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FACES OF USF

Fighter pilot continues brother's legacy

By Meghan Mangrum
NEWS EDITOR

Ed Woodward, a graduate student studying medical sciences, used to fly fighter jets.

"It was pure freedom," he said. "Some of the best days I've ever had in my entire life were Friday when you get a solo flight. You get a handed a twin engine supersonic jet to go do whatever you want to do, (it's) the best feeling in the world."

Woodward served in the U.S. Air Force for more than six years, fulfilling his dream to be a pilot and fly the F-15 fighter jet, but he doesn't fly planes anymore.

He was medically retired on Sept. 24, 2008.

Woodward suffered a stroke because of a blood clot in his brain. His injury was related to the gravitational forces that pilots experience while flying and a whirlwind of other circumstances, Woodward said.

After a series of medical and physical evaluations and years of rehabilitation, Woodward was deemed "undeployable" and retired from the Air Force.

"I used to feel robbed of my plane, my aircraft, my career," he said. "I worked so hard to get there and then have it taken away from me."

His plane was not the first thing taken from him.

Tragedy and Loss

Woodward grew up with a twin brother, Gene. While Woodward joined the military, his brother went to medical school at USF.

On June 13, 2000, a week after Gene completed his first year medical school exams, Woodward was driving his brother and two friends home after celebrating in Hyde Park, when a drunk driver on Interstate 275 hit them from behind.

The Ford Bronco they were riding in rolled, and the car landed upside down.

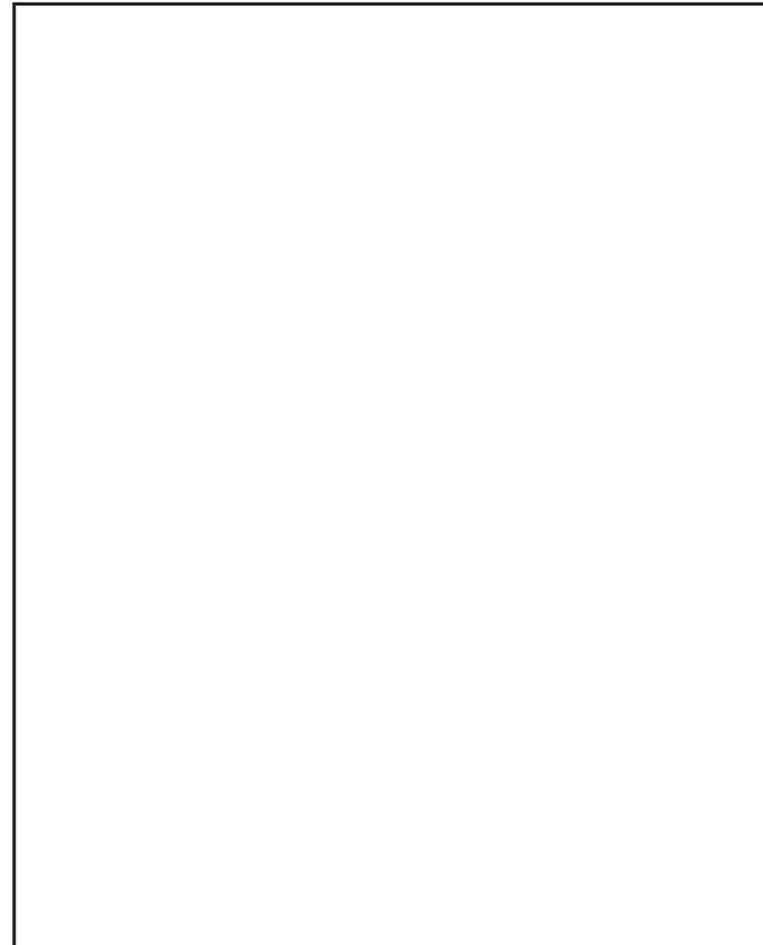
"I remember being upside down (and) when we finally came to rest, the smell of gas was everywhere," Woodward said.

He climbed out of the car and yelled for everyone else to do the same. Standing on the barrier in the road, Woodward remembered realizing his brother hadn't gotten out of the car.

"I went back to the truck and I could see his leg," he said. "Then something lit the gas, and the truck basically exploded in my face and another bystander pulled me away."

Woodward's brother was the only

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Ed Woodward, a graduate student studying medical sciences, is a Tillman Military Scholar and hopes to attend medical school at USF in memory of his brother. **ORACLE PHOTO/DIEDRA RODRIGUEZ**

Innovative mobile apps developed at Hackathon

By Lacey Irvin
CORRESPONDENT

Huddled over computers, students spent Saturday developing code they said they hoped would improve campus life at the USF Hackathon.

About 20 students, separated into groups comprising of developers and designers, came up with apps ranging from those used to find study partners to those intended to facilitate textbook exchanges.

Hosted by USF Createch, a group whose members won the Mayor's Hackathon this summer,

the Hackathon called for students to share ideas for mobile applications that will help USF or the overall community.

Ideas were then judged by their design, community impact and the future potential of the application. Along with the potential creation of the app, the top three teams received prizes from their sponsors, the Nielsen Company and Tampa Technology Forum. The companies, which specialize in improving and integrating technology, donated a total of \$1,000 in prizes to Createch for hosting the event.

The winning team of four students, Charles Burgess, Oge Ichoku, Daniel Gomez and Michael Maurer, who each received a \$100 gift card to the technology website NewEgg.com, developed an app that makes daily USF dining hall menus available with photos and ratings.

