

As a Hall of Fame keynote speaker, business leadership coach, a fourteen-time New York Times Best-selling author, host of the top-rated Corporate Competitor Podcast, Publisher of Forbes Books, Storyteller in Residence for National Geographic Cruise Lines, and longtime Associate Editor for Sports Illustrated, Don Yaeger has fashioned a career as one of America's most provocative thought leaders.

As a speaker, he has worked with audiences as diverse as Fortune 500 companies and cancer survivor groups, where he shares his personal story. He is primarily sought to discuss lessons on achieving greatness, learned from first-hand experiences with some of the greatest sports and business legends in the world. Additionally, Don has been retained by companies and organizations to coach their leaders on building a culture of greatness by looking at Great Teams in sports and discerning the business lessons we can learn from them.

Throughout his writing career, Don has developed a reputation as a world-class storyteller and has been invited as a guest to every major talk show, from Oprah to Nightline, from CNN to Good Morning America. Few journalists can lay claim to as exciting and colorful a career as Don Yaeger.

In three decades of reporting, the breadth of his assignments has been astounding. He has traveled the world in pursuit of stories as diverse as:

- Walking into Afghanistan with the Mujahadeen in 1988 as they fought the Soviets
- Going into Baghdad in 2003 with the victorious Iraqi soccer team as the battle between insurgents and the US Military waged around them
- Visiting China in pursuit of underworld characters counterfeiting American golf clubs
- Heading to Damascus to find the last living PLO terrorist from the 1972 Olympics
- Living with football legend Walter Payton and his family as Payton was dying
- Roaming the Middle East interviewing Iraqi athletes tortured by Saddam Hussein's son Uday, chairman of the Iraqi Olympic Committee
- Covering the first free national elections in El Salvador
- Traveling with candidates from both US parties during several Presidential campaigns

Yaeger began his career as a reporter for the San Antonio Light where he rose through the ranks to pen investigative features for the daily. He later moved on to the Dallas Morning News. Following his stint in Dallas, Yaeger became Capitol Bureau Chief for the Florida Times-Union in Tallahassee. After four years, he decided to dedicate himself to the pursuit of writing books.

Yaeger's first book, *Undue Process: The NCAA's Injustice For All*, was published in 1991. In the 30+ years since, he has penned more than 40 books, including an incredible FOURTEEN New York Times Best-sellers with more than 7 million books sold.

His New York Times Best-sellers:

- *Under the Tarnished Dome: How Notre Dame Betrayed Its Ideals for Football Glory* with Douglas S. Looney
- *Never Die Easy: The Autobiography of Walter Payton*
- *Ya Gotta Believe: My Roller-Coaster Life As a Screwball Pitcher, Part-Time Father and My Hope Filled Fight Against Brain Cancer* with Tug McGraw
- *It's Not About the Truth: The Untold Story of the Duke Lacrosse Case and the Lives It Shattered*
- *I Beat the Odds: From Homelessness, to the Blind Side, and Beyond* with Michael Oher
- *Play Like You Mean It: Passion, Laughs, and Leadership in the World's Most Beautiful Game* with Rex Ryan
- *Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain: How I Went from Gang Member to Multimillionaire Entrepreneur* with Ryan Blair
- *George Washington's Secret Six: The Spy Ring that Saved the American Revolution* with Brian Kilmeade
- *Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates: The Forgotten War that Changed American History* with Kilmeade
- *Teammate: My Journey in Baseball and a World Series for the Ages* with David Ross
- *Andrew Jackson and the Miracle of New Orleans* with Kilmeade
- *Elevate and Dominate: 21 Ways to Win On and Off the Field* with Deion Sanders
- *Born Lucky: A Dedicated Father, A Grateful Son and My Journey With Autism* with Leland Vittert
- *Behind the Castle Walls: My Thirty Years at the Happiest Place on Earth* with Bob Chapek

Don also wrote *A Game Plan For Life*, with legendary UCLA coach John Wooden. It was published on Coach's 99th birthday in October 2009.

A book he wrote in 2007 about a 59-year old college football linebacker was made into a major motion picture, *The Senior*, released to theatres in September 2025. Movie rights to both the *Duke* book and *Turning of The Tide*, a book about a 1970 football game between the last all-white team at the University of Alabama and the fully-integrated team from the University of Southern California, have recently been sold. Both movies have been scripted and are in production.

After several years of freelancing for *Sports Illustrated*, Don joined the magazine's staff full-time in July 1996. Two years later he was promoted to Associate Editor, where his work was to cover not just sporting events

but the off-the-field happenings which affect the world of sports. He took an early retirement from full-time work at SI in 2008 and continued to freelance for the magazine for several years. He was also Forbes.com's most-read leadership columnist.

Yaeger and his SI colleague William Nack were finalists for the prestigious National Magazine Award in the public interest category for their cover story "Who's Coaching Your Kid?: The frightening truth about child molestation in youth sports." This important piece triggered Don's appearances on programs such as Dateline, 20/20, and The Oprah Winfrey Show. It also resulted in changes to the law in several states and several youth sports organizations, including Little League of America, to require background checks of coaches and volunteers.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Yaeger has traveled extensively through his career. The Dominican Republic, Honduras, Japan, and Great Britain can be counted among the countries in which he has resided. A 1984 graduate of Ball State University (where he was selected as one of the university's "50 Graduates of Distinction" over its first century, and a 2022 inductee into its Journalism Hall of Fame), Yaeger currently lives in Tallahassee, FL. He and his wife Jeanette have a son and a daughter.