

A FORMER YANKEE BATBOY HONORS ANOTHER AT PLAY

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One former Yankee batboy honored another Sunday at the Argyle Theater in Babylon.

At the premier of his play "Batboy: A Yankee Miracle," Ray Negron recognized Suffolk County Sheriff Errol Toulon Jr. for being the first African-American named to his position.

"I didn't expect this," said Toulon, who as a teenager in the South Bronx worked as batboy for the Yankees. "I was just coming when he first told me" about the play. "But he wanted to honor me for my accomplishments."

The play, which is dedicated to law enforcement, is about a young boy who learns to laugh and cry with his heroes. Stu-



Sheriff Errol Toulon Jr.

dents from Oceanside High School starred in the one-day performance.

It's based on the life of Negron, who was caught spray-painting the outside of Yankee Stadium by then-team owner George Steinbrenner. Instead

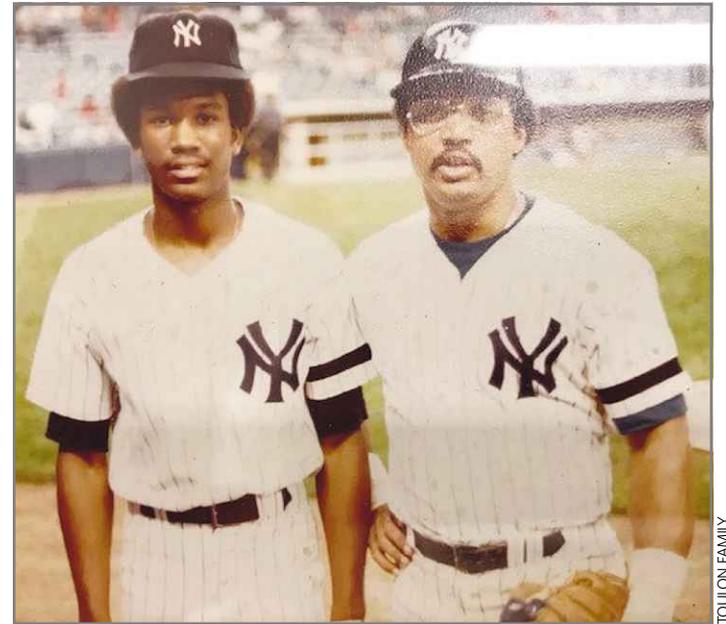
of having Negron arrested, Steinbrenner hired him as a batboy during the 1970s "Bronx Zoo" Yankees era.

The play tells of Negron's experience growing up and living his dream.

Negron was a batboy for the Yankees seven or eight years prior to Toulon, but was still working in the clubhouse when they met.

Toulon, who was elected Suffolk sheriff in November, and the Silver Shield Foundation, an organization founded by Steinbrenner that helps pay for the education of children of fallen police officers and firefighters, were recognized at the premier.

"You're talking about a guy that's a great person; a guy who has battled cancer," Negron said of Toulon, who has sur-



Toulon, as a batboy, with Yankee legend Reggie Jackson in 1980.

vived two bouts with cancer — lymphoma in 1996 and pancreatic in 2004.

Toulon said working for the Yankees helped shape his personal life and career.

"It was a great experience being with the Yankees," the sheriff said. "I really learned a lot about professionalism, in-

tegrity and also how to do things the right way."

Some who attended said the honor was in good spirit.

"It's a nice honor and positive message," said Rockville Centre resident Kelly Carney. "I think law enforcement should be respected and honored."

East End Art Hike offers visitors tips on ticks



Evangeline Pasquale, 5, of Manorville examines a tick at Indian Island Park in Riverhead on Sunday. ■ Video: [newsday.com/suffolk](https://www.newsday.com/suffolk)

BY KESHIA CLUKEY
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Visitors to Indian Island Park in Riverhead Sunday were greeted by educators and students raising awareness about a growing threat on Long Island — ticks.

Tick Wise Education, a non-profit organization based in East Quogue that focuses on teaching children about ticks, hosted its first Art Hike for Tick Bite Awareness, sponsored by East End Tick and Mosquito Control, of Southampton.

The event, which drew dozens throughout the afternoon, featured demonstrations on how to prevent tick bites, how to spot them, and how to properly remove ticks once they've become attached to the skin.

"You have to be aware of ticks and you can't just be careless about it," said Annika Pasquale, 11, of Manorville. "It's dangerous."

Annika was the grand prize winner of Tick Wise Education's poster contest. Her entry and the other winning posters were displayed at Indian Island Park Sunday and will be on view in kiosks

at parks across the county throughout the summer.

Ticks are an increasing problem in the Northeast, particularly on Long Island, which is considered ground zero for Lyme disease, the No. 1 tick-transmitted infection in the world, studies have shown.

In 2016 alone, there were 26,203 confirmed cases of Lyme disease in the country, 2,623 of which were reported in New York State, according to the most recent data available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That year, 48 cases were reported in Nassau County and 243 in Suffolk, according to the centers.

Ticks carry a variety of illnesses, including babesiosis and anaplasmosis. And a large cluster of people on the East End have tested allergic to red meat, a condition that experts have attributed to bites from the Lone Star tick.

Brian Kelly, owner of East End Tick and Mosquito Control, has two children, 3 and 8 years old, whom he has taught to dress appropriately, and to identify and properly remove ticks, but he wanted to do more.

"We're finding them everywhere. It's not just in the woods anymore," Kelly said about the tiny arachnids.

He hired April Nill-Boitano, the president of Tick Wise Education, to teach children about ticks. Putting on presentations at area schools, she's reached more than 3,000 students so far this year, Kelly said.

Stony Brook Southampton Hospital's regional Tick-Borne Disease Resource Center, and Suffolk Legis. Bridget Fleming also partnered with Tick Wise to produce informational booklets provided to the children and their families.

Teacher Stacy Hubbard, whose fifth-grade class at Pulaski Street Elementary School in Riverhead was among those taught by Tick Wise, on Sunday said she learned a lot from the program. "I've lived here my whole life and I've been pulling them out the wrong way for years," she said. And it was particularly relevant for her students, some of whom "had Lyme disease, or their parents couldn't eat meat for a time, or they had other tick-borne diseases," Hubbard said.