



# Eric Dixon was ‘truly one of a kind’ for clients, family and friends

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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Although **Eric Dixon** was alive only 31 years, his time will not be forgotten because of his compassionate efforts where he put others and friends first and inspired them to live healthy lives.

Dixon, of Holiday Shores, died at 5:04 p.m. Sunday in Alton from injuries he suffered in a tragic automobile accident.

Dixon was known throughout much of the region on a first-name basis, living and working in Edwardsville, but having roots in Jerseyville, growing up there and being a phenomenal high school athlete. He played football, basketball and baseball at Jersey Community High School.

Dixon will also be remembered for his boundless energy, enthusiasm and commitment to helping people overcome injuries and even emotional trauma through his two successful businesses in Edwardsville. He opened SPORTCHIRO+ in 2012 and also recently opened Accelerate Fitness in the community. His mother and father and siblings will remember him for being a loving son, brother and a man always dedicated to his family.

**Melessia Jones**, Dixon's right-hand person, served as his office manager. She of course is devastated with his loss and is attempting to cope with his such rapid departure from her life, like his other colleagues and co-workers.

She said Eric Dixon was "truly one of a kind."

"Not only did he do his best every day to serve his community, patients, and gym patrons, but he was kind and cared how he treated people," Jones said. "He was always trying to better himself and his businesses, not for personal gain, but to help others."

Jones said Dixon surrounded himself with only the best of the best when it came to his staff, interns and friends.

"I honestly believe that greatness is contagious," Jones said. "He made us all better. Eric Dixon had a vision, he wanted to learn as much as he could, then he would turn around and teach it to everyone who would listen. He was a great leader, teacher, and friend. His legacy will live on. He will be greatly missed."

Dixon interned as team chiropractor for the Los Angeles Clippers from 2005-2009. He also served as a consultant for the Arizona Diamondbacks. He attended Lewis and Clark Community College on a baseball scholarship. He then attended Logan College of

Chiropractic and earned a bachelor's degree in Human Biology. He next received a Master's Degree in both Sports Science and Rehabilitation. Eric then went on to earn his Doctorate of Chiropractic. He also received a Certified Personal Training Certificate from the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Eric is the son of **Max and Susan (Meuth) Dixon**. Max was a legendary athlete in his own right while attending high school in Jerseyville. Max was a multi-sport star known for his blazing sprinter speed on the football field and the track.

**Deb McNabney** first met Eric in 2013 and she said the defining adjective to describe him was he was “confident.”

“I limped into my first visit wearing an ankle brace due to a decade old injury and was a mess,” she said. “He made me take the brace off, claiming I wouldn't need it. I was so skeptical (and, frankly, terrified at the prospect of squats), but because of his confidence I did it.”

She said she was defeated mentally and physically when she first met Eric and had felt squats had destroyed her knees.

“One of the main movements he works on is the squat exercise,” she said. “I said I can't do squats and that was how I destroyed my kneecaps before, but I trusted him to show me the right way to use my body. I worked out in the gym with a small group of clients for a year and I moved on to trainers and I continued to progress physically.”

Ultimately, McNabney competed in the Senior Games and won medals in the shot put and discus.

“It was the first time I had competed in 10 years,” she said. “I threw farther as a 60-year-old than I did as a 50-year-old. I set a state record by three feet. He was so passionate about what he did, and brilliant. I loved when he would come bouncing in and was so happy. He would always say ‘how are you doing Miss Deb.’ He was passionate and persistent and he knew what he was doing. I know he has changed my life and so many others.”

McNabney said the others at his gym became “like family” to her and that Eric was “the light of their lives.”

**Christal Laswell**, one of his gym coaches, said he was 100 percent passionate about what he was doing and you knew it.

“He made an absolute difference in the fitness and chiropractic industry,” she said. “His passion and dreams were unstoppable. In a short amount of time, he made a lot of impact on people’s lives, which was awesome. He truly did leave a legacy.”

