

Pass It On®...

How to Honor Your Mother.

Warrick Dunn played in the NFL for 12 seasons. His most impressive stat: He's built 200 homes for single mothers. And he's not done.

When Warrick Dunn was a sophomore, he led his team to the state championship. When he was a senior, his mother, who worked in law enforcement, was shot and killed, leaving Warrick to care for his five brothers and sisters.

It's a lot of weight to put on a young man's shoulders, but Warrick handled it well, still graduating from high school and earning a scholarship to Florida State. At the same time, Warrick had to grow up fast, take on adult responsibilities while still charting his own course. He used his mother's life insurance to fulfill one of his mother's dreams: to buy a house for the family. And as a freshman, he led Florida State to a national championship.

His effort paid off with an NFL contract, and in his first year for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Warrick not only continued to take care of his siblings, he began Warrick Dunn Charities to help single mothers achieve first-time homeownership. He spent 12 years in the NFL, even though many thought he was too small. Perhaps being underrated drove him, or maybe it was the need to provide for his family and make his mother proud. Whatever his motivations, Warrick achieved rare greatness as an athlete and as a human being.

Adversity comes in many forms, and often to the people we least likely expect. Warrick's drive and example not only help single mothers but also inspire them to continue their upward journey. Over 90% of them are still in their homes, working hard, getting an education, taking care of their families and thankful for the start that Warrick Dunn gave each of them.

On the field, Warrick Dunn played cornerback, quarterback and running back. Since retiring, he has been playing give-back. Since 1997 he has helped over 200 single parents and over 500 dependents achieve first-time homeownership. He works closely with Habitat for Humanity to build and furnish the homes and provide down-payment assistance. He also works with other professional

athletes, guiding them to make a difference in their communities.

Perhaps most remarkable, Warrick Dunn later met with his mother's killer and offered forgiveness. Seems life is too short to harbor hate and bitterness. For each of us, we can face our challenges, great or small, with the same courage.

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