

University remembers dedicated senior

Kaitlin Ugolik

News Editor

Caitlin Hamill, a 22-year-old senior from Baltimore, Md., died of heart failure in her sleep Jan. 5 at a facility in Jacksonville, Fla.

She had been battling an eating disorder for several years that resulted in frequent hospital visits. The disorder began affecting her when she lived in Baltimore and she continued to struggle with it during her time at Elon, her father John Hamill said.

People who knew Caitlin describe her as a tremendously caring and giving person, full of love and positiveness.

"[Caitlin] was one of those people that went out of her way to make other people feel good," said Jana Lynn Patterson, associate dean of students.

"She was a charming, charismatic young woman with a beautiful smile and a great sense of humor," senior Darrick Penny said.

Though she had to withdraw from Elon for the last couple of semesters for medical reasons, Caitlin's friends and teachers say she

never let it keep her from helping others, something she loved doing.

Caitlin worked with CrossRoads, a local rape and sexual assault response and resource center in Alamance County, and as a guardian ad litem, a children's advocate for the Alamance County district attorney's office, for two years, putting in more than 200 hours of community service while at Elon.

Caitlin was also a dedicated student, making the dean's and president's lists several times.

"She was always very engaged in class," Patterson said. "She loved to learn. She was hesitant to leave school when she was sick because she didn't want to leave her teachers or disappoint group members."

Caitlin also received honorary status in two Greek honor societies: Pi Gamma Mu for social sciences and Psi Chi for psychology, her major.

Though school and service were important to her, Caitlin had many other interests.

"She loved to ski and skate," her father said. "She was a reckless downhill skier." She loved dancing and singing Broadway show tunes and even performed in shows at her high school, Roland Park Country School in Baltimore.

Penny described her as someone who would help in any way she could.

"She was a charming, charismatic young woman with a beautiful smile and a great sense of humor."

— Darrick Penny, senior



"She was always there for me when I needed her ... she made a tremendous impact on my life," he said. "She really knew how to help a stressful situation and make a person laugh when life was rough."

Penny remembers Caitlin making a full Thanksgiving dinner for him and some other friends a couple of years ago.

"Friends were everything to Caitlin," her father said.

Caitlin was a big fan of the Elon-based band Anonymous, who often practiced in her garage at her house in Gibsonville, N.C., where she lived for the past two years.

"She was definitely the heart of our fan base," said senior Chad Taylor, saxophonist for Anonymous. "For instance, last year when we opened for Perpetual Groove, we rented a bus for all of our fans and Caitlin made little 'goody-bags' for every person that was on the trip."

Caitlin's father said that when she died she

was waiting to be moved to another facility in Philadelphia where she thought she might do better.

"She really just wanted to get back to Elon," he said. "She wanted to go to grad school and get her master's in Play Therapy so she could help kids. She wanted to be healthy so she could help other people."

It is apparent that Caitlin's giving spirit had a great influence on a lot of the people she came in contact with.

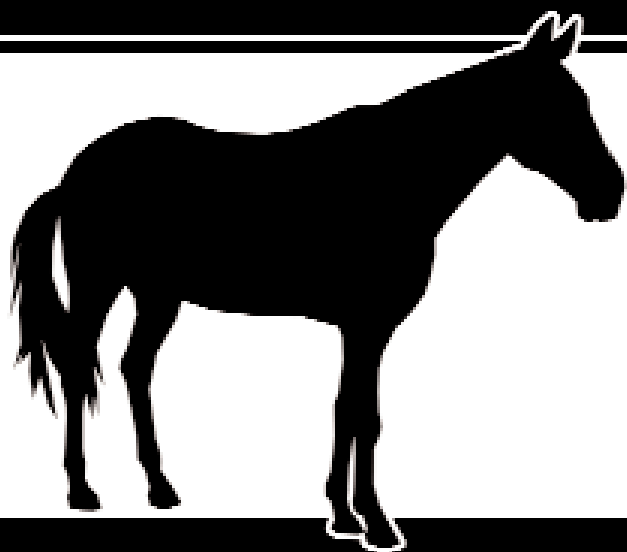
"Her friends [in Baltimore] say she is helping a wounded bird somewhere in heaven," her father said.

A group of Elon students, faculty and staff members, led by Patterson, traveled to Baltimore Wednesday to attend the visitation, memorial service and reception.

Contact Kaitlin Ugolik at pendulum@elon.edu or at 278-7247

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