Laswell said Eric challenged her every single day as a coach.

“He was just extremely knowledgeable and I always respected what he brought to our team,” she said. “His dreams were big and everyone knew it. There was nothing going to stop him. He literally just wanted to make people better.”

Laswell said Eric blended his chiropractic and sports medicine knowledge into one component. She said he used technology and a customized care plan for every client’s fitness journey. She said Eric was always in it for the long haul with clients and wanted the changes made in their lifestyles to be permanent for future healthy living.

“He took an individualized, long-term approach to a new lifestyle for clients,” she said. “His dream was getting his two businesses under one roof and be able to focus and guide his business in the direction of combining the two. He had an impact on educating students and interns he deeply cared for. He definitely made an impact on everyone he touched. I can’t imagine what his family is going through.”

Laswell said it is her hope to continue to help live out Eric’s dreams within his businesses and continue to inspire and assist clients like he would have wanted.

“He had a very proactive approach to chiropractic medicine and he molded and blended it with a fitness component,” she said. “Clients do corrective exercises in our studio and work on functional movement. We want to build a foundation for movement and create a lifestyle that has a long-term effect.”

She said it was Eric’s mission to not only help competitive athletes, but also help grandparents to be able to pick up their grandchildren without pain.

**Sarah Deatherage’s husband Kyle** was a trooper killed in the line of duty in November 2012. A friend of Kyle’s sister introduced her to Eric and workout classes that he had in January or February 2013. She said the classes enabled her to work through her grief and anger of losing her husband. Without Eric and his guidance, she said she doesn’t know what she would have done.

“I was able to funnel my emotions through physical exercise,” she said. “I don’t know without his motivation that I would have been able to do it on my own. He had the biggest heart and was so giving. Eric would do anything for anybody and he was just

constantly offering and asking what he could do. He was a sponsor of my husband's memorial foundation. It is a not for profit formed in memory of my husband that uses its funds to help other officers severely injured or killed in the line of duty."

She said Eric even let her daughter have a lemonade stand in his office each year to raise money for the effort and he helped her with a 5K race that is held now every year in memory of her husband.

**Becky Hartman** worked side by side with Eric as a physical therapist and said he was very giving and he was always passionate about sharing his knowledge of how to move better and how to get pain free.

"He would do anything for you," she said. "He was just a great boss. Besides a boss he was a very good friend and he treated each patient as if they were the only one in there at any given moment. He went above and beyond for his patients to make sure they had the best care. He did the same for his employees to make sure they were happy and had what they needed. It was just the two of us in the office."

She said now her hope is that she can spread the knowledge he taught her.

"I want to honor him in the best way I can," she said. "I think the best way to honor him is to carry on his legacy and work he was doing."

**Alexa Knuth** was an intern under Dixon and ultimately became an employee.

"Eric was in the picture of everything I did and is still in the picture and always will be, but now in a different way, unfortunately," Knuth said. "I was a student of his at SIUE and he was a career mentor. I interned under him for over a year, then I worked for him. My major is Exercise Science. I learned tremendous amounts from Eric."

Knuth said what she learned most was "how to be successful."

"If my drive with my work was like a fuse, he set fire to it," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to do anything I did if it wasn't for the passion I felt through him. I plan on taking his legacy and using it in my career. I hope he lives through me every day with his passion and his wholeheartedness and aspirations for success. I hope I am able to carry all of that. He has been one of the most influential people in my entire life of 21 years."

Knuth said Eric cared about each and every single person he came in contact with in business and in life.

He absolutely gave to people more than anyone could ever imagine,” she said.

In one of their last conversations, Knuth said it was a heart-to-heart talk.

“We were discussing my career route and where I should go and what my next step should be,” she said. “I told him I would always be there for him. He was always part of my vision and he will be for the rest of my life.”

Knuth uttered words that likely sum up what all Eric’s clients and co-workers would say to him if they could have a few final words:

**“I will make him proud** is what I would say to him,” she said.



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