

Officer vows to fight like a Golden

by Kyle Garmes Aug 23, 2022 Updated Aug 23, 2022

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"Fight like a Golden" is the message expressed near 103rd Street and Hoyne Avenue. The display was among many that saluted Danny Golden as the Mt. Greenwood native returned home on Aug. 19 after being shot and paralyzed in July. Golden, a Chicago Police Department officer and U.S. Army veteran, was escorted home from the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab by a procession of police officers. (Review photo)

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Danny Golden is now home.

And while the journey ahead of him remains daunting, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) officer is determined to make the best of his future.

Golden, the 32-year-old from Mt. Greenwood who was shot and paralyzed after an altercation in Beverly in July, came home Aug. 19, with a police escort leading him and his family from Shirley Ryan AbilityLab downtown back to the 19th Ward.

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Hundreds of people lined the route, standing on overpasses along the Dan Ryan Expressway and locally on 103rd Street.

Golden waved to supporters as he returned to Mt. Greenwood, and his father, Patrick Golden, said his son was overwhelmed.

"He's blown away. He's smiles from ear to ear," Patrick Golden said. "He's in great spirits. He's still in a lot of pain. But this takes away some of the pain. I really believe that."

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Golden, a U.S. Army veteran with five brothers and a sister, has been recovering since he was shot early the morning of July 9. An altercation started in a bar on Western Avenue, and Golden, who was off duty, was then shot in the back while on the 2400 block of West 104th Street.

Supporters have said he was acting a peacemaker, breaking up the fight. Three men were arrested, and two of them face attempted-murder charges.

Support has poured in from all over the country, with over \$1 million donated to a GoFundMe account.

As Golden returned home, well-wishers waved American flags, flags supporting police and signs cheering Golden on.

Fire trucks hung large American flags over 103rd Street, and police cars blared their sirens.

On one front yard near 103rd and Hoyne Avenue, a huge “Fight like a Golden” sign was displayed, an ode to the slogan that has become his rally cry.

All Golden wanted to do that day, his father said, was hang out with his family and friends—and enjoy a barbecue, with Italian sausages and brats.

He will undergo five hours of therapy a day, his father said, and he needs to learn to drive a car with just his hands.

The Queen of Martyrs Elementary School and St. Rita High School graduate also plans to earn a master’s degree.

Next October, Golden plans to marry his fiancée, Casey Szaflarski—and he wants to be able to walk down the aisle, his father said.

“All we need is a miracle,” Patrick Golden said. “Like Al Michaels said in the hockey movie [“Miracle on Ice”]—‘Do you believe in miracles?’ And I do. I do believe in miracles.”



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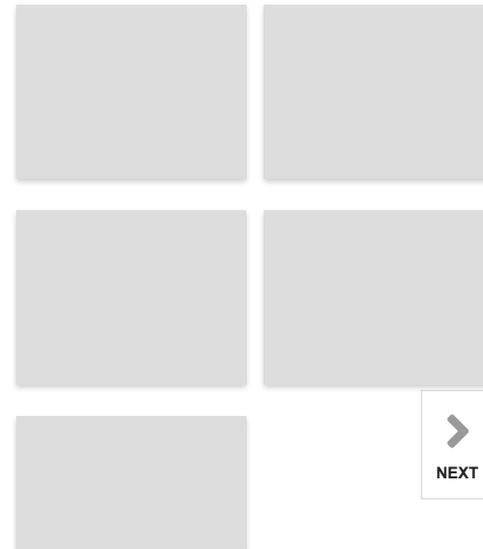
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About a week before returning home, Danny Golden posted a video of him walking with the help of leg braces and a walker.

His father was amazed.

"You could have knocked me over with a feather when I saw him the braces on and the walker," Patrick Golden said. "He's really determined. He did four years in the Army. He did seven years here with the CPD. He's a tough kid. He's really resilient, and I think with his mindset, with his spirit and his support from everybody, that he'll be fantastic. I really do."

Sports celebrities such as NFL quarterback Tom Brady and former White Sox Manager Ozzie Guillen have shared their support for Golden on TV and social media.

Lemonade stands have been set up throughout the 19th Ward, and Patrick Golden said similar fundraisers were also held in Canaryville and Bridgeport.

Former Mayor Richard M. Daley visited Golden at the Ryan AbilityLab.

"That lifted Danny's spirits," Patrick Golden said. "I thought Dan was going to walk away from me when he saw Rich Daley walking down the hallway to say hello to him."

Cardinal Blase Cupich also visited.

"You talk about a man of faith," Patrick Golden said. "That was incredible, for the cardinal to take time out of his day to see him."

Golden also thanked the Rev. Tom McCarthy, of St. Rita, and the Rev. Tom Hurley, of Marist High School, and he praised 19th Ward Ald. Matt O'Shea as a "godsend."

O'Shea has sold yard signs and T-shirts in support of Golden, with proceeds going toward his recovery.

The alderman said that, after spending just 5 minutes with Golden, his positive mindset becomes apparent.

"His strength, his positive attitude, the unbelievable care he's received at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab—this is such a wonderful story," O'Shea said. "You mark my words; Danny Golden is going to walk again; Danny Golden is going to continue to serve on the Chicago Police Department; Danny Golden is going to marry his sweetheart next October. He's going to make his way down that aisle."

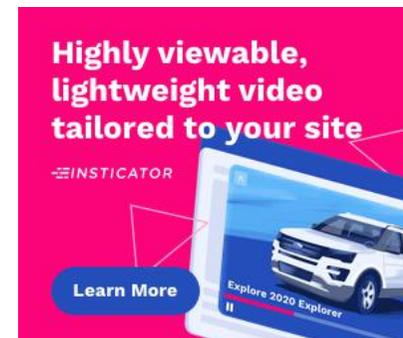
Patrick Golden said he understands that the future won't be easy. But, his son has taught him about perseverance.



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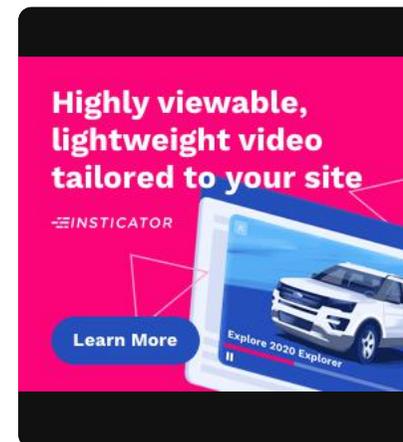


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"You can't let things get you down," Patrick Golden said. "Some things are out of your control. He is adapting, and he's learning how to do this. He's going to get through it. He's going to learn how to live a new chapter of his life. He'll get through it. He will.

"It's just going to take time. And there's going to be good times; I know there's going to be bad times—ups and downs.

"But I think there'll be more ups than downs. I do believe that."



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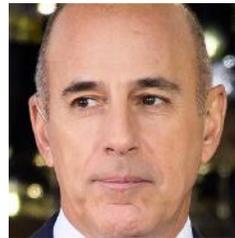
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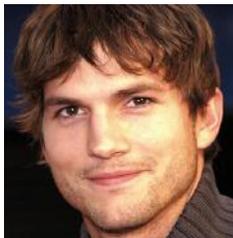
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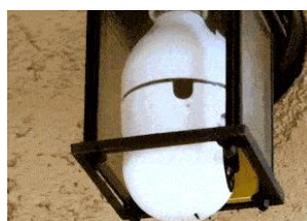
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