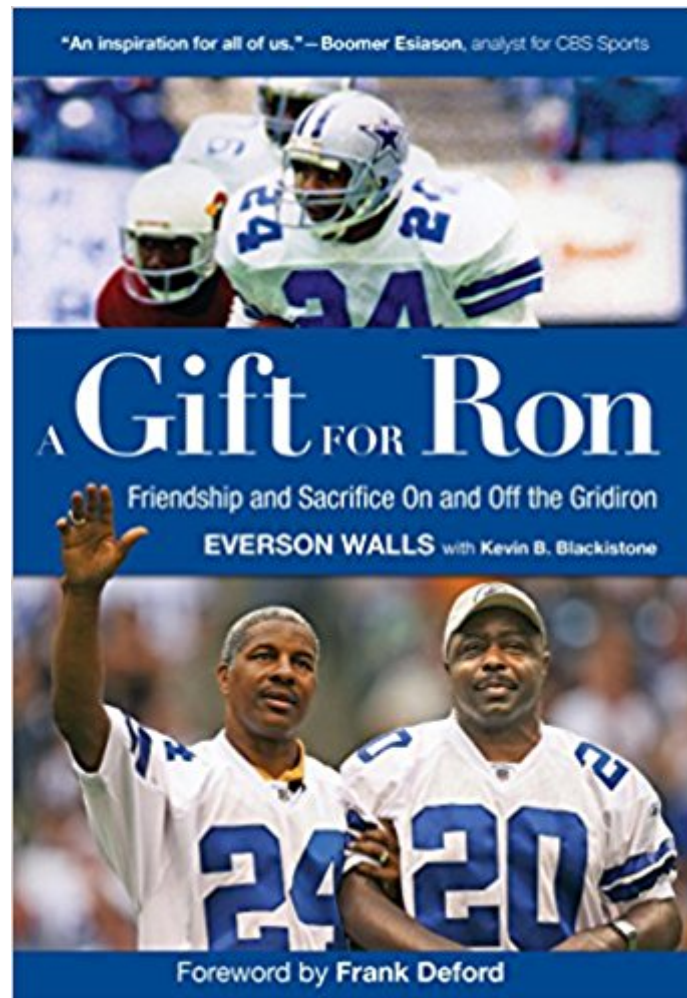




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A Gift For Ron: Friendship And Sacrifice On And Off The Gridiron



Synopsis

A Brian's Song for a new generation; the moving story of a rare friendship between two pro football stars

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Teammates for four years, friends for life. The story of Everson Walls's gift of life to a former teammate is an inspiration for all of us."--Boomer Esiason, analyst for CBS Sports and WFAN, and former NFL quarterback and NFL Most Valuable Player
How often do we hear about one person who is not related to another in any profession doing what Everson did? . . . [He] is the only person I've ever known who did what he did.
Frank Deford, author, sportswriter, and commentator (from the Foreword)
Everson Walls and Kevin Blackstone have not only written a good football book. They have also given us an important life book. By sharing such a personal and compelling story about organ donation and transplantation, they will inspire and impact for years to come.
Jeffrey Marx, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the New York Times bestseller Season of Life
Everson Walls's display of unselfishness was the ultimate example of teamwork. A life lesson for us all.
James Brown, CBS Sports/Showtime
Everson Walls is a true American hero on and off the field. His moving story of courage, sacrifice, and offering the ultimate gift to save a friend's life is truly inspiring. This story will motivate millions to sign up to become organ and tissue

donors. Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay, legislative sponsor of the Everson Walls and Ron Springs Gift of Life Act of 2009, it's good to know Everson as a person, but it's greater to have him as a friend! Doug Williams, Super Bowl XXII MVP

After thirteen seasons as an NFL star, Everson Walls retired to his hometown of Dallas, Texas. He and former Cowboys teammate Ron Springs worked together on charities, their families became close, and they became godfathers to each other's children. But, as time passed, Ron could no longer conceal the ravaging effects of his diabetes. Before Walls knew it, his friend's simple medical procedures had become amputations and dialysis. It didn't matter that Ron was a former football star. It didn't matter that he was still full of life. Ron was like everyone else in the dialysis center: He was dying. In *A Gift for Ron*, Walls tells the moving story of how he witnessed the suffering of Ron and his family. He also recounts their years of friendship against the backdrop of their football careers. Ron had always been willing, never afraid, to take up someone else's cause. Regardless of the consequences. Walls was to remember this life lesson on the day he heard that a potential kidney donor had fallen through for his friend; and also learned that he and Ron shared something truly precious: a blood type. Bolstered by his faith, Walls finally understood his only option; to donate a kidney to save his friend's life. Ultimately, *A Gift for Ron* is much more than the story of two pro football stars. It is about being a teammate, being a leader, being a friend. Most of all, it is about how one friend made another realize that to be lucky in life does not necessarily mean to receive gifts, but to be able to give them.

