



THE EXPRESS

THE **ERNIE DAVIS** STORY DISCUSSION GUIDE

A facilitator's discussion guide for youth leaders, educators and families to accompany the movie and book,
The Express: The Ernie Davis Story

F.I.L.M.
Fostering Interpersonal Learning in the Classroom & Movies



Ages 13–18
youthFILMproject.org

The Express: The Ernie Davis Story official website:
<http://www.theexpressmovie.com/>



INTRODUCTION

The Express: The Ernie Davis Story offers discussion topics, writing activities and service project ideas for youth ages 13–18 based on the central themes in the book and the movie.

About the film:

In America in the late 1950s and early '60s, one young man became a symbol for a country grappling to move past its long-held views of people of color. This young man's unprecedented journey unfolded as he shattered not only sports records but also perceptions of what was possible for an African-American at the time. His name was Ernie Davis, but fans knew him better as "The Elmira Express."

This film is a tribute to his courage.

Based on a true story, *The Express* follows the extraordinary life of college football hero Ernie Davis (ROB BROWN of *Finding Forrester*, *Coach Carter*), the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy. His quiet fight for equality and respect forever changed not only the face of the game, but his civil rights story continues to inspire new generations.

Born in 1939 and raised in poverty in Pennsylvania coal-mining country by his grandmother and grandfather (CHARLES S. DUTTON of *Secret Window*, *Gothika*), before moving to Elmira, New York, Davis hurdled social and economic obstacles to become one of the greatest running backs in college football history. Under the guidance of legendary Syracuse coach Ben Schwartzwalder (DENNIS QUAID of *The Rookie*, *Any Given Sunday*), he became a hero who surpassed Jim Brown's achievements and became the first African-American player to be awarded the Heisman Trophy, college football's highest individual honor.

Decorated veteran Schwartzwalder was a Southerner with a single vision of a national championship and hardened ideas about how the world worked. Though he and Davis clashed mightily, he taught the player everything he knew about football, just as Davis helped him learn the true meaning of victory. As the growing civil rights movement divided the country in the '60s, Davis became a symbol for achievement that transcended the gridiron. Refusing to flinch from others' prejudices, Davis achieved all his goals—until he faced a challenge that would make most men crumble. He joined the ranks of black pioneers by teaching a generation tolerance, inspiring a movement that smashed barriers on and off the field.

The FILM Project is made possible through the partnership of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures and the National Collaboration for Youth. Heartland is a nonprofit organization that seeks to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey. The National Collaboration for Youth is a nonprofit organization providing a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations, and concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities.



STEPS FOR FACILITATORS TO USE WHEN IMPLEMENTING THIS CURRICULUM:

Objectives for youth in this curriculum:

- Draw comparisons between the book and movie
- Understand the story in the context of history
- Explore the importance of strength of character

Steps for facilitators to use when implementing this curriculum:

Step 1) Read the book and see the movie

The Book: *Ernie Davis: The Elmira Express, the Story of a Heisman Trophy Winner* by Robert C. Gallagher was re-titled as *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story* when it was rereleased with the movie. Both titles are appropriate for reading in conjunction with seeing the movie and using this curriculum.

If you would like to learn more about Ernie Davis or the Syracuse University Football team, check out these additional books:

- *The Story of the 1959 Syracuse University National Championship Football Team* by Gary Youmans and Maury Youmans
- *A Halo for a Helmet: The Whole Story of Ernie Davis* by K. Coralee Burch

The Movie: *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story*, a Universal Studios production, is available on DVD at your local library or video store. It is rated PG with a runtime of 130 minutes.

Step 2) Participate in the activities

Activities at a Glance:

Grade Level: 9-12

Time required: 130 minutes for viewing *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story*

Time required to read the book varies

Take part in meaningful discussions and activities about:




- The similarities and differences from the book to the big screen
- The impact of sports on culture
- The importance of Civil Rights in America
- The importance of character

Step 3) Take the lead to help others

Engage in service projects within your community based on lessons learned from this story. Project ideas are included in the guide and a free, downloadable service-learning supplement is available to assist in the planning and managing of service projects based on *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story* service projects. Please visit youthFILMproject.org/resources.htm to download the supplement.



