

From Tulane to author: Xavier Rush tells his story

February 13, 2026

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When Xavier Rush (SSE '15) came to Tulane, he'd been a three-sport athlete as a high school student at Jackson, Mississippi's Terry High School, playing football, basketball and baseball. That tendency to succeed across multiple fields would prove prescient as his future would hold achievements as an NFL player, an entrepreneur with XRElite and, most recently, as an author of three children's books.

"Whatever I decided to do, I was never half-in, half-out. I was always all in, 100%," says Rush, who will be appearing at this year's [New Orleans Book Festival](#), which will be held March 12-15, 2026 on Tulane's uptown campus. Now in its fifth year, the festival will feature more than 100 authors, including prominent literary figures. The free festival draws audiences from across the country for four days of author sessions, panels, book signings and family programming.

At Tulane, he was a member of both the Green Wave Football and Track and Field teams while pursuing his Bachelor of Science in neuroscience. The camaraderie of the Green Wave, the culture of New Orleans and the academic rigor of Tulane were an outstanding fit for Rush.

"Tulane allowed you to figure out who you were. Its name itself gives you an opportunity to spread your wings in the world." — Xavier Rush (SSE '15)

"Being an impactful, melanated human being at Tulane University is a big deal, too, because I was able to show young people in Mississippi, in New Orleans, that look like me, you're able to not only just be an athlete, but be very successful, educated in whatever realm you would like to be, and it doesn't have to look conventional."

As he entered his senior year, Rush seemed unstoppable, considering either a career in the NFL or medical school after graduation. But just as his highest hopes seemed within reach, a torn ACL took him off the field. It was a moment that might have destroyed a student-athlete, but Rush had a will of iron — and family, teammates and professors who recognized his potential and supported his recovery.

"My parents were a huge support, my brothers and teammates in [Room] 102 and [Professor] Beth Wee. She was that person that even when I hurt myself, she was very helpful and made sure that I still got everything I needed for my classes and understood what I was going through at that time," Rush recalls.

Rush's career could have ended with the torn ACL. Instead, it clarified his vision for the future. He was going to play in the NFL. He recovered in Arkansas, putting his Tulane education to good use, teaching middle school as he healed. That March, he got a call from the Philadelphia Eagles, and soon he headed back to the gridiron.

Later, he would go on to play for the New Orleans Saints and in the Canadian Football League. "I was just grateful during that time. I was able to meet a lot of great people, other teammates, coaches, athletic trainers, things like that, and then it allowed me to broaden my horizon and vision on what my passion really was.

"I realized my passion was helping people at the end of the day. And then I realized I would rather help people by preventing them from going to the doctor than help them when they got to the doctor. So, that's how I fell into training and then nutrition, and then all the things that come with overall health. That's how I got so passionate about it."

Ultimately, Rush's passion would find form in XRELITE, Rush's thriving fitness and wellness company.

As he trained others with XRELITE, he noticed that many of his clients were lacking the positive nutrition and wellness information that is critical for good health.

"They got like this because we were taught a certain method when we were younger. Why not start with the youth and teach them a different method?"

Never one to back down from a challenge, Rush took on a new role: as an author of *Fitness Alphabet*, *Nutrition Alphabet* and *Mental Health Alphabet*. The books focus on strength and healthy habits in an approachable format, introducing core concepts to children, and says Rush, reinforcing them for parents as they read aloud.

This spring, members of the Tulane and New Orleans community will have a chance to hear from Rush firsthand at the [New Orleans Book Festival](#), which will be held March 12-15, 2026. He'll be appearing at Family Day on Sunday, March 15.