



Special Heart: A Journey of Faith, Hope, Courage and Love

Bret Baier , Jim Mills (With)

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Fox News Channel anchor Bret Baier shares the *New York Times* bestselling story of his son Paul's ongoing battle with heart disease, and how it transformed his own life and family.

This deeply touching personal story is told through the eyes of a journalist as he faces his life's greatest crisis: caring for his critically ill son. With the acute insight of a seasoned reporter, and the deep love of a husband and father, Baier shares behind-the-scenes stories and emotional narrative of young Paul's life thus far. Bret and his wife Amy emerge—just like their brave young son—scarred but infinitely stronger, and clearly understanding what matters most in life. Told by a loving father and master storyteller, this hope-filled account offers an inspirational glimpse into the family of a man who just happens to be someone millions turn to for the day's news.

One hundred percent of what the author receives from the sale of this book is donated to various non-profit pediatric heart causes.

Special Heart: A Journey of Faith, Hope, Courage and Love Details

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Sally says

My husband and I just finished listening to this book and we LOVED it!!! The story of Bret Baier and his life leading up to the present, including how he met his wife, how he became a news anchor, and most importantly, his family's experiences with his young son's complex heart disease. Bret Baier narrates his story, and we found ourselves riveted to this audiobook. Thank you Bret and Amy Baier for sharing your story - you are two wonderful examples of faith, courage, and love!

Len Knighton says

SPECIAL HEART by Bret Baier chronicles the struggles of his son Paul, who was born with a heart that was, in layman terms, backwards. Paul had to undergo three open-heart operations by the time he was six years old, along with other surgical procedures. It is a story of how medical skill and technology, teamed with faith and prayer, brought healing, not just to Paul, but to the entire Baier family. A compelling story to be sure, there was a great deal of redundancy in Baier's writing; thus, the reading was slower than it should have been. The interview with Dr. Richard Jonas, which concludes the book, is enlightening especially in Jonas' comments concerning future developments.

As I was coming to the end of SPECIAL HEARTS, May 28, 2017, I was already starting to think of how I would review the book. I knew that part of the review would include at least a mention of ALEX, a book written by sportswriter Frank Deford about his daughter who was born with and died of cystic fibrosis at the age of eight. In a recent letter to our local newspaper, The Lebanon Daily News, I had listed my 20 favorite non-fiction books in honor of National Library Week. ALEX was on that list. How ironic that on this date, with ALEX so much on my mind, Frank Deford, should die. Deford's birthday was twelve years and one day before mine. We were born in and loved the same city, Baltimore, Maryland, and her teams, the Orioles and the Colts. Deford helped make Sports Illustrated the premier sports magazine in the world. His tribute in SI after John Unitas' death on September 11, 2002, was among the best of his writings.

Three stars waxing

Meredith Atkinson says

Like his politics or not, this is a compelling story. Although we don't know Mr. Baier personally, we share many of the same doctors and surgeon at Children's National. Reading their family's story was like reliving many of our experiences with the three surgeries and multiple heart catheterizations for our daughter. This is one of the first books I've read that gives those outside of the heart community an intimate look at what this experience of having a child with congenital heart disease is like.

Félise Esposito says

I initially thought this was oddly paced, as the very long introductory chunk is about the Brett's life and doesn't tie in to what the title led me to believe this book was about, which is his son's heart! Fortunately, I do like knowing where people are coming from. Some foreshadowing or his wife's perspective would have been nice to balance it out, though. Eventually he talks about the support of his coworkers, so the whole history of his life as a reporter does become relevant, it just took a while to become apparent.

Wendy says

A good read. Faith confirming. This family has definitely struggled and survived the unimaginable. I recommend it for every family facing the daunting task of living through the lows and highs of sick little ones. I hope Paul Baier continues to be a fighter with success.

Sandy Haramut says

I enjoyed this book very much. I am a Bret Baier fan so enjoyed reading about his family. His son is such a courageous boy, and I had tears throughout the book. Just the love and pain the family went through. I pray for Paul's continued health.

J Layne says

A very touching story of a dad and his love for his family, particularly his oldest son, Paul, born with congenital heart disease, who in his six-year-old life has undergone three heart bypass surgeries, several angioplasty surgeries and a stomach surgery. He yet has one and maybe two more heart surgeries to undergo as his body grows and the heart needs to be replaced in his teenage years. It is lump-in-the-throat tear-inducing reading to hear Bret speak these words himself of the trials that he and his wife Amy endure and how the Lord has used their trials to grow them and bless their family. They are Catholic. I do not like how he refers to God as "the big man upstairs". That is so disrespectful to my way of thinking.