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The pencil icon designates pages that can be distributed to youth as worksheets.



Module One: The Art of Adaptation

Dear Facilitator,

Use the information on the following pages to involve your youth in meaningful discussion about the book and the movie. You may choose to assign independent reading of the book or you may set up a book club with your group to read the book over the course of a month, discussing a series of chapters once a week. However you choose to read the book, reading it will be helpful in discussing the differences between the book and the movie and deepening your group's understanding of the process of adaptation from book to film and of the themes in the story.

The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film by Linda Seger is a helpful resource on adapting books and plays into screenplays for those wishing to further explore the process of adaptation.



The Express: The Ernie Davis Story © Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.



Module One: The Art of Adaptation

Activity One: Adapting the Book to the Movie

Read the following section individually or out loud. Think about the questions raised in order to take part in a group discussion using the prompts on the next page.

Ernie Davis: The Elmira Express, written by Robert C. Gallagher, is the book upon which the movie *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story* is based. The process of taking this non-fiction biography and creating from it a feature film requires adaptation.

Adaptation is the process of recasting a composition into a new form and this development occurs in a variety of ways. For some stories, the book translates very well to the movie and for others it requires extensive adaptation. *Ernie Davis: The Elmira Express* is a biography that required more extensive adaptation yet the central theme and character remain unchanged.

Biographies often require more extensive adaptation to film than a fiction novel. To understand why this is the case, think about your own life and the sequence of events that has brought you to today.

- Has your life been constantly filled with important and interesting events?
- Has each exciting or memorable events in your life been related to one another or happened in quick succession? Instead, have these events been scattered throughout your life?
- Do you believe people unfamiliar with your life would need to have the context of these events explained to them?
- Would your biography make an interesting movie?

While Ernie Davis did have an interesting life, he would probably answer some of these questions similarly to the way you answered them. Not all the events in Davis' life happened exactly the way the movie portrayed them, but in order to make the movie more interesting, they were adapted in such a way to draw out the most interesting and important aspects of his life.

The screenwriters and director took some liberties with history in order to make a more engaging and exciting film. They changed some locations of games and order of events within games to build the movie to a climax that didn't happen quite as dramatically in real life. Additionally, the movie changed some of the reaction of fans, particularly those at the West Virginia game, in order to make a help define the obstacles black athletes had to overcome before they became widely accepted throughout America.



Module One: The Art of Adaptation

Activity One: Adapting the Book to the Movie

Discussion Questions:

After reading the book and watching the movie, discuss with your group the following differences between the book and the movie.

1. Some of Ernie's former teammates don't recall Ernie Davis being as angry as he was portrayed in the movie. Why do you believe the director and writer might have made Ernie somewhat different than his normal personality? Would a little more anger help convey the feeling of the struggle and frustration of discrimination, passion and will?
2. Do you feel that Coach Schwartzwalder was portrayed the same in the book and the movie? In what ways was he portrayed the same and in what ways was he portrayed differently?
3. In the movie, Ernie's teammate, Lundy, is the embodiment of racism. Lundy is not a character in the book so why do you think he was added to the movie?
4. Some of the facts in the book about Davis' time at Syracuse are altered in the movie. Can you recall what some of those altered facts are?

Examples:

- Syracuse only played West Virginia once in West Virginia while Ernie Davis was on the team. This game was played in 1960. The racial tensions and cruelty were not displayed in this 1960 game, or at the 1959 game that took place in Syracuse.
- During the 1960 Cotton Bowl Game the movie depicts a very close game and a climatic 87 yard touchdown by Davis. In reality, the game was never that close and the touchdown Davis made opened scoring for the game and happened in the first quarter.

Why do you think the writers and directors decided to make these changes? Do you feel these changes help make a more interesting movie? Why?

It is important not to forget the reason the story was told. Regardless of the inaccuracies in the movie they were intentionally changed to help create a more engaging film and ultimately the story is about Ernie Davis and the extraordinary person he was. Robert Gallagher who wrote the book was inspired by not only Ernie Davis' talent, but also by his kindness and goodwill. The book to movie adaptation process helps to highlight the key aspects of a great story, and in this case enabled the Ernie Davis story to become known to a much wider audience.



