****

**Weldon Bradshaw: You Are Never Too Old To Give the Gift of Life**

Weldon Bradshaw, a 64-year-old English teacher, track coach and part-time high school sports journalist, grappled for several years with primary sclerosing cholangitis, a chronic and deadly liver disease. In 2012, after attending a local high school football game and feeling particularly weak, he checked himself in to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center to discover his liver had deteriorated to the point that if he did not receive a transplant within a week, it would be too late.  
  
The only way for him to survive would be to receive a new liver from a deceased donor. In the eleventh hour, he received lifesaving news; a liver had been donated – from an 84-year-old woman.

New techniques have been developed that can improve the function of a donor liver, making it possible to use older livers. In fact, of the 56 liver transplants performed at VCU last year, eight involved livers from individuals between 64 and 84 years of age.

Since his transplant, Weldon has returned to teaching, coaching and writing. He has also reached out to the family of the woman whose liver saved his life, writing to express his gratitude and telling them, “I will do everything I can to honor the memory of your loved one.”   
  
Weldon now uses his platform as a part-time writer for the Richmond-Times Dispatch and Richmond News Leader to advocate for donation, publishing articles and using his speaking engagements to share his story and promote donation. Although Weldon is not one for attention, his appreciation of the gift he received guides him to be a true advocate for donation.

“I’ve lived a pretty charmed life,” he said. “From the get-go, it was never, ‘Why me?’ Now it is a *little* ‘Why me?’ but from the other angle: ‘Why did I get this gift?’ I’m very grateful to be alive, and I’m looking forward to writing the next chapter of my life.”