



CHRIS DRAFT
Former NFL Player

When NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell made that comment in 2009, it was insightful and prophetic. Everyone who has met Chris Draft knows he is an outstanding man. What everyone is learning is that he is also a compassionate, creative, driven leader who is using his national platform to change the future of lung cancer.

Chris Draft is the Founder, President, and CEO of the Chris Draft Family Foundation (CDFF) whose mission has been to empower families to lead healthy lifestyles. He is also the Co-Founder of Team Draft, leading the creation of a national campaign that is changing the face of lung cancer. He is an internationally recognized speaker, community leader, and family and character

advocate who serves as an NFL Ambassador and a national spokesperson on many health-related issues, including the care and treatment of asthma, from which he suffers, and lung cancer, the disease that claimed the life of his wife, Keasha in 2011.

Chris and his story has an impact on just about everyone he meets. His life and work have positioned him to be a catalyst for change.

A graduate of Stanford University with a BS in Economics, Chris played football and baseball with the Cardinal. As a three-year starter at linebacker, and senior captain, Draft was an All-Pac 10 performer.

In 1998, he was drafted by the Chicago Bears, ultimately spending 12 years in the NFL. In addition to the Bears, Chris played for the San Francisco 49ers, Atlanta Falcons, Carolina Panthers, St Louis Rams, Buffalo Bills, and Washington Redskins, finishing his NFL playing career in 2010.

In 2006, while with the Carolina Panthers, Chris established the Chris Draft Family Foundation, which focuses on several primary initiatives that stress the importance of family, education, healthy lifestyles, character development, personal responsibility, self-discipline, and physical fitness. His playing career has earned him a national platform to become a powerful community advocate across the country using his skills as a leader and speaker, and to act on his compassion for helping those less fortunate. Chris was and continues to be the face to the community within every stop of his career.

His efforts prompted this comment from Riley Fields, Director of Community Relations, Carolina Panthers:

“Chris Draft is a rare individual whose passion and compassion leads him to serve others in profound ways. His vision is impactful on a national scale, while his direct personal involvement reaches individuals on a meaningful, personal level. His unique ability to engage both children and adults inspires both in becoming better or to overcome their own personal challenges.”

Chris has been recognized for his contributions both on and off the field. He was named NFL Spirit Award winner in 2008, one of the highest honors for community service awarded by the NFL Community. Chris was named his franchise’s Man of the Year in both Carolina and St Louis (2006, 2008). He was also a two-time finalist for the prestigious Byron “Whizzer” White Award (2004, 2008).

Late in 2010, just a few months after his NFL retirement, Chris would be rocked. In 2006, while with the Carolina Panthers, he met Keasha Rutledge. A Clemson University graduate with a degree in electrical engineering, Keasha was a successful pharmaceutical sales executive, a former Charlotte Hornets Honeybee dancer and member of Clemson University’s Rally Cat dance squad. In November 2010, Keasha was the vision of health and a non-smoker, doing P90X and preparing to run in a 10K race. A shortness of breath led her to see her primary care physician who ordered X-rays and discovered a mass in her chest. Additional tests and confirmed Stage IV Lung Cancer.

On November 27, 2011, standing side-by-side, Chris and Keasha launched Team Draft at their wedding with the expressed goal to fight lung cancer. Just one month later, Keasha lost her courageous fight and died at the age of 38.

On Super Bowl Sunday morning in 2012, just 40 days after Keasha's death, ESPN shared the emotional and impactful video of Chris and Keasha's journey. The video has been shared over 1.1 million times through espn.com and has become a call for action and hope. At the conclusion of the video, Team Draft launched the National Campaign to Change the Face of Lung Cancer.

Chris admits that he was a “guy that really didn't know lung cancer” but he was driven to learn as much as he could. During Keasha's last year in life, Chris was her caregiver and together he and Keasha became lung cancer advocates. Since forging the national campaign to change the face of lung cancer, Chris has been a man on a mission.

