

WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION  
Annual Conference

LaCrosse Center & Radisson Hotel  
200 Harborview Plaza  
LaCrosse WI 54601  
September 23, 2012

sunday<sup>'''''</sup>

**tentative agenda**

12:00-7:00 p.m.	Registration
2:00-4:00 p.m.	First General Assembly
Evening	Dinner on Your Own



## keynote

**Aaron Thomas, My Family's Story:  
Courage, Passion & Overcoming the Odds**

A man whose family – and community- were shattered by a profound personal loss, Aaron Thomas is an inspiring example of courage, resilience and the very best of the human spirit.

Aaron Thomas' father Ed was a beloved high school football coach who not only trained generations of players on the importance of discipline, hard work and commitment but personally put these values into practice as a community leader who inspired his town to rebuild in the wake of a deadly tornado. Not long after the community withstood the disaster of the storm, the small town of Parkersburg, Iowa, endured a far worse tragedy: the fatal shooting of Ed Thomas by a mentally ill former player. Rather than shun the family of their father's murderer and perpetuate the tragedy that Parkersburg faced, Aaron and his family called for understanding and compassion- because that is what Ed Thomas would have wanted them to do.

In this incredible story of ordinary people thrust into an extraordinary situation, Aaron Thomas shares his family's journey of showing uncommon strength during the darkest of times. Having made it through tremendous adversity, Thomas shares the importance of living a life of passion and meaning while challenging audiences to set the goals necessary to stand out in both life and business. Picking up the mantle of his father as the Athletic Director of Aplington-Parkersburg High School shortly after his death, he and his family are the recipients of the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage presented at the 2010 ESPY Awards. Along with his family and the help of author Mark Tabb, Thomas wrote about his father and the lessons he taught him in the book, *The Sacred Acre: The Ed Thomas Story*.