Module One: The Art of Adaptation

Activity Two: Adapting Your Story

ACTIVITY

Just as author Robert Gallagher shined a light on the life of Ernie Davis, think of someone who has served as an inspiration and on whom you can help shine a light. Use the following questions to begin thinking about someone's story that you feel is important to tell.

- What part of Ernie Davis' story was most inspirational to you? Why?
- Think of someone who has inspired you in some way.
 - Is this person well known, or a friend, relative, teacher or coach?
 - What about this person inspires you?
 - Is this person's entire life inspiring or is there one particular event that impacted you?
 - How have you changed because of this person?

Biography Writing Activity

Using these questions as a guide and others you feel are important in understanding the person you selected, write a short biography documenting the highlights of his or her life. Think about the lessons you learned about the process of adaptation and write a short biography about him or her.

Then, using the ideas discussed about adaptation, rewrite this biography as a screenwriter might using characters, places and events in a way to convey the story in a movie. Highlight meaningful events and create a strong and engaging climax.

To take this activity a step farther use the biography you have written to create a short play, or video documentary to help bring the story to a greater audience so that more people can be inspired by the individual who inspired you.

Module Two: Setting the Story in History



Dear Facilitator,

The following module explores the history in which the movie and the book *The Express* are set. The 1950's and 1960's were a significant time for America and helped shape football in America. This section also offers an overview of Civil Rights in America.

The Civil Rights movement is an important history to understand in order to fully comprehend the significance of Ernie Davis' accomplishments, and all other African American's accomplishments during the time in which the movie is set.

In this section, help youth learn more about the history of football, athletes who helped break the race barrier, and the impact of Civil Rights in America.



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity One: Football in America

Football has been an American sports tradition most likely as long as you can remember. However, it wasn't always that way. The following is a timeline to better understand the rise of American Football and its significance as an American past time. Find discussion prompts about the impact of sports on culture on the following page.

American Football Timeline*

- The first rules of American football were written at the Massasoit convention in 1876. Before this point, American football had been developing from rugby where it had been gaining popularity at a majority of American schools in the East.
- For several years football was played on the amateur level between athletic clubs and colleges. In 1896, intense competition between two Pittsburgh-area athletic clubs led to the first professional football player, William "Pudge" Heffelfinger.
- In 1902, the Philadelphia Athletics and the Philadelphia Phillies formed a professional football team and along with the Pittsburgh Stars, attempted the first pro football league named the National Football League.
- States continued to form several professional football teams and players jumped from team to team, depending on the highest salary. Also, college players who were still enrolled in school were playing professionally. In order to address these issues the American Professional Football Conference formed and met in Canton, OH in 1920. The name soon changed to American Professional Football Association, then became the National Football League (NFL) in 1922, the name we know today.
- NFL regular season games were first broadcast in select markets by CBS in 1956.
- Another new league was formed to compete with the NFL in 1959. This one was named the American Football League (AFL), the same we know of today.
- The AFL signed a five year television contract with ABC in 1960, bringing football games into even more American homes. In the following years ABC and NBC would continue bidding to gain exclusive rights to football games, growing the popularity of American football. As time passed, more and more television stations would bid for the rights to televise football games as home viewership and popularity soared.
- The first Super Bowl took place in 1967 between the Green Bay Packers and Kansas City Chiefs. Green Bay won 35-10.
- In 1980 the television networks saw record viewership for football games, demonstrating the continued rise in Americans following the game.

American Football's entire history can be found at the NFL's website: www.nfl.com/history

* Adapted from information found on www.nfl.com/history.



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity One: Football in America

Discussion Questions:

1. As American football evolved from rugby, what other sports we have today derived from other sports or another country's sporting traditions? Do some research if you can't think of any.
2. Football is considered a traditional American sport and past time. What are some other traditional American sports?
3. Think about your favorite American sport and explore how it is engrained in American traditions. As a group, discuss significant events in that sport's evolution and how those events impacted American history. Think about notable sporting games and sports figures to get started.
4. What are some sports that are traditional in other countries? How are these sports important historically and culturally in these countries? If you can't think of any, this is your opportunity to do some exploration and learn about new sports.
5. Think of people you know who enjoy sports and grew up in different generations than you. Next time you see them, ask them questions about their memories of American football when they were growing up. Do people in older generations have as many football sport memories to discuss as those in your generation? How do they differ?



