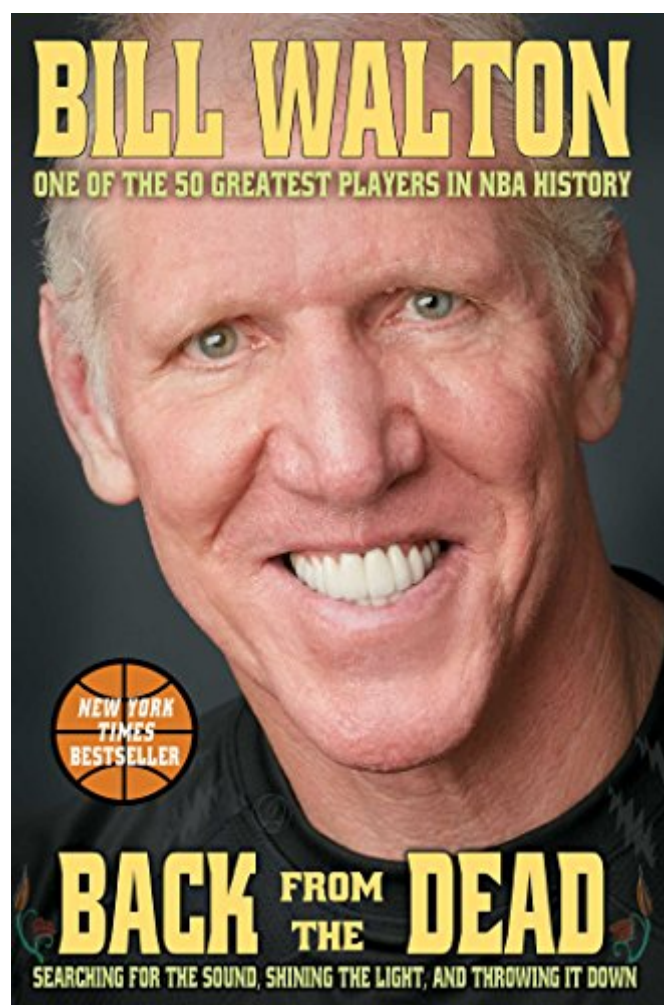


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# Back From The Dead



## Synopsis

This inspiring memoir from sports and cultural icon Bill Walton recounts his devastating injuries and amazing recoveries, set in the context of his UCLA triumphs under John Wooden, his storied NBA career, and his affinity for music and the Grateful Dead. In February 2008, Bill Walton suffered a catastrophic spinal collapse—the culmination of a lifetime of injuries—that left him unable to move. He spent three years on the floor of his house, eating his meals there and crawling to the bathroom, where he could barely hoist himself up onto the toilet. The excruciating pain and slow recovery tested Walton to the fullest. But with extraordinary patience, fortitude, determination, and sacrifice—and pioneering surgery—he recovered, and now shares his life story in this remarkable and unique memoir. Walton grew up in San Diego in the 1950s and 1960s and was deeply influenced by the political and cultural upheavals of that period. Although he strongly identified with the cool people, particularly in music and politics, his greatest role model outside his family was super-straight UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, a thoughtful, rigorous mentor who seemed immune to the turmoil of the times. Although there was always tension and conflict between them, the two men would speak nearly every day for forty-three years, until Wooden's death at age ninety-nine. Despite a lifelong stuttering affliction, Walton chose a career in broadcasting after his playing days ended. He eventually won an Emmy Award and other accolades for broadcasting and was recognized as a leading media pundit. John Wooden once said that no greatness ever came without sacrifice. Nothing better illustrates this saying than the real story of Walton's life. In his own words, *Back from the Dead* shares this dramatic story, including his basketball and broadcasting careers, his many setbacks and rebounds, and his ultimate triumph as the toughest of champions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bill Walton's memoir is interesting and captivating throughout whether you agree with all of his long held philosophies or not. As emblazoned boldly on the book jacket | he was selected as one of the fifty greatest players in NBA history. The fact that this was announced in 1996 it would assuredly not be the same players today. In fact there was much controversy regarding the fact that Walton was selected then. The controversy wasn't because of his Hall Of Fame caliber talent | but the fact that he barely played 5 1/2 complete seasons. He certainly made his impact in those few years. He is without a doubt (as rated by Sports Illustrated | and I concur wholeheartedly) probably the second greatest NCAA tournament player in history | behind only Lew Alcindor. Part of the beauty of this book | as compared to one written twenty-years-ago | is the detail in his early life and throughout his award winning UCLA career on and off the court. As a lifetime basketball player myself | and being within a few years of Walton's age | my high school career included playing and competing in Los Angeles with some of the UCLA stars (Sidney Wicks, Curtis Rowe, etc.) that handed the gauntlet of NCAA greatness to the young Walton. And simultaneously as Bill played at UCLA | I was defending our country and also playing on a military team | so I followed him during those years | not only for his on the court talents | but for his very public political/anti-war stance. The details in his off-the-court demeanor are handled in just as much detail as his on the court accomplishments. It also brought back many memories of my having played in Pauley Pavilion on weekends with many UCLA players after I was transferred back to California during the Vietnam War.

I read Bill Walton's autobiography Back from the Dead on Saturday after my long run. It was a good one and does a great job of capturing a complicated life filled with super high peaks and extremely low valleys. I was into basketball as a pre-teen. I played forward for a little while but really settled into my role as a guard. I played until junior high school when I stopped playing soccer and basketball

and focused entirely on tennis, which lasted until high school when I smashed my last wood racquet on the court. After that, I ran track and cross country and really began my love of long distance running. I dug Bill Walton when he played for the Trail Blazers. My team as a little kid was the Dallas Chaparrals until the ABA blew up. I didn't really have a team again until I moved to Boston to go to college, so I just liked individual players. When I eventually stopped paying attention to basketball in high school, even though the Dallas Mavericks were now my home town team (and I won a Dallas Mavericks college scholarship for \$1,000 for some reason I can't remember), I lost touch with pretty much all the players. So it was fun to see Walton re-appear in my junior and senior years at MIT on the Boston Celtics, which re-energized my interest in basketball a tiny bit (it didn't hurt that the Celtics were completely dominant in that time period.) In *Back from the Dead* Walton covers his years playing at UCLA, Phoenix, and Boston in great detail. He also talks about his time on the San Diego - and then LA Clippers - which includes some scathing commentary on the craziness and misery that was the team under Donald Sterling in its early years. The basketball stories, especially some of the detailed history, is fun to read.

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