

Community creates, dedicates window in honour of Mendes

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GRAFTON — Dedicated to the glory of God, and the memory of Major Michelle Knight Mendes, a pair of stained-glass windows were unveiled at Sunday's 165th-anniversary service at St. Andrew's United Church in Grafton.

Though Mendes's aunt, Linda Whaley, provided the guiding hand, the windows were in fact the product of a number of people who had known and loved the extraordinary young woman who died in April while serving in Afghanistan.

Whaley's idea was to have these people participate in the project by personally cutting or leading a piece of the design.

"I probably had over 45 friends and family who either cut a piece or soldered a piece on both sides of Michelle's family," she said.

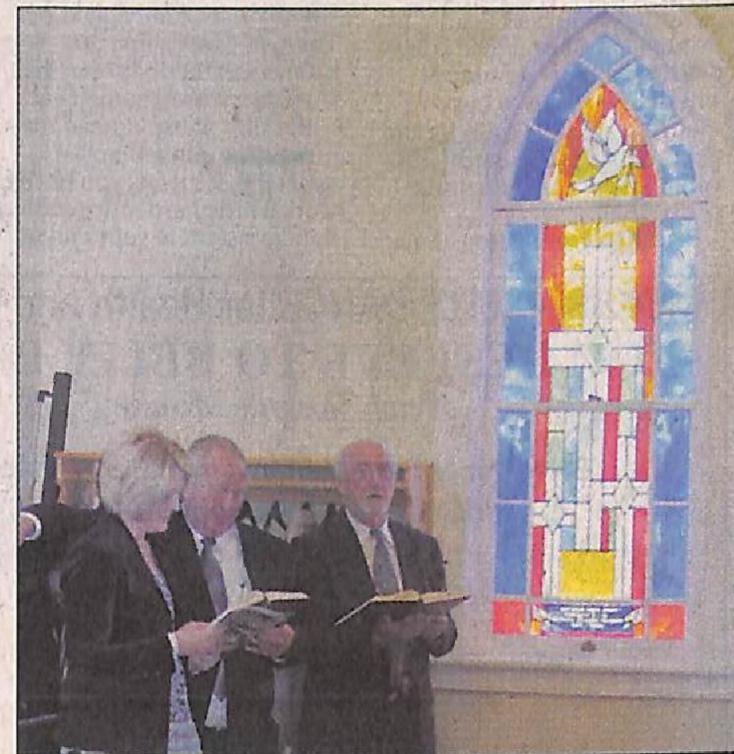
"That way, it comes from all of us."

The windows on either side of the front door both have similar facing designs of three crosses set off-centre among each other, topped by a dove with leaves in its beak. Rev. Phyllis Dietrich herself created the top two leaves in the north window, while Mendes's mother Dianne Knight created the bottom two.

Mendes's name and years of birth and death (1978-2009) are on the bottom pane, along with a quote from Matthew 25:20 on the south window ("I am with you always") and Matthew 5:10 on the north window ("Let your light shine").

Whaley's aunt Mary Buchanan chose the verses.

"She came down and sol-



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Seen next to one of the two stained-glass windows unveiled Sunday in honour of the late Major Michelle Mendes are (from left) Mendes's sister Melissa Knight, her father Ron Knight and Rev. David Janzen, guest speaker at the service.

dered a piece also," Whaley added.

The designs are done in vibrant colours with primary hues predominating. Whaley put them together inside the original windowpane frames of the two windows, three pieces on each side.

Even the installation was a family affair, with a Saturday-afternoon gathering at the church. Whaley was assisted by Mendes's sister Melissa Knight (visiting from her home in the U.S.) in carrying in the panes.

Mendes's father Ron Knight was assisted by parishioners Tony and Cathy White as he set them into place. Mendes's mother babysat Melissa

Knight's infant daughter during the operations.

In the church where Mendes grew up, the windows were unveiled the next day.

"The colours and shapes invite us to celebrate life in the face of life's hard realities," said guest speaker Dr. David Janzen, chaplain at the Golden Plough Lodge.

Melissa Knight read a poem at the dedication, and her mother offered a few words of thanks to Whaley.

"I want to thank my sister for the time, the hard work and the love she put into both these windows for everyone's enjoyment — and for letting our family be a very big part of it," she said.



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Piece by piece, Ron Knight worked Saturday to install the two stained-glass windows in honour of his daughter — the late Major Michelle Mendes — in time for their unveiling Sunday at St. Andrew's United Church in Grafton.