



## Always By My Side: A Father's Grace and a Sports Journey Unlike Any Other

*Jim Nantz, Eli Spielman, George H.W. Bush (Foreword by)*

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In the bestselling tradition of *Big Russ and Me*, America's most visible sports commentator tells the stories of some of the most dramatic moments in American sports and pays tribute to the man who inspired him to pursue his broadcasting dream— his beloved father, who has fallen victim to the ravages of Alzheimer's disease.

Vividly written in exciting, you-are-there replay, *Always by My Side* gives readers an insider's look into an unprecedented sixty-three-day stretch from February to April of 2007 when Jim Nantz became the first broadcaster to call the Super Bowl, the Final Four, and the Masters. Because Nantz was unable to share the voyage with his dad, however, this remarkable journey through America's premier sporting events took on a bittersweet tinge. Nonetheless, the devoted son felt his father's presence every step of the way, and used this championship odyssey to celebrate the people, venues, and moments that tapped into all the goodness that his dad—and his dad's generation— represent.

In recounting the highlights of more than two thrilling decades with CBS Sports, this broadcasting hall of famer recalls the legends of the industry—Dick Enberg, Curt Gowdy, Jim McKay, Chris Schenkel, Pat Summerall, Jack Whitaker, and others—who sparked his imagination and shaped his style.

*Always by My Side* traces Nantz's career, from creating his own imaginary studio as a boy to his college days rooming with future PGA Tour golfers Fred Couples and Blaine McCallister to his successful network audition at age twenty-six. Along the way, readers are treated to an array of memories, including Nantz's special relationship with the former president George H. W. Bush, as well as his friendships with such sports royalty as Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Peyton Manning, Tony Dungy, Tom Brady, Bill Belichick, Mike Krzyzewski, John Wooden, and many others. Poignant stories that explore the theme of fathers and sons who have bonded through a common love of sports complete this sparkling narrative.

*Always by My Side* promises to be the most cherished Father's Day gift of the year.

## Always By My Side: A Father's Grace and a Sports Journey Unlike Any Other Details

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## **From Reader Review Always By My Side: A Father's Grace and a Sports Journey Unlike Any Other for online ebook**

### **Mike says**

As someone who lost a parent (father) a number of years ago, I'm always on the lookout for books about father/son relationships. I stumbled across this title in a used bookstore and needless to say it was a very good read!

Many people might associate Jim Nantz with his connection to sports whether its the Final Four, the Masters, or NFL Football. This book is about his relationship with his father and how that helped him in his professional life.

The book takes us through Jim's life and his various achievements and how his dad both encouraged and stood by his side. Sadly, Jim's dad had Alzheimers and this book details some of the stories surrounding that.

If there is one lesson to be learned by this book, its to treasure the ones you love...and be sure to spend time with them for tomorrow they may not be here.

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### **Ruth Soz says**

I didn't let the fact that the forward was written by George H.W. Bush turn me away.

Although I may not follow sports as closely as the target audience, I did enjoy and recognize many of the broadcasting names due to my background. The title suggests that this is a tribute to his dad; there are many touching references to his father, but they feel a bit forced and it seemed like an outline of his career with some smattering father-son moments thrown in, and I was expecting the opposite. It also didn't seem to flow well.

That being said, I've had this feeling after reading other memiors and come away not caring much for the author. Even though I didn't love this book, I still have the overall feeling that Jim Nantz is a really nice guy, and I can still enjoy his sports commentary.

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### **Janet says**

Touching stories about Jim Nantz as a son and a father are balanced with scenes from Nantz's sportscasting career. I read this for the father-son relationship part. My casual interest in watching sports - especially golf - made it easy for me to skim through parts that didn't interest me.

But as I'd hoped, I was moved by Nantz's admiration and respect for his Dad. The book did not provide much detail about Alzheimer's, which afflicts Nantz Sr., but it's better off without it. The sentimentality of the anecdotes - and therefore the main goal of the book - would have been lost with added clinical information.

The stories are ordered roughly by theme instead of time. The numerous flashbacks within a single chapter

made it impossible for me to put things in a chronological order in my head. Maybe my "skimming" thing didn't help that either, so I can't fault the book entirely.

Nantz Sr. had sage advice for his son throughout the years, and the book is worth reading for those nuggets of inspiration alone.

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## **Chad Sayban says**

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If you are not a sports fan, the name Jim Nantz probably won't mean much to you. If, however, you have been watching sports at all during the last twenty years, you have almost certainly heard him. Jim Nantz has been the voice of The Masters, the NCAA Final Four, NFL Football and the Superbowl during his long tenure at CBS Sports. In *Always By My Side*, Jim compiles stories spanning his entire sports broadcasting career, from his youth when he would call games in his home through 2007, which saw him do what no sports broadcaster had ever done – call the Superbowl, the Final Four and The Masters in the same year. Throughout all of the stories, he ties everything back to his relationship with his father, the example and advice his father gave him and the unfortunate downward journey his father has taken as he has been consumed by Alzheimer's disease.

