

Voices: Reflecting on Jonathan Price: We must come together

October 14, 2020

I want to take a moment to pay tribute to Jonathan Price. By now, many have [read the news](#) or heard the reports about this tragic loss of life.

Jonathan Price, 31, worked for Wolfe City, Texas, as a maintenance contractor, and in his free time he was a personal trainer. He dreamed about owning his own gym. Jonathan was a hero in his hometown, a speaker, a mentor and a community servant. Recently, Jonathan was trying to break up a fight at a gas station in Wolfe City when he was shot and killed by Wolfe City police officer Shaun Lucas, who has since been arrested for murder.

At Hardin-Simmons University, we have a personal connection to Jonathan through his days as a student and a Cowboy football player under coaches Jimmie Keeling and Jesse Burleson.

Coaches reflect

Coach Keeling recently shared about Jonathan and their time together:

"Jonathan Price was an outstanding, great, young man. I remember clearly, while we were recruiting him, that he was 'Mr. Everything' in Wolfe City. He was an amazing running back for HSU, a model young man, a joy to coach, and a strong player who was well-liked by his teammates and classmates. Jonathan's outlook and attitude were always positive, and he was a natural encourager. Jonathan was always so dedicated and committed. This situation breaks my heart, and my heartfelt sympathies and prayers go out to Jonathan's family and friends."

Coach Burleson was also able to share:

“Jonathan Price is an inspiration to all of those who were blessed to know him. He was a young man who would always make your day better. Although I was only in close contact with him for a short time, I never saw him be anything other than joyful and in a great mood. I respect Jonathan and was not surprised to hear that he was making such a positive impact in his community. I was even less surprised when I heard that he was defending a female in the tragic situation that took his life. He did the right thing. That is what Cowboys do, and he was a Cowboy through and through.

“In our football program here at HSU, we are working with all our might every day to ‘Be the Change’ that this world needs. In our locker room it does not matter what color your skin is, where you are from, rich or poor, or any other differences we may have—we put all of those things aside and we strive, grind, and strain with a common vision towards a common goal. We focus on controlling what we can control and that is ‘Being the Change’—from a place of love—from our team to this campus to the city of Abilene and so on and so forth. We will fight with every fiber of our beings, like Cowboys do, to make real impact on each other and on all those we come in contact with. It will not be easy—but it will be worth it. The world needs a locker room.

“We believe that unity is the secret. The secret to our success, the secret to creating change, and the secret to live the life that God has planned for us. ‘Love one another, as I have loved you.’—John 13:34”

A friend reflects

As president of HSU, I had the lamentable honor of attending Jonathan’s funeral this weekend. It was both tragic and joyous, painful and affirming. This sacred gathering brought the Wolfe City community together to

console the family and one another in their grief at the gaping hole left behind by Jonathan's death.

At the funeral, I heard from Case Roundtree, a lifelong friend and HSU teammate of Jonathan's. Case had an opportunity to share a wonderful story. He and Jonathan had played football together their whole lives.

During one particular playoff game, Wolfe City was getting "demolished." During halftime, Case said he started to tear up about how badly they were losing. Jonathan looked at him straight in the eye and said: "Case, get your mind right. Get your mind right. Your team needs you."

Let us reflect

I hope you'll take inspiration from Jonathan and his words of encouragement directed to Case—and to you and me. My prayer is we will get our hearts and our minds right—in our schools, our cities, our churches, across our state and nation—because, more than ever, our team and our world need us to exemplify Christ in all we say and do.

I also hope and pray justice will be served and that Jonathan's death will not have been in vain.

Wolfe City—like many cities—and we at Hardin-Simmons are asking important questions about justice and fairness, life and death, right and wrong. I don't know if we'll ever get the answer to all of our questions here on this earth, but I do know it's imperative that we challenge ourselves to live out our Christian faith and values in our daily lives together in our churches and in our communities.

We must come together, break down barriers of communication, and be proactive in reaching out to others. We must continue to find ways to be like Jonathan Price, unafraid to intervene when needed, to serve, to show

love unconditionally as Christ loves us and to seek justice.

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