

Time Out



Yvonne Harris and son Jeremy

by: Yvonne Harris

He was an accomplished basketball player - Jersey No. 44, center position.

At 6-foot-9, his presence on the court demanded attention, and he usually got it. Making the 1997 Florida All-State team in his senior year of high school was a well-earned title; the proverbial college scouts started arriving on the scene in the usual fashion. And before you could say "time out," my son, Jeremy, was off to college on a scholarship - to live apart from family and friends for the first time in his life.

Fast forward to May 8, 2000, intensive care unit, local hospital, 3:30 a.m. I sat in the corner of my son's room staring at the readouts from the monitors perched above his head. It had happened too fast, it should not have happened at all. He was driving to his girlfriend's house, something he had done

a hundred times in the past. It had taken place in a split second; an enraged motorist took his anger too far, way too far.

The incident happened in Argyle, a seemingly average little community on the Westside of town. Jeremy was making plans to return to college soon. His current work schedule was hectic and physically demanding. He was looking forward to relaxing with his girlfriend for a few hours this particular evening.

Driving down Argyle Boulevard at around 8:00 p.m., my son noticed the traffic had slowed down considerably, reaching a near stop at one point in the road about a quarter of a mile ahead. Jeremy soon found out why. Two men were involved in an obvious confrontation in the middle of the road. He recognized one of the men as his friend - and his friend was in trouble.

An enraged motorist, a Caucasian in his mid-30's, buzz haircut, tattoo on one arm, was accusing my son's friend of driving too close behind his car; the enraged motorist had maliciously slammed on his brakes several times with every intention of causing a rear end collision.

Jeremy's young friend did something he never should have done. He pulled over

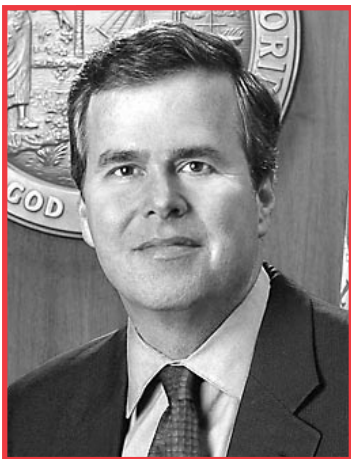
and stopped his car. The enraged motorist, driving a blue-grey, late model Aerostar van, turned around and came back. He had two children in the van but that didn't stop him.

Nothing would stop him at this point. He had crossed over the line between civilized human adversity to pure evil aggression, intent on causing physical harm.

Jeremy stopped to help his friend. What transpired over the next few minutes could have been the last few minutes of his life.

Realizing the man was beyond negotiation, my son told his friend to get in his car and leave. My son was attempting to do the same when a blow to his head from behind fractured his skull.

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DEATH PENALTY SAVES LIVES

by Governor Jeb Bush

I support Florida's Death Penalty **because I believe it saves lives.** I also believe that **justice for the victims of crime** must be our primary concern when

deciding what the appropriate penalty should be for a given offense. The people of Florida have made it clear time and time again that, for especially egregious crimes, the ultimate penalty is the correct penalty. I agree.

Without the Death Penalty, convicted mass murderers like Danny Rolling, who pled guilty in 1994 to killing five young people in Gainesville — three of whom he raped — would

escape true justice. And more innocent people like his victims would die, as criminals would quickly realize they could murder innocent people without fear of the Death Penalty.

Some opponents of the Death Penalty claim that executing convicted murderers is not a deterrent. The statistics say otherwise:

As reported in the Wall Street Journal, national murder

rates and the number of executions were very closely correlated from 1930 to 1963, both falling. After 1963, as the number of executions dropped to zero, the murder rate dramatically increased. This unfortunate trend reversed itself around 1990, when the number of executions began to rise.

While these statistics are striking, and suggest that capital punishment does

indeed deter murder, we are not relying solely on the Death Penalty to reduce crime in Florida. I advocated in 1998 for tough laws like **10-20-Life**. Passed in 1999, this law mandates long prison terms of ten years up to life for violent criminals who use guns. Violent gun crime is down 24% during the **10-20-Life** era in Florida.

In fact, over the past several **Governor Bush... Con't on page 4**

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