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity Two: African Americans Who Broke the Race Barrier in Sports

Ernie Davis was the first African American to win the Heisman Trophy, but this doesn't mean he was the first African American capable of doing so. There have been amazing athletes of all races for many years, but it has taken years of progress for many of them to receive the recognition they deserve.

Here is a list of some notable African American athletes who were “firsts” in sports history.

Baseball:	Frank Robinson:	First manager in the Major League
	Larry Doby:	First player in baseball's American League
	Jackie Robinson:	First Major League Baseball player
Basketball:	John McClendon:	First coach in Basketball
Boxing:	Jack Johnson:	First Heavy-weight boxing champion
Football:	Frederick “Fritz” Pollard:	First All-American running back and later became the first black professional football coach
	Doug Williams:	First to start as quarterback at the Superbowl
	Charles Follis:	First known black pro football player
Golf:	Tiger Woods:	First to win the Masters Tournament
	Lee Elder:	First to play in the Masters Tournament
	Althea Gibson:	Upon retiring from tennis she became the first black woman pro golfer.
	Charlie Sifford:	First approved black on the PGA Tour and first to win a PGA event
Tennis:	Althea Gibson:	First to play in the US Open and was the first to win the Grand Slam Title.
	Arthur Ashe:	First to win Wimbledon
Olympics:	Alice Coachman:	First woman to medal at the Summer Olympics, winning the high jump in 1948.
	Debi Thomas:	First woman to medal at the winter Olympics.
	Vonetta Flowers:	First woman to win a gold medal at the winter Olympics.
	George Poage:	Was the first to medal at an Olympics. He won two bronze at the 1904 summer Olympics for hurdles.

This is just a short history of some notable African American athletes who broke racial boundaries, but there are many others who broke this boundary in other fields. Check out Famous Firsts by African Americans at www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmfirasts.html for more information. Additionally, a comprehensive timeline on Black History can be found at www.biography.com/blackhistory/black-history-timeline.jsp.



Module Two: Setting the Story in History
Activity Two: African Americans Who Broke the Race Barrier in Sports

ACTIVITY

Writing Activity

Choose a sport or field that you have deep interest in such as sports, law, politics, government, literature, etc. and then conduct research to discover more about the history, the leaders and “firsts” of that field.

Use this worksheet to explore the people who impacted your subject in greater detail, and then use these answers to write a short story about the history of the subject you have chosen.

1. Chosen Field (i.e. baseball, Olympics, legal system, politics, etc.)

2. Who are three important people who helped shape this field? Why is each important?

3. Was there any opposition this field faced over the years? What was this opposition and how was it overcome?

4. Name a few major events that helped shape this field and explain why they are important.

5. Name the most recent person to impact this field and how the impact will be felt in years to come.



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity Three: Civil Rights in America

The Express: The Ernie Davis Story is set in the years of turbulent and historical events in which African Americans organized peaceful efforts and persevered to gain equal rights. The movie ends in 1962, just two years before President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into place. Although the Civil Rights Act was signed, it did not immediately change the way all Americans treated African Americans. Since the 1960s significant progress has been made to providing equal rights for all, but the struggle continues for not only African Americans, but for other races, and even women.

Read the summary of the Civil Rights Act below individually or out loud with your group. Use the information to discuss the prompts on the next page.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a comprehensive U.S. legislation intended to end discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin; it is often called the most important U.S. law on civil rights since Reconstruction (1865–77). Title I of the act guarantees equal voting rights by removing registration requirements and procedures biased against minorities and the underprivileged. Title II prohibits segregation or discrimination in places of public accommodation involved in interstate commerce. Title VII bans discrimination by trade unions, schools, or employers involved in interstate commerce or doing business with the federal government. The latter section also applies to discrimination on the basis of sex and established a government agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), to enforce these provisions. The act also calls for the desegregation of public schools (Title IV), broadens the duties of the Civil Rights Commission (Title V), and assures nondiscrimination in the distribution of funds under federally assisted programs (Title VI).

