



## TOMMY THE CLOWN Biography

Born Thomas Johnson in Detroit and raised in South Central Los Angeles, **Tommy the Clown** founded the competitive dance movement, now known as “krumping” more than 13 years ago to encourage creativity among at-risk kids and teens and provide them with a non-violent outlet. Today, Tommy is the internationally recognized “father of krumping” and stands as a positive role model in urban communities across the country.

As a youngster, Tommy often found himself in and out of trouble, faced with many of the same destructive temptations that confront today’s youth. Fate intervened when a friend called with an urgent need for entertainment for her child’s birthday party. Although he had no experience, Tommy accepted the job. He combined popular hip-hop music and an athletic, energetic dance form. Soon, the young people began emulating Tommy’s clown persona, adding their own style of clown makeup, and “krumping” was born.

Boys and girls, who otherwise might have turned to gang life and violence, suddenly are staying in school, building self-esteem, and saying “no” to drugs. On any given weekend, Tommy can be found entertaining at neighborhood parties or performing at major events. When the demand for Tommy became overwhelming, he formed the **Hip Hop Clowns**, a crew of neighborhood kids who perform with him at the parties and events.

He was a spokesperson for the 2000 Census Campaign and recently formed strategic partnerships with counties, cities, and schools to present enrichment programs and provide esteem-building activities, all while delivering smiles and laughter.

Also in the year 2000, Tommy launched the **Battle Zone**, a series of krumping competitions where dance crews from all over are encouraged to participate. Tommy also hosts **Battle Nights** held monthly in conjunction with the non-profit Debbie Allen Studios in Culver City.

Tommy was also the subject in the feature documentary, “Rize,” released earlier this year by Lions Gate Films. He has appeared on virtually every television network, in newspapers and national magazines and has shared the stage with Will Smith, Snoop Dogg, and Usher. Appearances include “Larry King Live,” “The Tonight Show,” “MTV Music Awards,” and “CBS Evening News.”

Tommy’s dream is to continue to spread his movement throughout the world and encourage people to creatively express themselves and realize there is always another alternative.