

Accident forces Paralyzed Athlete to Rely on Inner Strength

The Stuart News, Florida, by Ed Filo
December 27, 1984

Friends and relatives of Scott Burrows believe the Martin County teenager's spirit and inner strength will help him pull through the most traumatic period of his life.

The athletic 19-year old former Martin County High School graduate is undergoing intensive physical therapy at a Colorado hospital following an automobile accident last November that left him paralyzed from the chest down.

"He's taking it very well. His spirits are high and I know he's accepted the fact that what happened has happened." Said his father, Tom Burrows.

Burrows and his wife Joan, residents of North River Shores, are at their son's side at Craig Rehabilitation Hospital in Denver where he's enduring physical therapy.

"I don't think either one of us initially accepted the fact that he could be paralyzed, but we are adjusting," Burrows said.

Burrows said Scott's doctors have said his chances of walking again are very low, but right now he's concentrating on how to take care of himself.

"He was able to sit up in a chair the other day and move his hand and arms. It's an accomplishment. But he's not the type to stop there." Said Burrows, director of the Turtle Creek Club in Tequesta. It's quite a change for a youngster who enjoyed physical sports like football and karate, said Ray Eller, vice president of Sheraton/American Express Inc. in Stuart.

Eller said the Scott Burrows Recovery Trust has been established at First National Bank of Stuart, P.O. Drawer 2316, to help cover the medical bills.

Scott graduated from Martin County High School in 1983 where he lettered as a tight end for the Tiger football team. He also earned a black belt in Kung Fu and worked his way up to be the state's No. 1 light heavy weight in full contact karate.

At the time of the accident, Scott was majoring in business at Florida State University, where he was a walk on wide receiver for the Seminoles. The 6-foot-2, 185-pound sophomore was selected as "Mr. September" for the school calendar.

He was critically injured last Nov. 3 near Apalachicola when the car in which he was passenger flipped in a single-car automobile accident. Since the accident, he has lost 45 pounds.

"He was so full of life. He was the epitome of a high school kid filled with spirit," said Wanda Yarboro, Martin County High School Principal.

Yarboro described him as an "unofficial and unelected" spiritual leader who would direct student cheers while he was on the sidelines.

The Tigers didn't forget him and gave Scott the game ball in their 22-0 victory over cross-country rival South Fork in the first football meeting between the two schools.

Chuck McCaughey, who coached Scott in football and full contact karate, described him as a strong-willed, likeable and dedicated youngster who enjoyed physical contact just for the challenge.

"Pound for pound, he was dynamite. But he wasn't one of those guys who went looking for a fight. He liked to talk, he'd talk a mile a minute. If you met him, you would just like Scott." McCaughey said.

"He was an all American boy, a great athlete in several sports. He was always full of life." said McCaughey's wife Dianne, a physical education teacher at South Fork High School.

Burrows said he doesn't know how long it will be before Scott returns home but has unfailing confidence his strong-willed son will return to school and finish college. "He intends to, that's what he said. And knowing him, he'll do it one way or another." Burrows said