



Cheryl Woolhead's daughters Lindsay (left) and Lisa reminisce about their mother. On the cover, family members gather to talk about the popular PACE credit union head teller who died in a recent car crash.



STAFF PHOTOS/MIKE BARRETT

PACE credit union manager Lina Benincasa and the rest of the staff set up a memorial at the Main Street branch in honour of co-worker Cheryl Woolhead. Cards, flowers, photos and a single candle make up the memorial table.

Head teller touched many, family learns at funeral

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

"Happy dreams. Good dreams. Remember I love you," is what Cheryl Woolhead would tell her four girls, even as adults, and her four-year-old grandson every night before bed.

Mrs. Woolhead died July 28 after the van she was driving westbound on Concession 9 in northern Pickering left the road linking Clarendon and Stouffville, entered the ditch and struck a tree.

Mrs. Woolhead's affinity for Bon Jovi was no secret. PACE Savings and Credit Union, where she was a head teller, played their music last week in the Main Street branch.

She was coming home from Durham Region where, along with some friends, she saw a Bon Jovi cover band play.

The case remains under investigation, according to Durham Regional Police.

Mrs. Woolhead, 51, leaves behind her husband Lee, children Lindsay, Lori, Lacie and Lisa, grandchildren Jackson and Taylor, as well as sisters Debbie and Shelley.

"She had a really good night," her younger sister Shelley Bond told The Sun-Tribune this week. "Making people get up and dance and have a good time."

Mrs. Woolhead's affinity for Bon Jovi was no secret. PACE Savings and Credit Union,

where she was a head teller, played their music last week in the Main Street branch. The staff also set up a memorial table for Mrs. Woolhead inside the branch, where people have been leaving flowers and cards.

The grandmother even had a poster of band leader Jon Bon Jovi inside her armoire. Her children said she looked at it daily while getting ready for work.

"He's a good looking guy. I like him. I'd hang out with him," said Lee Woolhead, her husband. The couple has been separated for about six years but remained "best buddies".

The couple met at a dance in Clarendon when she was 17. They started seeing each other once a week, then twice a week.

"Then you want to see the person every day. So I wanted to marry her because I wanted to see her every day," Mr. Woolhead said of the woman who got his attention because she was attractive and happy.

"She was all about making people happy," he said.

"Her smile, it just lit up her whole face," said Lina Benincasa, branch manager for PACE on Main Street, where Mrs. Woolhead worked since 2005.

At her funeral, the family learned about one of Mrs. Woolhead's regular customers who would come into the credit union. They would talk and Mrs. Woolhead always asked about her customer's husband, who had health issues. Those problems would sometimes keep him in the car. Mrs. Woolhead would always drop what she was doing and head outside to say hello and have a chat.

The family knew Mrs. Woolhead had a large circle of friends, but it wasn't until her

funeral did they realize how much she meant to so many people.

"It was non-stop for both visitations," Shelley said.

A reception was held at Stouffville's Royal Canadian Legion, where her mother, Judy Bond, is the president. It was standing room only and some people didn't make it into the hall.

Mrs. Woolhead and her sisters were born and raised in Stouffville.

They attended Orchard Park Public and Stouffville District Secondary schools and spent many winters sliding down Rupert Park's toboggan hill.

"We were typical kids, we fought like typical kids, we were close," Shelley said, noting in their teens, they became friends and started to hang out together.

She was also a free spirit, who loved to sing and found a way to turn a negative into a positive.

"We're going to miss her words of wisdom," Ms Brock, her older sister, said.

The Bond/Woolhead family has been and remains close.

Mrs. Woolhead and her sisters met regularly at their father's home in Oro-Medonte for weekends of euchre and "lots of laughs and giggles," Ms Brock said. Their last get-together was for Father's Day.

On the day of the accident, she texted Shelley apologizing for not being able to attend a party for one of her grandchildren.

Judy Bond, who spoke with her daughter almost daily, saw her earlier that Saturday. She was packing for a trip to the cottage with some girlfriends.

"It's really hard to comprehend," Ms Brock said.

"I'm still struggling every day. You have your moments when you break down," then you think of the good times and smile, Shelley said.

"She would hate to see us all sad and upset," daughter Lori Woolhead said.

Those problems would sometimes keep him in the car. Mrs. Woolhead would always drop what she was doing and head outside to say hello and have a chat.

Shelley has a small memorial of her sister set up in her Barrie home that includes a pink beta fish given to her by a friend upon hearing of Mrs. Woolhead's death. Pink was one of her favourite colours.

Jackson, 4, was Mrs. Woolhead's first grandchild and whom she often referred to as "my baby", according to her daughters who noted those two had a very special bond.

"He would actually listen to her," Mr. Woolhead said with a smile.

Lori, Jackson and Taylor's mother, noted Mrs. Woolhead was in the delivery room for their births and taught her everything about being a mother.

Her daughters laughed when talking about how their photos were "relegated" to the back of their mother's wallet. Jackson and her newest granddaughter, Taylor, were in the front.