



STAFF PHOTOS/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

A tribute (above) of flowers, letters, and photographs covers tables and the wall outside the girls' athletics office at Markham District High School on Thursday after the traffic accident that claimed the life of teacher Rhianon Shepherd (right).



Young teacher 'had such bright future'

From page 1.

"Everybody at the school loved her. She was a great teacher and such a nice person."

— student Sarah Ladouceur on the late Rhianon Shepherd

7:30 a.m. when her Dodge Shadow, which was southbound on Hwy. 48, entered the northbound lane just south of Stouffville Road. It collided with a Toyota 4-Runner driven by James Reid of Stouffville, said OPP Const. Norm Penney. A storm had blanketed the area with snow that morning.

Students remembered Ms Shepherd on Thursday as a great teacher.

She co-ordinated the outdoor education program, which includes hiking, canoeing and ski trips, and coached the school's swimming and frisbee teams.

A member of the swim team during her days as an MDHS student, Ms Shepherd was president of the school's athletic association and won the athletic citizenship award, the second-highest athletic award presented by the school.

While at McMaster, Ms Shepherd competed with the university's swim team.

"Everybody at the school loved her. She was a great teacher and such a nice person. It was pretty hard for us (upon hearing the news of her death)," said Sarah Ladouceur, a Grade 12 student who had attended a winter camping course organized by Ms Shepherd.

Students were informed of the accident after all staff were called to the library where they were given the news.

Sandy Strachan, former Markham High girls' physical education department head who had known Ms Shepherd for 15 years as both a student and teacher, was shocked by the news.

"I taught Rhianon in Grade 9. When she graduated, we kept in touch," said Ms Strachan, who retired last year. "She was a wonderful girl. She was extremely talented and had such a bright future ahead of her."

A memorial service for Ms Shepherd will be held in Markham District High School girls' gymnasium on Thursday, March 21 at 2 p.m.

Visitation is at Dixon-Garland Funeral-Home, 166 Main St. N. in Markham, on Monday from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. The funeral is 11 a.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that donations be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Any witnesses to the accident are asked to call the OPP's Aurora Detachment at (905) 841-5777.

— With files from Mike Hayakawa and Carol Cooper



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