

Tragic Accident Takes Life of Loved Frankfort Native

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By Joe Coughlin -The Frankfort Station

On Oct. 27 at about half past midnight, Lyndsey Whittingham was about to take her seat in a cab when before she could flinch, a second cab struck the 23-year-old Frankfort resident. Whittingham, daughter of Ray and Betsy, sister to Kevin (wife Colleen) and Joe (wife Ana) and friend to countless others, was brought to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, where just over a day later on Oct. 29, her body gave into the injuries.

"She had so much going for her," said long-time friend Ashley Pyle.

"She was beautiful in so many ways, but she was so down to earth about it. She had no idea how awesome she was."

Whittingham was a product of Frankfort School District 157-C before heading to Marian Catholic High School. There, she was a cheerleader as well as a class officer all four years. Pyle said somehow Whittingham pulled off being secretary all four years even though that was not allowed.

Whittingham was accepted to Purdue University, where she spent a year before transferring to John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. Freshman year she was randomly assigned to room with Colleen Curtis, now a law student at St. Louis University, which turned out to be a perfect match.

"I had a rough time freshman year and was actually hoping I would have no roommate," Curtis said. "I got Lynz. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was so lucky. She taught me how to be a friend. Everyone loved her. I feel so lucky that she was my best friend."

Whittingham was struck in the 2500 block of Ashland on the north side of Chicago. That night she was surrounded by friends, not unlike almost every night of her life. Whittingham had a way of bringing people into her life and making them want to stay.

"Her smile lit up the room. She was special," Curtis said. Whittingham was very outgoing. Pyle said she was always the first to hop on the dance floor or grab the microphone.

"She wasn't afraid of anything," Pyle said.

Whittingham earned her bachelor's degree in biology at John Carroll University. She worked at Fischer Scientific in Schaumburg as a sales representative while living in her childhood home in Prestwick. She was applying to dental schools and hoped to follow in her father's (Dr. Ray Whittingham D.D.S.) footsteps.

"It's real upsetting," Frankfort Mayor Jim Holland said. "Frankfort is a small community and its active members are well-known. I think that I and others feel a real sense of loss."

Whittingham was a giver as well. She was a strong believer in the organ donor program and her family respected her wish to donate. Curtis remembered how she loved birthdays. She said Lyndsey loved other people's birthdays more than her own.

"I remember on my birthday one year," Curtis said, "I went to the bathroom and when I came back 'Lynz' had thrown a quick surprise party just with like people from the hall before I came back."

Whittingham participated in many fundraisers for a variety of charities during high school and college. The Lyndsey Whittingham Foundation was formed in her honor and will accept donations to her favorite charities. The foundation will help keep her memory alive.

"She made people around her better," Pyle said. "That was the gift she was able to give. She taught you how to let go and be yourself. She accepted everybody, it didn't matter who you were."

In lieu of flowers, memorials to the Lindsey Whittingham Foundation would be appreciated. The foundation was established to provide scholarships and to contribute to charities and causes that were important to Whittingham including St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and others. Checks should be made payable to Lindsey Whittingham Foundation and donations will be accepted at First United Bank, 7626 W. Lincoln Highway, Frankfort, IL. 60423. (815) 469-8555.