Chris launched a national fact finding tour to fifty of the top cancer centers across the country to find the best way to use the Team Draft platform. He built relationships with leading cancer doctors and raised awareness about lung cancer and lung cancer survivors. He is known to frequently remind everyone that lung cancer is about the people and that it is critical to tell the stories about the people who are impacted. More awareness leads to more research, more research leads to better treatment, and to a better and longer life. That, as Chris says, is what it is all about.

He brought media along to chronicle the journey and to help spread the message of awareness and hope found in these cancer centers. He has now made similar trips to more than 130 cancer centers.

Team Draft was founded upon a mission of action based on awareness, early detection, treatment, research, and survivorship. With Chris' extensive national network and skill set, Team Draft is positioned to do unique things. His playing career took him all over the country allowing him to build contacts nationally. His twelve years as a player and established relationship with the NFL and ongoing relationship

as an NFL Ambassador provide Team Draft with the one of the largest, visible platforms in the country.

Appearing on CNN in November 2012, Chris launched the Team Draft Survivor Series. Team Draft arranges for a lung cancer survivor and their advocate to attend a game together. This not only gives the survivor a much-needed day of fun, but provides a platform for them to tell their own very personal stories of their journey. By putting a face on lung cancer, the survivor raises the awareness that lung cancer can strike everyone. However, they also share a message of hope.

Over the last three years, more than 200 survivors and caregivers have enjoyed more than fifty separate NFL, NHL, NBA, and college football games. The survivors are typically accompanied by Chris who is able to provide back-stage access and contact with current players and legends.

In 2013, Chris and Team Draft helped launch National Lung Cancer Screening Event to get veterans tested. Veterans are the largest sub group of people diagnosed with lung cancer. One of Chris' grandfathers and an uncle were both veterans who picked up smoking while in the armed forces. They eventually suffered and died from smoking related illnesses – making this a personal issue for Chris as well.

Also in 2013, as part of a satellite media tour sponsored by Genentech, Draft, along with lung cancer survivor, Don Stranathan, gave satellite interviews to local and national media outlets around the country discussing their personal experiences with lung cancer, Team Draft's work, and the importance of talking to your healthcare provider about screening and treatment.

In 2014, Team Draft launched the Super Bowl Challenge, allowing lung cancer survivor advocates to compete for a trip to Super Bowl XLIX by raising funds for their local cancer centers. The three winners and their caregivers were hosted by Chris and had behind-the-scenes access to the NFL Pro Bowl, The Taste of the NFL, and the Super Bowl, respectively. Each survivor was able to share their unique stories and once in a lifetime event with NFL players, legends and members of the NFL community

Chris has partnered with Lilly Oncology on their internal Moments Matter campaign. He is a sought out speaker for international businesses (Genentech, Lilly, Porsche, Covidien), national cancer organizations (ACS, ALA, CEOs Against Cancer, 24 Hours of Booty, Livestrong), lung cancer specific foundations (Bonnie Addario, LUNGeVity).

Andrea Ferris, president and chairman of LUNGeVity Foundation had this to say after Chris was awarded with the Lungevity Hero award:

“Chris Draft has shown remarkable dedication to raising lung cancer awareness and putting an end to the harmful stigma associated with lung cancer,” said. “LUNGeVity is glad to have passionate individuals like Chris on our side in the fight against lung cancer.”

He maintains a very visible presence by frequently being called upon to provide his unique perspective to CNN, ESPN and the NFL network on community and sports issues. The NFL continues to count on him as an NFL Ambassador to help mold the future stars of the NFL through NFL Prep, NFL High School Player Development, and to visit troops as part of NFL/USO Tours.

A selfless leader, Chris continues to fight for and develop deep, authentic relationships with lung cancer survivors, their caregivers, doctors and cancer centers all over the map.

It is frequently said that the work he does is inspirational. Chris prefers to talk about the work. As Chris says, “The work we are doing makes it easier for survivors to become survivor advocates.”

That work is how Chris is helping to change lung cancer “4 future.”