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[**Bernard Curtis Brown II's bench**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/interactives/pentagonmemorial/victims/index.html?jump=13)



**Bernard Curtis Brown II**

**Age:** 11

**Hometown:** Washington, D.C., USA

**Occupation:** Student, Leckie Elementary School (Washington)

**Location:** Passenger, American Flight 77, [Pentagon](http://projects.washingtonpost.com/911victims/pentagon/)

"He just loved basketball. He's been playing [on teams] since he was 7, in [Corpus Christi,] Texas. He tried football, but he couldn't, because of his asthma. He played soccer at 5. As he got older, he would just go out and shoot baskets. He usually got up Saturday morning, about 8 in the morning, and he'd just go outside and dribble, shoot. The goal was right outside our neighbors' bedroom window. He would play by himself in the mornings, or his dad would go out and play with him. Sometimes I would, or his sister. The neighborhood kids would come and play once they got up. He always said he was going to be a star, that he was going to play [professional] basketball some day." -- Sinita Brown, Mother

**Profile:**

Eleven-year-old Bernard Brown was clever, a quick wit, the kind of boy who kept his teachers on their toes. Estella Cleveland, who taught his fifth-grade class last year at Leckie Elementary School in Southeast Washington, loved him.

"He used to give the fourth-grade teacher fits. But he turned it around last year. Everybody noticed it," Cleveland said.

That's why Cleveland gave Bernard's name to her best friend at Leckie, sixth-grade teacher Hilda Taylor, when Taylor asked whom she should take on a four-day National Geographic trip to California.

Taylor drove from her home in Forestville before dawn Tuesday to Bolling Air Force Base, where Bernard lived with his parents, Bernard and Sinita Brown, in naval housing. Taylor left her car on the base, and the boy's mother drove the two travelers to Dulles International Airport.

An official at the Browns' house said they did not want to speak about their son's death. Cleveland said she was devastated about her former student's death.

"He was fun-loving," she said. "He was the joy of the class."

-- Debbi Wilgoren

*Source: The Washington Post, AP and washingtonpost.com*