

Mural Honoring Paul 'Unk P' Gripper to Be Unveiled July 27 in Philadelphia

New public artwork by Nile Livingston celebrates the life and legacy of beloved mentor Paul “Unk P” Gripper. Dedication starts at noon July 27.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, July 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new public mural honoring the life and legacy of Paul “Unk P” Gripper will be unveiled on Sunday, July 27 at 12pm at Kirbymack’s Professional Barber Salon, located at 2600 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia. Designed by artist [Nile Livingston](#) and produced by [Mural Arts Philadelphia](#), this vibrant work celebrates a beloved father, coach, mentor, and community icon whose presence shaped countless lives.

Paul Gripper, affectionately known as “Unk P,” was known for his booming personality, streetwise charm, and relentless dedication to uplifting youth. A basketball coach and car salesman, Paul routinely drove neighborhood kids to practice in his white Ford Explorer, ensuring they had meals, support, and opportunities—often at his own expense.

“

If the youngsters call you OG or Unk, it’s your job to keep them from making bad decisions.”

Paul Gripper

Over 1,000 signatures from community members and colleagues helped bring this mural to life. It now lives on the exterior wall of Kirbymack & Pete Rock’s Professional Barber Shop, a place Paul frequented for over 25 years—bonding with barbers, laughing with friends, and making memories.



Artists painting the Paul “Unk P” Gripper mural during the community paint day, organized by Mural Arts.

The mural, designed by Nile Livingston, draws from comic book aesthetics—evoking influences

like Black Panther, Spider-Man, and Paul's favorite Marvel villain, Thanos, whom he often referenced playfully. At the top of the mural, "Unk P" floats in balloon-style letters, and his birthday, July 31st, is etched into the comic-inspired layout as the origin date for this story.

A basketball loops through the mural's composition, framing Paul's legacy and symbolizing teamwork and leadership. The design includes his three children, a nod to his priorities in life, and features his late ex-wife depicted in a Byzantine-style halo—an intentional tribute to the women who supported Paul and so often go unrecognized in public memorials. His mother Judy and sister Naima are also honored, alongside a space for community members to add their names as part of the story.

"Paul was more than a local legend—he was a warm, funny, deeply human figure who made people feel seen and supported," said Livingston. "His story reminds us what it means to truly show up for your community."

Notable design elements include a split face symbolizing Paul's dualities: strength and vulnerability, street-savvy and open-heartedness, struggle and resilience. The phrase "Kentucky Boom," a signature basketball call used by Paul, bursts across the wall in a comic-style bomb, capturing his energy and unforgettable presence.

At the bottom right of the mural is one of Paul's own quotes, shared on social media:



Standing in front of the future mural site at 2600 Ridge Ave, outside Kirby Mack Barbershop in North Philly.



Young person participating in the community paint day hosted by Mural Arts Philadelphia

"If the youngsters call you OG or Unk, it's your job to keep them from making bad decisions."

Event Details

Mural Dedication: Paul "Unk P"

Gripper

□ Sunday, July 27, 2025

□ Starts at 12pm

□ Kirbymack's Professional Barber Salon

2600 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19121

About [Creative Repute](#)

Creative Repute® is an award-winning design agency led by artist Nile Livingston. The agency specializes in public art, branding, and digital design that amplifies social impact and community narratives.



Nile Livingston, the visual artist behind the Unk P mural. Photo by @arekusn

About Mural Arts Philadelphia

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, creating enduring artworks that ignite change, inspire action, and build community through collaboration.

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