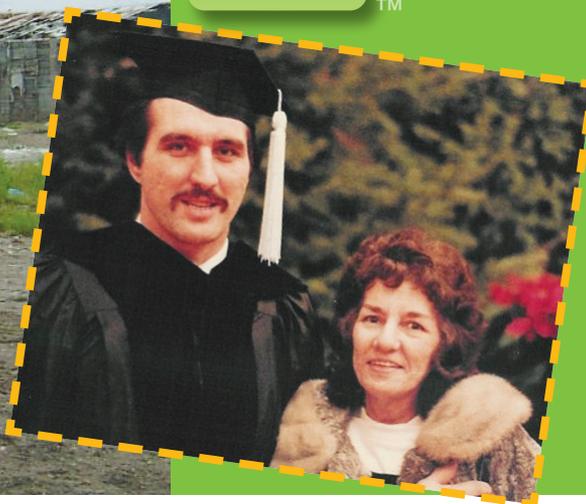




PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos courtesy of John Shinsky



GRIT ON AND OFF THE FIELD

IMAGINE

... losing everything and everyone you know in the world and living at an orphanage where the law was the “toughest kid ruled.” On visiting days, every time the doorbell rings, you hope it’s your mom. But it never is.

This became John Shinsky’s world. John’s father died when John was eight, and his mom sent him to an orphanage shortly after. John says, “I know what it feels like to be abandoned and not accepted.” He lived it daily and it haunted him, even after a foster family took him in four years later. His foster family got him involved with playing football, but he still struggled. John had the orphan mentality that problems were solved by fighting. He was almost expelled from school. John turned things around, focusing his grit on working hard at school and football. It paid off, earning him a scholarship to Michigan State University.

When he became 18, John visited his mom. He needed to know why she abandoned him. “Because I loved you more than I loved myself,” she answered. John finally understood she was doing what was best for him. Years later, when John received his Doctorate Degree in Education, his proud mom was there to see him. He was grateful she could be there, but tragically, she died the very next day. His grit would grow to overcome another adversity.

John had another dream. Freshman year in college, he told his roommate, future NFL Hall of Famer Joe DeLamielleure, “someday, somewhere, I am going to build an orphanage.” Almost 40 years later, John approached Joe about a 2,000 mile bike ride from Michigan to Mexico to raise money to build an orphanage. “He was a guy who would never get discouraged,” Joe says, “An orphan who is building an orphanage? You can’t make this up.”

John, Joe, and Eljay Bowron (another teammate and former director of the Secret Service) completed the 3 week bike ride through nine straight days of rain, 40-mile per hour winds, and angry dogs chasing them. They raised the money and opened the orphanage. John had become a ‘treasure hunter’ by finding the

benefit in his pain of being an orphan, to build an orphanage to help kids like he had been.

A football teammate described John as a player, “Every time he went through any element of the game, he was always totally committed to that particular activity being done.” That describes the grit John has for all areas of his life.

John understands that grit is powered by purpose™: “The things we’ve done in our lives – Joe as a Hall of Famer, Eljay running the Secret Service and protecting Presidents, me as an educator – none of it is anything compared with what we are doing for these children.” John’s purpose that powers his grit is to help orphaned kids like he was. You, too, can have grit to power through life’s challenges. What purpose might you have that gives you grit to become the author of your own awesome TrueSuccess lifestory?

Note: See more lifestories, videos and more: www.TrueSuccessTools.org.

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What evidence is there that John had grit? Do you think John’s story would have ended the same if he did not have grit?

2. How did John’s grit help him overcome his difficult start in life? What was John’s purpose he worked so hard for?

3. How can you learn from John’s lifestory? What are specific actions you can take to overcome challenges in your own life?
