

**Heninger Garrison Davis**  
**“A Second Chance:  
How My Accident Changed My  
Goals for the Future”**

**Scholarship Essay**

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March 10, 2021 is a day that will forever be etched in my memory, and not just because it was my Dad's birthday. It was a mild day in Minnesota as my friend and I hopped on our bikes and headed out on a bike path near our house. We rode along and talked about our homework we had and upcoming plans for the weekend without a care in the world. I was just a 15-year-old kid working hard to finish sophomore year strong, hopeful for what was to come in my high school years. As we came up to an intersection, having slowed down and checked for traffic, I entered the crosswalk. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a big black blur rapidly approaching the stop sign at the cross street we were riding across. I turned my head and saw a chrome Dodge Ram logo inches from me. The next thing I knew, I was airborne before hitting the asphalt, rolling after being launched out into on-coming traffic, with the pickup truck nearly running me over. It felt surreal as I laid there stunned and disoriented with commotion around me.

The next few days were some of the most painful I have ever experienced. I had suffered a significant hip injury from slamming onto the pavement. Everything in my body hurt. For the first time in my young life, I fully understood the saying "I feel like I was hit by a truck". After the swelling went down and some of my road rash began to heal, I started working with a few different providers to assist with my healing. Despite my dedication to rehab and recovery, I knew my body and I knew this was only the beginning of a very long journey. As fall approached, the football season started and I still was not even close to being back to full capacity. I am a pretty private guy, so very few teammates knew details about the extent of my accident and injuries either. This was a prime example of people being unaware of the battles other people are facing privately. The football season ended up being ridiculously challenging and deflating. Finally, I decided I needed to be honest and let people know that I was really

struggling physically, emotionally, and psychologically, replaying the accident over in my head and thinking of how close that pickup truck came to ending my life.

Once I sat down with my mom and gave her an authentic assessment of where I was at, she moved up our next check-in with the doctor. An MRI was ordered and this is where things came to light. The MRI revealed that my labrum was torn and there was additional bone damage in my hip joint. Given the extent of my injuries, I was referred to Dr. Christopher Larson with Twin Cities Orthopedic who is known nationwide as the best of the best and who also serves as the team doctor for the Minnesota Vikings. The fact that the Vikings did not make it far in the playoffs that year worked in my favor as it allowed me to get in sooner to see Dr. Larson, although it still took a couple of months. As I waited for my appointment, Dr. Larson had me work with his preferred Physical Therapist, Becky Stealy. Not only was Becky incredible to work with, she has a wonderful, calming presence which helped put my mind at ease. Strange as it may sound, I found myself looking forward to the weekly PT appointments even though I knew they would not always be the most comfortable. When we finally got in to see Dr. Larson, he laid out our options. We decided the best course of action was to undergo hip surgery. On February 8, 2022, eleven days before my 16th birthday, I underwent labrum repair surgery by Dr. Larson. My surgery also included an acetabular chondroplasty, AHS subspine decompression, femoral resection osteoplasty and soft tissue cam excision of the right hip.

The past couple years since the accident have brought many challenges. My high school football career I had hoped to continue was dramatically impacted and ended up being essentially non-existent. Every aspect of my life was altered as a result of the accident. Much of what I looked forward to and thought high school would be was taken away from me, yet I have

managed to come out stronger and with a renewed purpose of wanting to help come alongside and support others, despite still having on-going pain and discomfort that I will have the rest of my life. As a result of being given a second chance, I am now planning to pursue a pre-therapy path with the goal of becoming a Physical Therapist to help others. This experience has shown me what is important in life – building relationships, making the most of the time we are given, and helping others along the way, like so many people helped me navigate the challenges I have faced as a result of my accident.

Never in a million years did I think I would be sitting here writing a scholarship application essay as a result of being injured in an accident caused by a distracted driver. But here I am. Even when our circumstances feel unfair, overwhelming and defeating, there is always something to be grateful for when we are given a second chance. I am grateful for skilled, caring medical professionals such as Dr. Larson and Becky Stealy. They have left a huge impact on my life and helped me in a time of crisis. While I would never wish an experience like mine on anyone, I am thankful for the lessons I have learned and the relationships I have formed with the medical staff who helped me. I plan to use my second change to improve and positively impact the lives of others in my career as a Physical Therapist.