

## **Todd Fultz Nomination Letter:**

I am proud to nominate Todd Fultz for the GGO award this year. I have known Todd for 24 years and I believe Todd fits the mold of what a good guy really is. He has great faith, growing up as the son of a Lutheran Pastor, a wonderful family, wife in Erica, three kids Mary, Madeline and Timmy who mean the world to him, a wonderful trait of giving back to others through volunteering at church, coaching his kid's sports teams or volunteering through his Stillwater community where he now resides.

The following is a piece that was featured on "Fox Sports North" November 15<sup>th</sup> 2010, that explains who Todd Fultz is and why I have nominated him for this year's Good Guy award ;

If you walked a mile in his shoes, you'd know it. You'd probably be sore and tired -- and you might complain. But not Todd Fultz. Todd considers himself lucky -- lucky to be able to toss a football with his son Timmy and play outside at the family farm with his two daughters Madeline and Mary. And after a major car accident, lucky to be alive.

Todd Fultz grew up in Forest Lake, where he was an all-state wide receiver. His coach was a young Mike Grant, now the head coach at Eden Prairie. After high school, Todd played one season at South Dakota State, then transferred to St. John's. Grant was the offensive coordinator there under a living legend, head coach John Gagliardi.

According to Gagliardi, "He's not only a great athlete, but an unbelievably fine person. And the most positive guy I've ever known." A good Guy Trait I would say!!

Grant added, "Everybody at St John's knew him. Everybody loved the guy. His personality and impact on people's lives up there probably were more important than what he did on the field".

What he did on the field was pretty impressive. The first touchdown pass Todd ever caught as a Johnnie was a 94-yarder at Gustavus. It's still the longest touchdown reception in St John's history. But even more significant than the touchdown itself is what Todd did immediately afterwards.

After he made a seemingly out of place gesture, Gagliardi remembers thinking, "Gol' dangit, we don't do that at St John's". He wanted to grab Fultz and say, "Todd, none of that stuff."

But on the sideline, Grant told Gagliardi that Todd wasn't showing off. He was pointing up to his little brother, Timmy.

"Tim was energetic, athletic, fun to be around -- great smile, a Dennis the Menace type," recalls Todd.

Timmy was five years younger than Todd, and a typical little brother -- until he was 11 years old and got sick with a rare type of cancer. Within a year of the diagnosis, Timmy passed away at

home. At the time of Timmy's passing Todd remembers, "It got real quiet. You saw his chest rise and fall one last time, and we all kind of waited for that next breath, and it didn't come. I remember my dad saying that this was it".

Todd was at Timmy's bedside, and made one last promise to his little brother: "I just said whenever I score a TD, I'll point at you."

Todd says he never planned to say it -- the words just came out. But since that day, he honored and remembered Timmy by pointing to the sky after every touchdown he scored. Todd says Timmy taught him how to overcome great challenges. That is a life lesson Todd would come to greatly need.

On June 5, 2008, Fultz was driving down a road in Stillwater, heading to a meeting, when he was hit head-on at 60 miles per hour. Todd's car did a 360 barrel roll in the air, landed on its tires, and started on fire. Gasping for breath and in tremendous pain, he couldn't feel his legs. But Todd knew that somehow he had to get out.

Todd recalls, "I put my hand on the back-seat passenger-side head rest and did everything I could to pull myself through. My legs didn't work -- I couldn't feel anything in my legs and my back was searing in pain so I only had my upper body. I put an arm around the driver's side and pulled myself into the back seat and pushed off the passenger side. I put my left hand over the driver's side and yanked as hard as I could to get up to the window, which was broken. I had just put my hand up on the frame of the car to try to pull myself through the window when Elliott and another person first on the scene stopped to help me out".

Todd's business partner, Elliott Saltzman, had been driving behind him and immediately called Todd's wife, Erica. She rushed the miles to the scene of the accident. She remembers the scene with Todd "laying on the ground, just this color of a person I'd never seen before in my life. Just white and horrible ... the people around were talking. One said, 'He's not gonna make it, I don't think.'"

Todd was taken by ambulance to Regions Hospital in St. Paul, where Dr. Tonn Lee operated on him. Todd had multiple surgeries to repair his legs and ankles, pelvis, back and hips. He also had internal injuries and a broken nose. The x-rays tell a lot of the story, like his right ankle, which is now held together by 20 screws.

The road to recovery was a long one for Todd. He spent nearly a month in the hospital, and in typical Todd fashion, made that time as positive as possible.

Grant recalls conversations with Todd: "Every time I talked to him in the hospital it was, 'I'm gonna be fine. It's gonna come back. I think it's feeling a little better. I'm gonna be up and walking. ... My goal is this, my goal is that.'" A good guy trait indeed..

Todd was released from the hospital 23 days later. And three months later -- on September 28, his 41st birthday -- he took his first steps. He recalls, "I put aside my walker, and Erica almost fell over. I was supporting myself with the table. I took my first step and I remember Erica telling me I wasn't ready, and I almost went down."

Todd took those first steps in his daughter Mary's room. She was 5 when the accident happened, and was the only one of the three kids who could comprehend any of it. Todd said he wanted to trump any bad memories Mary had of the accident with a better one.

Todd still has a limp. But if you walked a mile in his shoes, you'd feel pretty lucky. He lives a full life, based on the lessons learned from a short one, his 11-year-old brother Timmy. With every touchdown scored during his St. John's football career, Todd honored his little brother. And today, he's able to play catch with his 7-year-old son, Timmy.

According to Todd, "Life is so short. We don't get another chance. There's not another go-around. This is what you got, so you just go after it. And you just make sure you've got enough to do it again the next day. Life's great. Life is fabulous.

Todd has written a book "The year of little victories" a daily account of what Todd remembers each day in the hospital and through rehab and what he faced in his uphill daily battle after the accident.

I cannot say enough good things about Todd the person, mentor and friend, he leads by this example "Life is Great. Life is Fabulous" every day of his life. There are people whom you meet in life that you want to be around because of their energy and Great Spirit, Todd is that person. I am so very proud to call him my friend.

The above is why I have nominated Todd Fultz for this year's Good Guy award.

Proudly submitted

Greg Kienholz