The stories include a staggering number of famous sports luminaries including Dick Enberg, Curt Gowdy, Jim McKay, Chris Schenkel, Pat Summerall, Jack Whitaker, and his friendships with people such as former president George H. W. Bush, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Peyton Manning, Tony Dungy, Tom Brady, Bill Belichick, Mike Krzyzewski, John Wooden, and many others.

*Always By My Side* paints a picture of a man who has worked really hard and had several breaks to become one of the most well known and respected sports announcers in the world. Nantz spends a great deal of time tying together the relationships between all of these people together with his relationship with his father. I would have preferred it if the stories had gone deeper than the cursory treatment most of them received. In many cases, the stories are barely touched upon and leave a lot of questions. Also, the chronology of *Always By My Side* really jumps around. At times it is difficult to figure out where Nantz is going or what period of time he is talking about. The narration jumps back and forth between events in different decades without any really compelling reason to do it. *Always By My Side* has the feel of being patched together out of a pile of disjointed stories through the miracle of cut-and-paste word processing.

In spite of this, *Always By My Side* is at its best when Nantz is speaking of his father and the deep love and respect that is so obviously shared by them. It is a quick and compelling read and for sports fans, it is a look inside what goes on behind the microphone at the biggest sporting events. For everyone else, it is a lament by a devoted son to a wonderful father that is both heartwarming and painful. There are plenty of things to nitpick about the writing, but it is still well worth the time to read.

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## **Mark says**

Although Nance has spent his entire career in sports broadcasting, and the book is biographical, the part that stands out (to me) most is his love, respect, and honor of his own father. In that sense, it is a touching,

timely, and needed reminder to all of us about the value of a good father in a child's life.

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### **Jason says**

Jim Nantz writes like a sportscaster, and that isn't a compliment. He's the prototype of the guy who was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple. There are some decent anecdotes and insider feels to be culled from this memoir, and there's certainly something sympathetic about his dad's bout with Alzheimer's, but it's a pretty self-serving book in which Nantz recounts all his good fortune. Yeah, he's a good sportscaster, but that doesn't make him a compelling writer.

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### **Ronald Wise says**

A memoir by sportscaster Jim Nantz, whose voice I'm sure I've heard, but about whom I knew nothing. The author tells the story of the development of his career in the sports-broadcasting business, while concurrently his father's awareness is withering away from Alzheimer's disease. He tells tales of his encounters with big names in professional football, college basketball, and professional golf — and I did recognize some of those people. The most interesting relationships, however, was with George H. W. Bush, whom he saw as a surrogate father — and from this book it seemed that Bush was closer to Nantz than to his own sons. This book had me wondering, however, if Nantz thought that the only important things in the world were sports and his career — even when he mourned for his father's condition, it was for his father's inability to appreciate the success of his son. This memoir came to my list from its five-week stay on the *New York Times* best seller list.

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### **Joel says**

Great book. Jim talks about his dad, even has him be his partner until his dad illness. He had others who would fill in for his dad later in life. Pres. Bush 41, Ken Venture, Billy Packer. In 2007 Nance broadcast the Super Bowl, The Final Four and the Masters in 3 months. This book makes me miss my dad so much. They both had the same disease. I know what he went through!

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### **Tom says**

This is more of a mid-career memoir than a celebration of dads and sons. As a memoir it has interest, but I confess disappointment that I thought I was going to learn more about how a dad and son grew together vs. what was delivered.

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## **Amy says**

Pull out the kleenex, this is an emotional read! It is also a charming and engaging story.

Great for anyone who has ever cared for someone with Alzheimer's, this is the story of Jim Nantz and how his father has been there for him always by his side if not always physically, then emotionally.

It is also a tale of the other figures who have been an inspiration to Jim over the years. A wonderful story!

I also recommend this for people who have an interest in sports, especially golf and/or the final four!

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## **Kyle Tait says**

I actually listened to this on CD on a long road trip, and I feel that listening to Nantz actually describe (in his own spectacular, immortal voice) his experiences make it far more entertaining than simply reading the book. Very touching stories laced with beautiful description and imagery. As an aspiring broadcaster (though not at the network level, as Nantz is), I was particularly moved by the giddiness and excitement Nantz felt, even decades into his career with CBS, when he met or was able to cross paths with his childhood heroes and sports legends.