The book ends with an interview with Dr. Richard Jonas, the famous children's heart surgeon in Washington, D.C., who has operated on Paul's heart for each of his surgeries, the first one being when Paul was only two weeks (10 days?) old. Dr. Jonas is one of the top pediatric heart surgeons in the world, and Bret expresses repeatedly how thankful he is that their family had him for their son's very serious surgeries. Dr. Jonas called

Paul Baier's the most complicated heart he had ever seen. The book begins with Bret's young life and how he got into journalism and met his wife Amy and how he was hired by Fox News.

A most interesting and appealing human story. Brett Baier has a way of expressing himself that is endearing, especially when he talks about his son calling him on his birthday and how that call means more to him than a call from President Bush and how, of all the professional titles he holds, the one called "Daddy" means the most.

Andrew says

Anyone facing a medical crisis with a child should read this book. Baier retells his journey through many heart operations with his infant son. At the end of the book, one of the doctors also provides perspective on the operation.

Baier is a great storyteller despite being a bit cliché at times. This book also details Baier's journey through journalism and his marriage.

Nancy says

Within this book is an interesting and inspiring story of a boy born with congenital heart defects, his family's courage and fears, and the skillful doctors who treat him. That story is buried, however, within a larger and rather egotistical recounting of Bret Baier's professional accomplishments.

Steve says

What if you were born with a heart that contained blood vessels in the wrong location and much smaller than normal? What if you were born with an artery that should be going to your lung but leads to your heart? What if you were born with an artery that goes to your heart but should be going to your lung? What if you were born with a heart-lung system featuring blood flowing entirely in the wrong direction?

If all those catastrophic medical events were true of you, your name most likely is Paul Francis Baier, first born of Bret and Amy Baier. "Special Heart" is a 288-page journal chronicling the first six years of young "Paulie" Baier's medically-challenged journey to survive critically serious birth defects. This is the powerful story of how world-renown pediatric cardiac surgeon Doctor Richard Jonas and his Children's National Medical Center team put "Paulie" Baier back together again.

The plot here is simple. Take a newborn baby boy's heart with arteries performing the wrong functions, arteries on the same side of the heart, (the right side), and perform "an arterial switch to get the arteries back to their proper positions and doing what they were originally intended to do." As if that wasn't enough, in the words of Paulie's famous Fox News anchor father Bret Baier and his co-author Jim Mills, young Paul "had a few other things going on." He was born with arteries in the wrong place, yes, but they were also smaller than they should be. (Pulmonary stenosis.) Pinched arteries prevented Paul's blood from flowing properly. Also on Paul's list of medical challenges: aortic stenosis. His aorta was smaller than it should be. That prevented blood from pumping to Paul's legs. And to top it all off: Paul was born with VSD and ASD. Basically, two holes in his heart.

To make a long story short, spoiler alert, Bret and Amy's first-born son somehow survives two open heart surgeries in the first ten months of his life and a third open-heart procedure as a six-year-old kindergartner. Add to that, at least seven angioplasty procedures, several catheterizations, not to mention stomach surgery to correct pyloric stenosis, and Paul Baier beats the medical odds. I would love to get an update on what life is like now for "Paulie" as a ten-year-old. He is one tough little kid. One very special Baier. From a very special family. A very uplifting read. Well told. Don't forget to stick around long enough for Bret Baier's exclusive, wrap-up interview with Doctor Jonas.

Lindsey Collins says

It's taken me a long time to finish this book because it hit SO close to home. The autographed copy Bret sent to Luke shortly after it was written, thanks to my mom, will always have a special place on our bookshelf.

Jan says

This was so pleasant to read. My heart goes out to any parent who has a child with any kind of disease. I truly enjoyed reading this book. It was a window into the life of the parents of a seriously ill child.

Gail says

This is the true story of Bret and Amy Baier's journey with their newborn son that was born with a major heart problem. Bret does a good job documenting their journey the first six years of Paul's life.

Jennifer says

I only gave this a four because sometimes the story does repeat itself a bit, and there are times where the author goes off on a bit of a tangent more into the life of his journalistic career than his son's story. If it weren't for those issues, I would have rated it a five. This is a wonderful story not just of his son's journey and heart condition but of their entire family. I really enjoyed how open he was about his faith and the role that it plays in his life and in his handling of his son's situation.

Nancy Lee says

Beautiful, inspired testimony

Parents are gifts to their children. Each of Paulie's parents loving with great intensity of sheer will and selflessness. Accepting love and light from God to heal and guide, strength as only He provides. A journey of a young man with a most special heart, God bless you all.