George Hebron, a senior majoring in computer science and Createch senior adviser, said the intent of the competition was to foster the spirit of innovation.

"Our main goal is to bring creativity and technology together, which is something that the (computer

science) industry requires but is not being taught in school," he said.

Daniel Goodwin, a senior majoring in computer science, worked to create a "study-buddy app," an app that can help students find potential study partners based on class and course material.

"I like competition," he said. "It forces me to concentrate and focus more instead of messing around."

Jayne Hollerbaugh, director of marketing for Tampa Bay Technology Forum, invited the students to attend upcoming technology seminars and meet with

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Oracle online

To watch a video of Ed Woodward's story visit usforacle.com/news or take a photo of the QR code below with a QR reader app on your smartphone.



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PILOT

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fatality. Their two friends suffered minor injuries; Woodward was not injured.

The accident occurred a week before Woodward was supposed to be commissioned as an officer, but it was pushed back due to the circumstances surrounding the tragedy and the loss of his brother.

"I used to feel a lot, but it's not there anymore," Woodward said. "There was a part of my brain that stopped working, some kind of mental connection. I don't mean to say we had ESP, but it was definitely a hole, not just the sorrow, but a hole in my mental processing."

A 'damn good idea'

His brother's death gave Woodward a clearer path after his own career plans came to a halt.

"The transition out of the military was real tough, I thought I was going to do that forever," Woodward said. "I had my whole life mapped out and that is how I was going to proceed."

After his rehabilitation, Woodward was working on earning his MBA from St. Petersburg College, but soon realized he had no interest in business. His grandfather proposed the idea of finishing his brother's dream of becoming a doctor.

"He said, 'Why don't you finish what Gene started?' and I thought, 'that sounds like a damn good idea,'" Woodward said. "So I said that's what I'll do."

'He's got a winner'

Woodward came to USF in Spring 2012 and began a master's degree program in medical

sciences. This summer, he was named one of two Tillman Military Scholars at USF, a prestigious scholarship given to veterans by the Pat Tillman Foundation.

"When I first met him, I had not seen any of the application, (but) when I heard his story, I knew if he could communicate it half as good on paper, he's got a winner," Larry Braue, director of Veterans Services, said. "His story is extraordinary."

Woodward went through an extensive process including two interviews, an essay and was judged against the other 14 schools that participate in the program.

"It was one of the best things that happened to me," Woodward said.

The scholarship helps veterans financially while they go back to school.

This means allowing Woodward to take care of his family. He and his wife, Manda, have a five-year-old son named Tyler.

"That has been the biggest challenge," Woodward said. "My son doesn't understand why I can't play with him. He doesn't understand why I can't be there."

Woodward's friends, though, think his son is learning work ethic from his father. Many of Woodward's friends knew his brother as well, and his son gravitates towards them.

"Tyler almost feels like they are surrogate uncles, (he) gravitates toward them and listens to their stories about Uncle Gene," Woodward said. "My favorite stories to tell him are things he kind of does like him."

Overcoming challenges

Other than teaching his son work ethic and other character traits, Woodward's goal is to attend medical school at USF and

become a doctor, possibly a neurologist specializing in traumatic brain injuries, and work with other veterans.

"I feel a responsibility to help guys like me," Woodward said. "The goal is just to become a doctor and establish my own practice and be in a position where I can give my time to those who need help who may not be able to afford to get it."

Despite debilitating migraines, difficulties focusing and paying attention in class and other distractions, Woodward continues to work toward his dream. He will be taking the MCAT next spring and applying to medical school. He said one of his driving forces is still his brother Gene.

Growing up as a twin instills competitiveness, Woodward said. His brother earned a 32 on the MCAT and Woodward jokes that he will need to get a 33.

"Basically you have somebody just as good as you at everything so it is very difficult to win," Woodward said. "We were extremely competitive with each other."

Braue said he has been impressed by Woodward's ability to overcome his struggles.

"It's one thing to come in with a brain injury — his was so traumatic. There is a whole lot that he's had to overcome," Braue said. "He's got that desire. I'm really hoping when he applies to med school, they look at it and see his desire."

Woodward said he doesn't think his challenges are particularly special.

"I find it humbling to hear that people even want to hear my story," Woodward said. "Everybody has challenges in their life that they have to overcome and it's how you manage to do that."

HACKATHON

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companies offering internship opportunities.

"I've been on the hiring side," Hollerbaugh said. "I know how much better it looks when you have an internship."

Among those who stopped by to show support were Hillsborough County Commissioner Mark Sharpe.

"This will change our community more than anything else," Sharpe said. "Economic development is truly driven by young minds and a younger work force."

Job creation, he said, starts with the creativity coming from the universities.

Sharpe said that organizations, like Createch, which build on young people's ideas of technological advancements, could help a struggling community create jobs.

"We've been trying to encourage students to get more involved in this type of effort and stay in Tampa Bay and start your business in Tampa Bay," Sharpe said. "These students are going to mentor us. They're going to come in and say this is how it can work better. This is a great way to kick start the entrepreneurship in Tampa Bay."

Former president and co-founder of Createch, Luqmaan Dawoodje, said during the Hackathon that the event probably would not be the start of the next Facebook.

"Were not doing this because we want things built, but because we want to connect the developers with people who are excited about programming on a Saturday morning," he said.

Though Dawoodje graduated, he hopes to help the organization host similar events, like the Hackathon, in the future.

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