I loved this book. For a lot of reasons. *Gift for Ron* is a surprisingly good book about an amazing story. The story of what happened between two friends when one became desperately ill, of how the other became a hero who literally gave the gift of life at great sacrifice to himself... stories like that seem to be few and far between these days. But it's not just a simple feel-good book. The proceeds from Everson's book were always designated to benefit the foundation that he & Ron Springs started, *A Gift for Life*. This book wasn't written to toot anyone's horn. It was meant to educate, encourage, and inspire--and it does all those things. Everson Walls and Ron Springs were both well-known and much-loved Dallas Cowboys before anyone ever knew Ron would become so ill. Yet, the fame and admiration they both received in those positions was dwarfed by their later story of Ron's illness and Everson's sacrifice. Those are only some of the reasons I loved *Gift for Ron*.

Everson Walls and his co-author, Kevin B. Blackistone, do a great job of telling the story of his life, particularly of how he evolved to the point of being able to make such a sacrifice for his friend without hesitation. I sometimes lose interest in all the details that are typically included in a non-fiction. That never happened while I was reading *Gift for Ron*. The style is very conversational and engaging--I wanted to keep reading. It clearly makes the points the author wanted to make. And it does all those things without ever once being preachy. Those things alone would be sufficient reason to recommend *Gift for Ron*. But I have still more. I am a lifelong Dallas Cowboys fan of the same age as Ron Springs. (My very first crush, at the age of 9 or 10, was Don Meredith.) I grew up in the same Dallas as Everson Walls. His high school, Richardson Berkner, was the rival in many of the football games I attended in high school. As a young adult, I lived for 5 years in an apartment at Forest & Abrams, very near the Hamilton Park he so clearly still loves, and directly next door to the old Cowboys practice field. We went to watch the Cowboys practice, including Everson during his early seasons there. I went on high school dates to the dinner theaters where he worked as a teenager. I REMEMBER the people and places and events he wrote about. It was a joy to read about those places, people, and even the times, through his eyes. We may not have ever met, but we grew up together. It was a bit like meeting an old friend I'd never met before. Everson, I remember the Cowboys things, too, both before you and after you. I remember being traumatized because fans were booing my adored Dandy Don. I remember the 12-to-88 Hail Mary, and I remember poor Jackie Smith. I remember the Million Dollar Saloon (and Baby Dolls, and Campisi's, and yeah, the Boys ALWAYS got the best table and the fastest pizza). I remember screeching, "Get Walls in there!" when we sure could use a pick. I remember Drew Pearson's horrible accident and feeling so bad about the loss of his brother. I remember Danny White's struggles for respect, and when he was benched, and when we got Steve Pelluer. I remember the Catch. I hope it pleases you that I also remember what a great game you had that day. But it wouldn't have mattered, you know. You wore the blue & silver, so you were ours. I have one big quibble with you, Cubby. At one point in your book, you discuss visiting family in Garland. Well, you know, I've lived on both the east coast and the west, and everywhere in the Metroplex from North Richland Hills to Plano. (Try living in D.C. and rooting for the Cowboys against the Skins.) But my hometown is Garland and most of my life has been lived there. I have to tell you, my jaw dropped a bit when I read what you said about us. Granted, there are a lot of bad things you can say about Garland. But comparing us to Elysian Fields? Out in the COUNTRY? Say what? You do realize, right, that Garland was the largest suburb of Dallas until the mid-90's? (Plano passed us up. Another thing I remember: when Plano was a farm town with 1500 people!) My high school class, and the other 3 high schools in Garland that

year, all had 600+ graduates, even way back then. We were always city folks. There's a rumor we may even get electricity in the next year or two. :) Apart from those 3 or 4 sentences, I loved everything in your book. I enjoyed hearing about your family and your church and the things you learned growing up, and how your faith has guided you through your life decisions, and how you grew into the decision you made for Ron. I loved hearing you talk about being taught the same values that I grew up with. Dallas may have been segregated during some of that time, but hopefully those times are way, way back in our history. Faith, family, and community are the true values, and they're still worth writing and reading about. They still matter. I am so sorry that in the end we lost Ron. But that will never change or diminish what you gave up for him, and what the two of you did together. Thank you for sharing your story.

I'm not a sports fan, but I respect it and the people who play the game and turn around and give back. I purchased this book because Everson Walls is my long time friend of 38 years brotherinlaw. The relationship between Everson and Ron was deeper than brothers with so much unselfish love. The entire family is rooted this way and I guess that's why we're still friends to this Day.

I purchased this book for my husband for Christmas a couple years ago and he loved it. Found it to be very inspiring.

This was a remarkable story about true friendship, which the world is so lacking today. It was easily readable and well-written.

This is not your typical football story. This book tells the story of how Everson Walls comes of age to give his kidney to his best friend and "brother" off the football field. From his on-again-off-again high school football experience, his first true football experience that forever shaped his life at Grambling State University and legendary Coach Eddie Robinson, to his time in the NFL, Everson chronicles each of these experiences in detail and depth tying everything that happened to him back to his growth into the person who made a living organ donation. He weaves amazing stories of his life, going back and forth in time, with each chapter being tied to a theme. This book is more than a one-dimensional look at the career of an NFL player. It looks at all aspects of the life of a true hero (who will NOT call himself that). Everson continues to give the gift of life to all that read this book. This book is a must read for any sports fan, or any person who wants to understand the mind of someone who truly lives a selfless life.

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