



## Don McPherson

**Don McPherson** is the author of [\*You Throw Like a Girl: The Blind Spot of Masculinity\*](#), which chronicles 36 years of harnessing the power and appeal of sport to address complex social issues and focuses on a quarter century of work on gender-based violence prevention.

McPherson was an All-America quarterback at Syracuse University and is a veteran of the NFL and Canadian Football League. As captain of the undefeated 1987 Syracuse football team, McPherson set 22 school records, led the nation in passing and won more than 18 national “player of the year” awards, including the Maxwell Award as the nation’s best player, the Davey O’Brien National Quarterback Award and the inaugural Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award. He was second in the Heisman Trophy voting. In 2008 McPherson was elected to the **College Football Hall of Fame**. In 2013 Syracuse University retired his **#9 jersey**.

Since 1984 McPherson has delivered school and community-based programs addressing issues such as drunk driving, alcohol and substance abuse, bullying, youth leadership and mentoring. Upon retiring from pro football in 1994, he joined Northeastern University’s **Center for the Study of Sport in Society** as national director of Athletes in Service to America. In 2002 he founded the **Sports Leadership Institute** at Adelphi University, for which he served as executive director until 2007.

In 1995 McPherson turned his focus to the issue of “men’s violence against women,” as director of Sport in Society’s Mentors in Violence Prevention Program, taking over for the program’s founder, Jackson Katz. McPherson emerged as a national leader and advocate for the prevention of sexual and domestic violence. He has conducted workshops and lectures for more than 350 college campuses, community organizations and national sports and violence prevention organizations. His programs and lectures have reached more than **1 million people**.

Don has twice testified before the United States Congress and has worked closely with the U.S. **Departments of Education and Defense** on issues of sexual violence in education and the military, respectively. He has provided commentary on numerous national news programs and was featured in O Magazine and appeared on the **Oprah Winfrey Show**. Don also created and hosted “**Training for Life**” on MSG Varsity, a life-skills TV show that examined a myriad of social issues and

sports. In 2012, Training for Life's episode on "Sports Parenting" was nominated for an **Emmy Award**.

McPherson has worked as a college football analyst for ESPN, BET and NBC and spent six seasons as the lead studio analyst for Sportsnet New York's coverage of Big East and American Athletic Conference football. In 2000, while a board member of the Nassau County Sports Commission, McPherson created the **John Mackey Award**, which recognizes college football's outstanding tight end.

Don McPherson has received several honors in recognition of his service, including the inaugural **Voices of Solidarity** Award presented by Vital Voices and, the **Frederick Douglas Men of Strength Award**, given by Men Can Stop Rape, **Champions for Change**, presented by Lifetime Television, The **Creative Vision for Women's Justice**, presented by the Pace University Women's Justice Center, and a Leadership Award from the National Center for Victims of Crime. Don has also received the **George Arents Award**, Syracuse University's highest alumni honor and "**Letter Winner of Distinction**," the highest honor bestowed a former student-athlete.

Don McPherson has served as a board member, consultant and adviser for several national organizations including the **Ms Foundation for Women**, the **US National Committee for UN Women** and the **National Football Foundation**. McPherson has also served as a member the **NCAA Task Force on Sexual Violence** and the **NCAA Board of Governors Commission to Combat Sexual Violence**. Currently he serves on the board of directors for the **NYC Chapter of the National Football Foundation** and, is a member of the advisory board of **Press Forward** and **the Solidarity Council** of Vial Voices.



## **Eric McGriff**

Eric McGriff (he/him) is the Prevention Coordinator at the Crime Victims Treatment Center (CVTC) in New York City, an organization that provides free legal, medical, therapeutic services to any New York City resident impacted by any form of violence in their lifetime. In 2018 McGriff was hired with the task of building CVTC's Prevention Program when the organization transitioned from a hospital-based Rape Crisis Program to an independent community-based organization wanting to expand their services and focus them on supporting to NYC's most underserved populations. Eric is a Syracuse Native and began his prevention journey in high school, volunteering as a Peer Facilitator for a University of Rochester suicide prevention program and as Co-Chairman of Cicero-North Syracuse's White Ribbon Campaign. Eric identifies as a "child of Prevention" and is extremely proud to tell anyone who will listen that he is "Vera House born and raised". It was through his work as a Prevention Educator in high school, at Syracuse University, and as a Prevention Educator in Vera House's Prevention Education and Alternative Programs, that he found his passion and purpose.

In his role, Eric works college campuses, K-12 schools, justice-involved youth, and New York City's diverse nightlife community on efforts geared toward helping communities prevent and respond violence. He is a member of of the Brooklyn Sexual Assault Task Force and the Manhattan Sexual Assault Task Force, for which he is the chair of both the Campus and Nightlife Committees. Eric has also been able to from a programming partnership with the United Nations, where he has had the opportunity to support a global constituency, and even present at the last 3 UN General Assemblies on his violence prevention framework, which is heavily influenced by his learning and growth at Vera House. Of course, Eric would not be Eric if he did not also join NYC's Healthy Manhood Collaborative, where he works closely with A Call To Men and the NYC Mayor's Office to organize and facilitate programs, campaigns, and education with the goal of promoting healthy masculinity and ending gender- based violence. Every day Eric is comforted by, and grounded in, all that he has learned from his prevention travels and from his upbringing in Syracuse, and with Vera House. He is excited to be in community with you all today.