The Civil Rights Act was a highly controversial issue in the United States as soon as it was proposed by President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Although Kennedy was unable to secure passage of the bill in Congress, a stronger version was eventually passed with the urging of his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, who signed the bill into law on July 2, 1964, following one of the longest debates in Senate history. White groups opposed to integration with blacks responded to the act with a significant backlash that took the form of protests, increased support for pro-segregation candidates for public office, and some racial violence. The act gave federal law enforcement agencies the power to prevent racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities.

Excerpted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica online <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/119351/Civil-Rights-Act>



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity Three: Civil Rights in America

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you imagine living in a time when the rights outlined in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were not defined by law? Do you see any of these rights being violated around you today? How?
2. Are there other rights not in this legislation that you feel everyone should have? If so, what are they and are there any current events that deal with these rights being violated?
 - Are lawmakers attempting to bring equality to these rights? How?
 - What other movements are taking place to establish equal rights for these issues in which you believe?
3. In the movie you witnessed discriminatory behavior against Ernie and others. Discuss three of these incidences and discuss whether Ernie's reaction to the behavior was appropriate. How would you have responded in Ernie's situation?
4. Are there instances of people's rights being violated in your school or community? Are there ways you can help those whose rights are being violated? How?



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity Four: Standing up for Change

In the book and the movie, Jim Brown and Ernie Davis are two very similar, yet very different figures. Both are amazing athletes with some shared talents, but off the field they are two individuals who address discrimination in different ways.

In a 2008 interview with Patrick Goldstein of the Los Angeles Times, Jim Brown recounts he and Ernie's differences during the civil rights movement. Brown states, "You have to realize, in the civil rights movement, there had to be radicals and peacemakers, radicals like Malcolm X and peacemakers like Martin Luther King. At Syracuse, I was the radical and Ernie was the peacemaker, the guy everyone loved. But you needed both of us to make real changes."*

Brown, in addition to being a football legend was also an actor and civil rights activist. In another segment of the interview with Patrick Goldstein, Brown expresses how important it is to push forward to continue making a positive impact on equality in America. As a famous figure, Brown recognizes the enormous responsibility others have to portray positive images and reshape stereotypes. He suggests that some figures today don't realize the responsibility they have to continue shaping American culture.

"To shake your butt is to regress... It's buffoonery. It's me-ism. There's no getting around it--it's putting gasoline on the fire of stereotypes. When we were growing up in the '50s and '60s, we spent every day of our lives fighting stereotypes, all the shucking and jiving and cartoon dancing routines that black people were forced to do....Athletes need to represent more than that just getting a big contract and lots of endorsements. ...Sports is detrimental to the development of culture if all you're willing to do is enjoy the fruits of this country... You've got to reinvest in the culture, not just exploit it. Today people just want non-combative heroes, who smile and say all the right things. That's fine, but that doesn't mean you have to play the fool and shake your butt just because you caught a pass for a touchdown." **

*excerpted from *The Big Picture*, Patrick Goldstein on the collision of entertainment, media and pop culture. Jim Brown: The other star of "The Express", Sept 17, 2008. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/the_big_picture/2008/09/jim-brown-the-o.html

** excerpted from *The Big Picture*, Patrick Goldstein on the collision of entertainment, media and pop culture. Football great Jim Brown on 'The Express' and why Kobe needs to step it up, October 9, 2008. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/the_big_picture/2008/10/jim-brown-the-f.html



Module Two: Setting the Story in History

Activity Four: Standing up for Change

In interviews Jim Brown has said that he was an abrasive man, but that Ernie Davis was so kind to everyone that he broke racial boundaries and was liked by whites and blacks alike. Read more about Jim Brown's thoughts on Ernie Davis, the civil rights movement and the responsibility of today's athletes on the LA Times Blog, *The Big Picture* by Patrick Goldstein.

