hall. The group recorded on their independent label, Sound Innovation Records, one hit, "Jungle," that went number one locally, but it wasn't until they hooked up with the late great Eddie Kendricks [formerly of the Temptations] that they received critical acclaim.

Immediately after starting his solo career, Kendricks solicited the Young Senators' services and initiated a relationship/friendship that would last for almost eight years. Kendricks with his silky smooth falsetto voice, combined with TYS' soulful sounds, first collaborated on his second album "People Hold On." According to Kendricks' former producer, Frank Wilson, the Young Senators provided a new sound for the veteran performer. "I wanted to move away from the Motown Sound and get closer to what people were hearing when [Eddie] Kendricks performed live," said Wilson. "We got that feel with 'Girl You Need a Change of Mind'."

After hearing the group perform, Wilson pushed The Young Senators into history by making them the first road band to record with a Motown act. Their first gig with Kendricks was at the internationally known Apollo Theater in New York City. They would shatter all previous attendance records and set a standard of music and showmanship that is to date unprecedented.

On February 24, 2002, The Young Senators were inducted into the Go-Go Hall of Fame.

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