

Len Bias' mother speaks of pain and moving on

Few Maryland sports fans will forget where they were when they heard Len Bias died June 19, 1986. My aunt worked at Leland Memorial Hospital in Riverdale, where Len died. She called my mother to tell her the news. Len was a hero in my hometown. He went to Hyattsville's public high school, Northwestern, and became University of Maryland's biggest star on the basketball court just two minutes up the road. Then he got picked No. 1 in the NBA Draft. As an 8 year old kid, all that mattered to me was Redskins football and Maryland basketball and football. Bias' death from a cocaine overdose crushed my generation's heart. Four years later, Len's brother, Jay, was killed during a drive-by shooting at Hyattsville's Prince George's Plaza. It was an awful time that tested Len and Jay's mother, Dr. Lonise Bias. As you'll see below, she came through the fire a stronger woman determined to save as many young people as possible. I'm working on a story for The Catholic Review print edition and CatholicReview.org about Dr. Bias and her surprising connection to Baltimore's Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, where she spoke Nov. 29.

Stay tuned for that. Until then, here are some clips from Dr. Bias' talk.

[youtube=https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukAMMX0YLi8&fs=1&hl=en_US]

[youtube=<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzqwQYtiKTK&hl=en&fs=1>]

[youtube=<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i64PFC6j7js&hl=en&fs=1>]