

A Different Goal Line

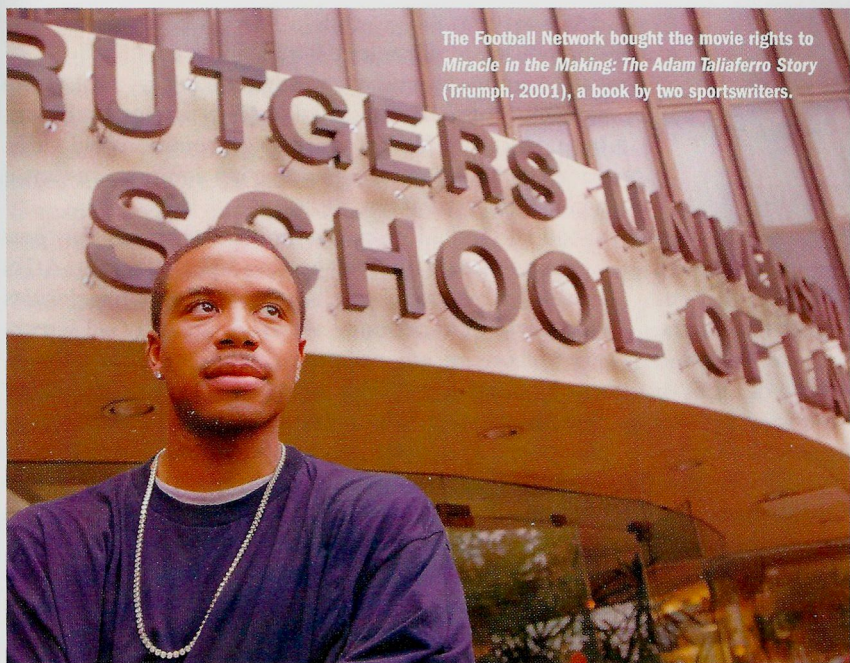
ADAM WALKED AGAIN—AND THEN SET HIS SIGHTS ON LAW SCHOOL

If hard work and perseverance are required to succeed in law school, then Adam Taliaferro shouldn't have a problem. Before Taliaferro entered the class of 2007 last fall at the School of Law-Camden, he faced the challenge of a lifetime. As a freshman-phenom on the Penn State football team in 2000, he shattered his fifth vertebra when he tried to stop an Ohio State running back with a head-first tackle. It was a maneuver he had used many times before. Only this time Taliaferro found himself lying on the field, unable to move.

His prognosis was grim; doctors said he might never walk again. Determined to prove them wrong, Taliaferro began weeks of intensive rehabilitation after spinal fusion surgery. By December 2000, he had taken a few steps. A year later Taliaferro was back at Penn State, walking to classes and working toward his degree in labor studies and industrial relations and serving as a student coach.

While in the hospital, he met other patients with spinal cord injuries who needed financial help and some words of encouragement. "The NCAA paid all my bills, but most weren't as fortunate as I was in that respect," says Taliaferro, who graduated from Penn State with a 3.2 average and received a standing ovation at graduation. With the help of family, friends, and former coaches and teammates, he started a foundation (www.taliaferrofoundation.org) to raise money for spinal cord patients through football all-star games, dinners, and other events.

"Someday I hope to get involved in sports again, but as an agent," says the 23-year-old Taliaferro, a Sicklerville resident who works out but will never run again. The onetime NFL prospect is far more thankful than bitter about the accident that changed his life: "I could go on for hours thanking all the people who helped me along the way. So far we've raised close to \$30,000."



The Football Network bought the movie rights to *Miracle in the Making: The Adam Taliaferro Story* (Triumph, 2001), a book by two sportswriters.