Jim Brown: The Other Star of 'The Express':

latimesblogs.latimes.com/the_big_picture/2008/09/jim-brown-the-o.html

Football great Jim Brown on 'The Express' and why Kobe needs to step it up:

latimesblogs.latimes.com/the_big_picture/2008/10/jim-brown-the-f.html

Discussion Questions:

1. What characteristics do you believe Ernie displayed that allowed him to be so well liked by nearly everyone he met?
2. Do these quotes and articles give you a better insight into Jim Brown's character in the book and the movie? How?
3. Do you agree with Jim Brown's statement that it takes both radicals and peacemakers to cause change? Why?
4. What responsibility do you think famous figures have to society? Why?
5. Who are some famous figures who you believe are using their fame that way Jim Brown believes it should be used? How are these individuals generating awareness for a particular cause?



Additional Activities

To further explore the history of Civil Rights in America, download the F.I.L.M. Project's curriculum for *The Secret Life of Bees: Uncovering Your Secrets* Module One: Learning about Civil Rights, Activity One: Civil Rights Timeline. This is a good activity for groups or individuals to further explore many of the significant events of Civil Rights in America.

Additionally, Civil Rights Progress can be explored in the *Glory Road: Choose Your Road*, Module Two: 40 Years of Civil Rights Progress, Activity One: Mapping the Milestones of Civil Rights from 1966 to 2006. Find both of these curricula at youthFILMproject.org



Module Three: Strength of Character

Dear Facilitator,

Although *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story* is a movie steeped in the history of the Civil Rights Movement and the Syracuse Orangemen's 1958-1961 seasons, this movie is just as much a movie about strength of character. There are many strong characters in the book and the movie. Ernie Davis became the person he was because he was shaped by so many strong individuals. From family members to coaches and teammates, Ernie had a wide range of influence on his life and he always strove to be the best individual he could be.

The following section explores Ernie's character and why his character helped him to see the success he enjoyed.



The Express: The Ernie Davis Story © Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.



Module Three: Strength of Character

Activity One: A Positive Outlook on Life

Someplace along the line you have to come to an understanding with yourself, and I had reached mine a long time before, when I was still in the hospital. Either you fight or you give up. For a time I was so despondent I would just lie there, not even wanting to move. One day I got hold of myself. I decided I would face up to whatever I had and try to beat it. I still feel that way.

This quote comes from the article, “I’m not Unlucky,” Ernie Davis (with Bob August), wrote for the *Saturday Evening Post* in March of 1963, less than two months before his death. Although Ernie had been dealt an enormous blow with the diagnosis of leukemia and had not been able to play one game with the Cleveland Browns, he was determined not to let himself be thought of as unlucky. This positive outlook on life is just one of the factors that let Ernie to serve as an inspiration to others.

Read the full article here: http://www.steele.lib.ny.us/famouselmira/ed_sat_eve_post.htm

Use the article and the portrayal of Ernie’s character in the book and the movie to discuss the prompts below.

Discussion Questions

1. After reading the article, “I’m not Unlucky,” what stands out most about Ernie’s character?
2. Does this article put any misfortune in your life, or others into perspective? In what way?
3. Throughout Ernie’s life, what factors or events helped him build his strong character and positive outlook? How do you believe they helped shape him?
4. How did Ernie’s actions on the field make his teammates and even his opponents respect him? Do you believe that there would be better sportsmanship if today’s sports players behaved differently? Why?
5. The book *The Express* describes Ernie’s disappointment about missing the 1961 All Star Game against the Green Bay Packers due to his illness. Although the Packers won the game, they voted to give the game ball to Ernie. This display of sportsmanship demonstrates how fully Ernie’s good sportsmanship impacted others. Do you know anyone like Ernie who inspires the best in others? How do they inspire you?
6. In the same spirit of Ernie’s article, write a short essay or discuss with your group why you are not unlucky. Focus on the positive parts of your life.



Module Three: Strength of Character
Activity Two: Discipline and hard work

ACTIVITY

Although the movie doesn't go into great detail about all of Ernie's athletic abilities, Robert Gallagher's book describes how Ernie excelled in multiple sports, even in college where he also played basketball. Ernie could have simply focused his energy on one sport, but he was always working hard to improve in all sports as well as striving to excel in his schoolwork. Ernie also decided to major in business in college because he realized that he would not always be able to play football.

