



RAYNA LEE DUBOSE

Basketball

Virginia Tech University

Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management

Nominated by: Katie Ammons

Rayna DuBose started at Virginia Tech Fall 2001, and like most freshmen, she was full of excitement, hopes, and goals that she hoped to accomplish during her years of collegiate enrollment. Also like many freshmen, she found it difficult to resist the enticement of an active social life and thus found her time management skills lacking when it came to balancing academics, athletics and the enticing campus social scene. At the close of her first semester, she faced NCAA eligibility problems as

well as possible suspension if she proved unable to turn around her academic performance. She scaled back her social time, increased her study table and seemed to have things back on track when she experienced a sudden and life-changing turnaround.

On April 1 of 2002, Rayna found herself struggling to concentrate and perform in practice. After practice, she decided to lay down on the floor of the locker room for a few minutes to rest, but she was unable to stand up after doing so. She was taken to the hospital where she was diagnosed with the flu and released. The next morning, she was re-admitted to the hospital, and late in the evening on April 2 she was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. She was airlifted to the University of Virginia Medical Center and listed in critical condition. She soon slipped into a coma, and one-by-one her organs failed as she tried to fight the infection that raged inside her. Her parents, coaches, and doctors were all concerned about not only her survival, but also the effect that the medication and the damage done to her body would have on her mental and physical recovery if she did survive. After 25 days in a coma, Rayna regained consciousness, and fortunately, she seemed to regain all of her mental functioning very quickly. Physically, the news was not as good. The medications she'd been given caused severe damage to her limbs, and the only viable option was amputation of both arms below the elbows and both legs below the knees.

In her essay, Rayna wrote about coming to the realization that “the bacteria had robbed me of everything that I loved” and that her stubbornness and strong will were suddenly going to be her true keys to survival. In May 2003, Rayna returned to the Virginia Tech campus, enrolled in classes, and became a student assistant with the women’s basketball program. She brought with her a renewed commitment to academics and a better understanding of the importance of living life to the fullest each and every day. Somewhere, Wilma Rudolph is smiling because we honor Rayna DuBose today.