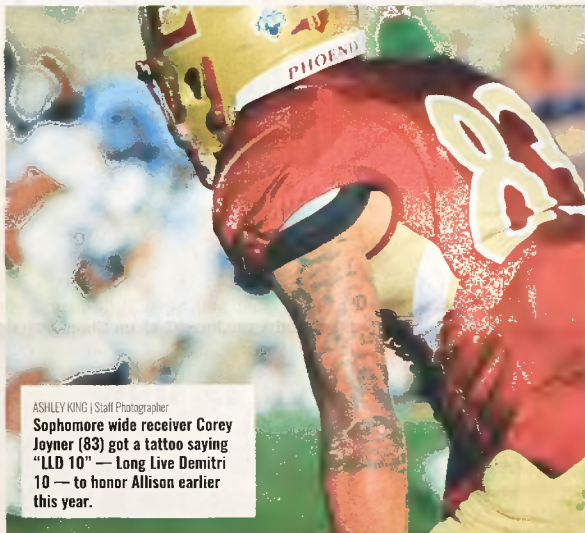




ASHLEY KING | Staff Photographer
Redshirt junior wide receiver Demetrius Oliver hugs Lisa Hartman, Demetri Allison's adopted mother, at the end of the Senior Day ceremonies Nov. 12.

I WANTED TO TELL MY STORY WITHOUT TELLING MY STORY, THAT PEOPLE COULD SEE THE TATTOO, AND SO HIS NAME CAN LIVE ON.

COREY JOYNER
SOPHOMORE WIDE RECEIVER



ASHLEY KING | Staff Photographer
Sophomore wide receiver Corey Joyner (83) got a tattoo saying "LLD 10" — Long Live Demetri 10 — to honor Allison earlier this year.



ASHLEY KING | Staff Photographer
Lisa Hartman touches the number honoring her adopted son, Demetri Allison, at the end of the Senior Day ceremonies Nov. 12. Lisa was joined by her son, Sam.

ALLISON from cover

the 10 on the sideline and other things to commemorate his memory. I was proud of how things were handled Saturday."

Allison has been at the forefront of the team's mind since Nov. 11, 2015, with players using the phrase "L.L.D." — Long Live Demetri — to honor him. When the team breaks the huddle, they use "L.L.D." On many of the players' social media accounts, you find "L.L.D."

And on the bodies of a few of the players — like on the left forearms of both Joyner and senior offensive lineman O'Shane Morris — you'll find "L.L.D." in their profiles.

"I got it about 2.5 weeks after the incident happened," Morris said. "I wanted to get something so I can keep him with me forever. He's with me on my forearm. I look at it before every game to remind me of who I'm doing this for."

Joyner's tattoo, which he got a few months after last season, is on the back of his left arm. His bond with Allison and the Hartman family goes back years.

"I knew him before I came to Elon, and he was the reason why I came to Elon," Joyner said. "I knew his family really well, and we're close friends. I wanted to do something for him, to honor him. I wanted to tell the story without tell-

ing the story — that people could see the tattoo — and so his name can live on."

Skrosky has done his best to be understanding of the various ways that his players cope with the tragedy, which has lasted beyond the final few games of the 2015 season.

"I think we all deal with tragedy in different ways, and I think I tried, deliberately, to do as good of a job as I can [with that]," Skrosky said. "It wasn't my job to tell 100+ people, 'Here's the way to deal with this tragedy.' That wasn't the time and place. Each individual guy — myself included, my staff included, support staff, everybody — deals with it in a different way, mourns in a different way and looks at it in a different way."

The team has focused on trying to break the stigma around mental health, especially in a masculine culture that is typically associated with a football team. The team shot a suicide awareness video in September with Active Minds, something done with Allison in mind. Skrosky said it's continued to be a focal point for the team.

"Mental health in this country is a serious issue, especially in this age group and in African-Americans," Skrosky said. "At the end of the day, when I see a guy going down a path that might be bad — not depression, per se, but not having the self-esteem they should have when they're doing great things — you're saying,

'Hey guys, it's not bad. You're not going through this alone. You're not the only one experiencing anxiety, or experiencing pressures that are athletically-related, academically-related, socially-related.'

"I think it's made that conversation much more open. To tell a guy, 'Talk to somebody. You aren't the only one going through that.' That's what I've recognized, and because of that, you do see these guys in a closer light. I think it's a lot easier for a kid to talk to a coach or fellow teammate and say, 'Hey, I'm struggling, man.' And that teammate to say, 'Yeah, me too.' It's like, 'Okay, I'm not any different.' We all struggle. I struggle. You need people to get through the struggles."

The team has grown closer in the time since the tragedy, with Joyner saying he feels "closer than [he has] ever felt" to his current teammates. But they won't go on without their teammate. Christiansen keeps Allison's memory alive by hanging the "L.L.D." towel that the players got for the Nov. 21 game in his room.

"Everyone has their own little thing that reminds them of somebody they lost, and that's my thing for him," Christiansen said. "I wake up and I see that everyday, and what I think is, 'Who am I living for? Who am I trying to remember and make proud?'"

Morris also believes the best way to honor Allison is to never forget

him.

"It's as simple as when we play NCAA Football, Demetri pops in my head because that was our favorite game to play with him," Morris said. "I just look at my arm sometimes and think, 'L.L.D.' and just Snapchat [my tattoo] saying, 'Miss you Demetri.' It's the little stuff like that."

Joyner says he felt Allison's presence on the first play of Saturday's game against the University of Rhode Island, when junior defensive lineman Dondre Howell intercepted a pass and returned for a touchdown.

"For me and for a lot of the team, [the Senior Day ceremony] was motivation," Joyner said. "That motivation was depicted more on the first play of the game, when [Howell] was able to pick that ball and run it back. That was the epitome of what we thought the game was going to end up and play throughout."

And Joyner said he truly believes Allison has become a guardian angel for the team since he passed away, continuing to make an impact at Elon.

"He has been since Nov. 11 last year," Joyner said. "I still continue to feel that feeling. Even for the young guys who didn't know him, Demetri has blessed them to bring them closer to us. He continues to help this team out, and it's a wonderful thing."

Players use the phrase "L.L.D." — Long Live Demetri — to honor him. Joyner and Morris both have "L.L.D." tattooed on their left forearms.