By watching the movie and reading about Ernie's life, it is easy to see that his hard work and discipline provided him with wonderful success. Although not everyone will achieve the same level of success Ernie's saw in his life, his hard work and discipline can inspire everyone to strive to be the best they can be.

Fill in the chart below so you begin thinking of ways you can become better in many different aspects of life. After filling out this table individually, regroup and discuss the questions that follow.

Subject	Goal(s)	Three Steps to Achieve Your Goal(s)
Example: Athletics	Improve time for running a mile from 7:30 minutes to 7:00 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run on the weekend, outside of track practice 2. Organize a group of friends and track members to run with in the off season 3. Listen more closely to my coach's suggestions
School		
Friendships		
Extracurricular Clubs and Activities		
Athletics		
Other		



Module Three: Strength of Character
Activity Two: Discipline and hard work

ACTIVITY

Follow up Questions:

Discuss these questions with your group. Use the spaces available to record the thoughts inspired by your discussion.

1. When looking at other people's goals are you inspired to make some other goals for yourself? Why?

2. Do any of your group members have the same goals? Can you work together to help each other meet these goals? How?

3. Can you think of any additional ways for the other members of your group to reach their goals? What are your constructive suggestions?



Module Four: Take the Lead to Help Others

Ernie Davis was the first African American to win the Heisman Trophy, but that doesn't mean he was the first African American man capable of doing so. It means that for years before him others had persevered in order to pave the way toward equality. Sometimes a task, such as gaining equal rights for all, is greater than one person's ability to overcome. That's why your help is so important in helping pave the way for a better world.

Use inspiration from this curriculum to help you make decisions about how to invest your time to make a difference through a service project.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- As Ernie Davis inspired his teammates, opponents, coaches, and aspiring athletes you can also serve as an inspiration to others. Think about becoming a mentor in your school or community. There are many younger youth, and even your peers who will benefit from your mentorship. Whether you choose to mentor someone in school, sports, setting career goals or helping make good relationship decisions, make sure you are helping them by offering insights and ideas about how they can best explore their own abilities.

Learn more at www.mentoring.org

- Advocate for equal treatment for all. Look at your school, community or city and find places you can make an impact by being an advocate for equality.

FIVE KEY STEPS FOR BEING A CHAMPION FOR CHANGE

(Adapted from the Youth Policy Action Center)

www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org or 1-866-mobilize

1) PICK AN ISSUE. Be sure you are clear on **WHAT** you want to change.

2) STUDY UP. Even though studying is not everyone's idea of fun time, putting in a little time to really understand an issue and **WHY** it matters, is important. You want to be able to convince your friends, adults and elected officials that what you say matters.

3) FIND ALLIES. You don't have to run a campaign by yourself. Chances are there are others who are interested in the same issue – and want to help. Find them.

4) DEVELOP A STRATEGY. While most of us experience the world broadly (we like or don't like our school, we do or don't feel safe in our neighborhoods), simply saying we want to improve the schools or our neighborhoods is not enough to get an elected official to do what we want. **FOCUS** on what specifically you would like elected officials to do. And, **FOCUS** on the right officials for your cause.

5) LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN. Send messages. Public officials keep track of how many messages they receive on specific topics. **WRITE, CALL** and **USE THE MEDIA.**

Download the free Service-Learning guide at www.youthfilmproject.org/resources.htm to guide you as you implement your project.



Post Program Evaluation

Dear Facilitator,

Please take a few moments to answer the questions in the evaluation for The Express: The Ernie Davis Story Discussion Guide at www.youthFILMproject.org/evaluations.

We value your feedback, and your comments and stories can help inspire others and keep the FILM Project alive.

Please visit www.youthFILMproject.org/evaluations at the completion of this curriculum and tell us what you think. You can also send your stories to FILMinfo@trulymovingpictures.org

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,

The FILM team

The FILM Team
filminfo@trulymovingpictures.org

The FILM Project is made possible through the partnership of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures and the National Collaboration for Youth. Heartland is a nonprofit organization that seeks to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey.

The National Collaboration for Youth is a nonprofit organization providing a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations, and concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities.

