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# Johnston Waxes Courage and Inspiration

*Johnston Waxes Courage and Inspiration From Chicken Soup for the Soul: Inside Basketball*

BY: From [Chicken Soup](#) for the Soul: Inside Basketball

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Ray Johnston was “living the dream.” The former [University of Alabama](#) point guard was dating Miss Texas, modeling for Kinko’s ads, and playing on the Maverick’s summer league team trying to make it in the NBA. In the summer of 2004, however, Ray lapsed into a coma after contracting a rare and aggressive form of leukemia.

Ray was in a coma for over two months and “coded” three times. Over the next three years he survived two relapses of cancer, kidney failure, heart fibrillation, seizures, blood clots, pneumonia, the loss of his spleen and seven toes as well as his ability to dunk on the fast break. Ray’s dream life had turned into a nightmare.

Odds were that Ray was not going to survive the leukemia— the doctors gave him one hundred days to live. The outlook was bleak but the support was tremendous. There was an outpouring from the Dallas community, specifically the Dallas Mavericks’ organization. Everyone— from owner Mark Cuban and general manager Donnie Nelson to players and equipment managers— became emotionally invested in Ray’s recovery. Ray was welcomed with open arms at Dallas games and in the locker room. In January, 2007, Ray underwent a bone marrow transplant. After at least three brushes with death, Ray appears to be beating the odds.

After Johnston’s miraculous “reprieve” it would be natural to think that he would seek to “eat, drink, and be merry.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, Ray Johnston is giving back to the Dallas community by [investing](#) his time in the lives of high school basketball players.

Ray Johnston now heads the Heroes Organization basketball program. Realizing that most of the at-risk, inner city teens in his basketball program will not ascend to the NBA ranks, Ray created a “Prepare for [College](#) Fair.” With the help of the Dallas community— Southern



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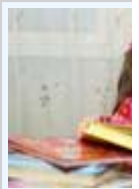
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Methodist University, Brookhaven College, volunteers and corporate sponsors— Ray leads a hands-on seminar instructing the student-athletes on how to take the SAT, apply for college and practice for job interviews.

While most of these kids have many obstacles to overcome to succeed, they don't have far to look for inspiration in overcoming life's bad bounces. Ray Johnston is still living the dream.

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