I was rather surprised how much of the story focused on his career and not on his relationship with his father. Certainly, there was a good amount regarding his father, but I feel that it was a secondary theme and wasn't necessarily the main idea behind the book.

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## **Michael Todd says**

Sports, broadcasting and slowly losing a father to Alzheimers come together. Jim Nantz shows humility and class in this read. Even if not interested in sports, you will be entertained with his stories of three decades on the road broadcasting the NFL, NBA, PGA and NCAA.

His amusing tales are juxtaposed against Jim spending as much of time as possible in a race against time, as his father battles an insidious disease. Think of a sports broadcaster's greatest dream, calling the Super Bowl. The game is extra special as that year, it was held in his hometown of Houston. As he calls the game, in the back of his mind is his dad, who is a few miles away, bedridden, with the TV tuned to the game. He doesn't know if his dad recognizes his voice or even what's going on.

On a brighter note, imagine sharing dreams with a good friend in college (University of Houston). Then life plays out those dreams as one college friend becomes a broadcaster (Jim Nantz), while the other friend (Fred Couples) achieves his dream of becoming a pro golfer. The sportscaster gets to announce that his friend has won the Masters and watches, on-air, as the famous green jacket is placed on his friend.

This book is for anyone who has a passing interest in broadcasting, sports or those who may have lost a parent.

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### **Andy says**

Good in places....I especially enjoyed the parts where Nantz was able to relate his career accomplishments to his father's struggle with Alzheimer's. That seemed to really bring out a human side to Nantz, but there were perhaps a few too many times where the book strayed from that engrossing formula to focus on Nantz specifically and his somewhat choir-boy and look-at-me moments. Don't get me wrong...those were still some good reading points in the book, but I couldn't help feel that this book could have elevated itself to the great category if it had really focused more and driven home the relationship to his father at those other times in the book. As a sports fan, reading about Nantz's experience at the '86 Masters with Nicklaus pulling out perhaps the greatest golf round in history brought chills to me.

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### **Pat Murray says**

The sportscaster writes the book as a tribute to his dad, who suffered from dementia. It covers how his father was a big influence to him while planning for his career. Then how his dad guided him to his dream job. Covers Mr. Nantz's career as a runner at a local job in college(he thought it was a prank pulled by his college team mates) to the pinnacle of his field covering the Super Bowl, Final Four, and The Master's in just a couple of month's time. It is a great read for all sport's fan because of all of the stories he tells about his time covering our favorite events.

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### **Bryan says**

Bought this book for both of my Dads, and they both enjoyed thoroughly. Also read one of the copies myself. You don't have to be a Jim Nance "fan" to enjoy the countless people, places & events he has a story to share about. And the story of his journey relative to his father is touching, while never (in my mind) crossing to sappy, despite the feeling throughout that it might do that.

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### **Nat Kidder says**

Poignant, if uneven, story of Jim Nantz's ascent to the top of sports broadcasting, only to then watch his father's descent into dementia. Nantz tells heartfelt anecdotes and give plenty of credit to others (particularly his father) for his professional success.

But, as do some other broadcasting icons, he leaves his wife out. Doesn't her patience during his long road trips count? Just after the book was published his wife divorced him; was marital unhappiness the reason for her non-inclusion?

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### **Brian123 says**

I really liked this book, I think he's one of the best sportscasters in sports. Some great side stories in this book that are really interesting. The main point of this book was how his father helped prepare him for his career. Jim tells a great story, if u watch sports on tv this book should really pique ur interst. Highly recommended!!!

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### **Mary says**

If I were a great sports fan I may have given this book a much higher rating. I enjoyed many of the stories even though I read the book because of my interest in the lives of those who suffer from Alzheimer's and other dementias. It was a warm story in that regard. Jim Nantz's dad suffers from AD, and he is the one who inspired his son in so many ways. The references to that part of the story are few, but I think that sports-minded people will probably love this book.

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### **Greg says**

I've always been a huge fan of Jim Nantz on CBS Sports so when I got a copy of his book for a present I dove right into it. I'm normally not a big fan of autobiographies but something about this book really grabbed my attention. It was a true and humble story about a boy who just wanted to make it big in the industry, and set out to achieve his goal. There is much you can learn from this book on how to be a better person, better friend, and better child. The main theme behind this book is Jim Nantz's struggle with his fathers illness and ultimate death, and using sports and his past stories to overcome the challenge of dealing with it, and there is much to be learned from that. Great book. Highly recommended for anyone with a passion for sports.

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### **David Christensen says**

Manta has high character value - he's a good human being. He's humble about how he got his start and the good fortune he's had in his career. It's fun to learn about how the famous people live and interact. I know I can relate better to him on the air since I've read the book.

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