

Former Rocky football player Travis Hearn in critical condition

Story

Discussion

By Thomas Geyer | Saturday, November 29, 2008 |

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(UPDATED 10:12 p.m.) Paralyzed former Rock Island High School football player Travis Hearn is listed in critical condition at [Trinity Medical Center](#)-West Campus, Rock Island, a hospital nursing supervisor said today.

Rock Island High School Athletic Director Bob Swanson said this evening that Hearn had surgery, "which was a planned surgery to relieve some problems he was having with his lungs. It was risky and during the surgery he did blue line but they brought him back."

Swanson did not know when the surgery occurred. He added, "As a result of the surgery he's still in intensive care. I know he had some visitors this evening."

Swanson said he discussed Hearn's condition with football coach Vic Boblett.

It is not known how long Hearn has been hospitalized at Trinity.

Of late, Hearn, who was paralyzed from the neck down from an injury sustained during a football game in 2006, has been a resident of Rock Island Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Earlier story

(POSTED 6:49 p.m.) Paralyzed former Rock Island High School football player Travis Hearn is listed in critical condition at [Trinity Medical Center](#)-West Campus, Rock Island, a hospital nursing supervisor said today.

The nature of his illness was not known this afternoon. It also is not known how long he has been hospitalized at Trinity.

Of late, Hearn, who was paralyzed from the neck down from an injury sustained during a football game in 2006, has been a resident of Rock Island Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Despite his injury, Hearn graduated from Rock Island High School in June and spoke freely about his accomplishment at the time. He was living in the Habitat for Humanity home built for him in a day by a mass of volunteers.

But something happened to Hearn during this summer that changed his condition.

During a court hearing in September to determine guardianship of Hearn, his mother, Colleen Stovall, referenced an "incident" in July, but gave no details. She said at the time that her son was no longer able to communicate but is "aware" or "semi-aware" of his surroundings.

The National Bank, which oversees Hearn's trust fund, requested in a Rock Island County Circuit Court filing that a guardian be appointed to maintain his affairs.

Officials from the bank said in its filing that Hearn was not able to manage his affairs because he had an anoxic brain injury, which means a lack of oxygen to the brain, quadriplegia and is not able to communicate.

Hearn has relied on a ventilator to breathe since being injured.

A cousin of Hearn's, Curtima Hearn, was appointed to manage his medical and financial decisions by Rock Island County Circuit Court Judge Mark VandeWiele.

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A fullback and linebacker on the Rock Island High School football team, Hearn was paralyzed from the neck down as a result of a collision with a teammate while both were covering a kickoff in a Sept. 22, 2006, game at Augustana College's Ericson Field. The game was against Alleman High School.

After being injured, thousands of dollars poured in to help him, although it is not known how much was donated nor how much money is left.

His injury got lots of attention both locally and nationally.

In December 2006, teenage golf sensation Michelle Wie spoke to Hearn over the phone and donated \$25,000 to the Travis Hearn Fund.

An appearance by NFL Hall of Famer and legendary Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka highlighted an April 18, 2007, dinner at The Mark of the Quad-Cities (now the i wireless Center) to raise funds for Hearn. The dinner was part of an ongoing fundraising effort involving then Quad-City Mallards.

When the Quad-City Flames took the place of the Mallards, the National Hockey League team donated \$10,000 to the fund benefiting Hearn.

Money also was raised by the Swing of the Quad-Cities in the baseball's teams Homers for Hearn program.

Former Pleasant Valley High School and Iowa State football standout Chris Anthony, who played for the Quad-City Steamwheelers and the Arena Football League's New York Dragons, raised money for Hearn by selling "Stand with Travis" T-shirts.

Also, Donn Grossnickle, the activist and author who donated about \$11,000 to help injured Rock Island football player Travis Hearn, auctioned off a pair of donated Super Bowl XLI tickets to raise additional funds for paralyzed athletes.

When Hearn returned to the Quad-Cities in May 2007, he was housed in a specially built home thanks to Habitat for Humanity. More than 1,300 volunteers spent one day building the house.

Thomas Geyer can be contacted at (563) 383-2328 or tgeyer@qctimes.com.

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