

## How I LIVE UNITED: Sean Elliott

Sean Elliott is known for many things. The words basketball and star come to mind. One of Tucson's favorite sons, Elliott played for the Cholla High School basketball team and was a McDonald's High School All-American in 1985. Elliott then starred at the University of Arizona, where he was a two-time 1st team All-American and the recipient of the Wooden Award, which is given annually to the most outstanding men's and women's college basketball players.



The word miracle also fits Elliott like his trademark #32 Spurs jersey. Elliott's Memorial Day Miracle Shot in 1999 is known as one of the most memorable shots in recent NBA history. The San Antonio Spurs and Portland Trailblazers were in Game 2 of the Western Conference Finals when Elliott stood on the 3-point-line and gave the Alamo City one of the greatest and most memorable victories it has ever witnessed. The catch, the dribble to regain balance, the tip-toe to avoid the sideline, the unbelievable arch to clear 6'11" Rasheed Wallace's outstretched arms. The play shifted the momentum of the series and the Spurs went on to win their first NBA championship.

The Memorial Day Miracle Shot:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FDboZTyeuA&feature=related>

A month after the Spurs were crowned NBA champions, Elliott announced publicly that he had been suffering from a kidney disease for years. In a circumstance that trumped the "Memorial Day Miracle," his brother, Noel, offered to give Sean one of his kidneys. Another miracle; the surgery was a success and enabled Sean to become the first player to return to the NBA after a kidney transplant.

The word champion also applies to Elliott. He is two-time NBA All-Star, NBA champion and was a member of the gold medal winning 1986 United States national team. But, he is also a champion for and of the community; specifically, for youth.

He is passionate about keeping kids healthy and active. "I want kids running, playing sports, out of the house and away from the TV," Elliott said. He learned how to play basketball at the Steve Daru Clubhouse and credits the Boys and Girls Club for helping him become the man he is today. "A lot of kids don't get

enough exercise and that can lead to a life of health problems and poor eating habits,” Elliott said. “Sports also help kids learn a thing or two about life; how to work together, be a team player and strive for goals.”

Elliott started volunteering at an early age. As a kid, he was a “candy striper” at the hospital. Wearing a striped uniform, he would deliver snacks and newspapers to patients. “My mom made me do it because she didn’t want me sitting around the house all day,” Elliott recalled.

As a player, Elliott was very active in NBA Cares, the league’s social responsibility initiative that supports education, youth and family development and health-related causes. He competed in many NBA golf charity events and was part of a national education campaign to raise awareness among the more than 26 million Americans—one in nine adults—that have kidney disease. Elliott served as national spokesperson for CHECK-UP - the Campaign for Health, Education and Care of Kidneys in Under-diagnosed Populations.

“One lesson that I have learned from my work in the community is that you always get back what you give, two-fold,” Elliott said. “That is the best lesson. You feel good about your community and you feel good about yourself.”

Today, he donates his time to youth basketball clinics and speaks to both kids and adults about leadership in sports and in life. Last month, Elliott spoke to members of the United Way Young Leaders Society about the importance of being a leader in your neighborhood and community. Elliott has also donated sports memorabilia to a number of youth organizations. He has also hosted a golf tournament to raise money for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson.

“It is important for us all to give back to the community, because we are all a part of it,” Elliott said. “You can’t separate yourself from the place you live and the people around you. We share a responsibility to make our community a better and safer place for all.”

### **What does it mean to LIVE UNITED?**

*“To me, LIVE UNITED means taking responsibility for the well-being and improvement of our community. It is part of our nature to want to make a significant difference in the world.”*

**~ Former UA Star/San Antonio Spur Sean Elliott**