

# Life stories

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## Hilary Moylan connected with everyone she met

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Two words come to the minds of those closest to Hilary Moylan when they're asked to recall her personality.

Loving and stubborn.

Of course, there are many other adjectives that suited her: beautiful, fun-loving, generous, genuine, witty and wickedly smart.

Growing up, Hilary had the sort of childhood that many can only wish for, although her mother and father split while she was still young, she benefitted from plenty of close friends and family, who meant the world to her.

Her mother, Aurora's Nanett Moylan, said what amazed her most about her daughter, was her ability to bring those around her together, no matter what may divide them.

"She was a planner by nature, a fixer," she said, cradling a cup of tea in her hands. "She was so much stronger than I was, she was so confident, she was a force. The way she dealt with people was amazing. How she could persuade and read people, she knew how to get results and accomplish goals."

Nanett recalled how Hilary could develop lifelong bonds with so many people around her,



Hilary Moylan was known for being loving and stubborn.

including Nanett's father, Papa, someone she herself was never very close to.

She remembered how Hilary, a bright eyed 17-year-old, then graduating from Aurora High School, managed to collect money, gather music and hire buses to transport most of her

graduating class to her father's farm in Orangeville for a huge post-prom party, organized along with her best friend, Katherine McCulloch.

"If she wanted to do something, she just did it," she added.

As she grew, Hilary would use her independence and ambition

to land herself a summer job at Pine Farm Orchards in King City, gaining ever more responsibilities, until she was often left in charge.

Along with those qualities, Hilary also developed a strong-mindedness that many would come to admire.

"Stubbornness was really a trademark of our relationship growing up and I love her for it," according to her cousin, Derrick Emsley, who spoke at her funeral on Dec. 11. "It's what made her so special. The question wasn't if we would get in a fight, it was who would Hilary pick to be on her side that day, because we both wanted to be that person. Kalen (his brother) and I were both so quick to drop one another for the sake of being on Hilary's team. She was too stubborn to fit anyone else's definition of who she should be."

It's all these positive qualities that have left those closest to her with so many questions surrounding the mental health struggles that would eventually lead to her passing.

Hilary continued to thrive throughout her post-secondary years at the University of Ottawa.

And after graduating, she landed what most girls her age would deem the opportunity of a lifetime – organizing events for a

successful Ottawa lobby firm.

She had a successful boyfriend and, from the outside looking in, everything appeared great for the beautiful graduate.

However it was around this time that anxiety would come to control much of her life.

Despite her mother explaining that in high school it was usually Hilary dragging home friends who'd had too much to drink, at some point, she said Hilary started drinking to cope with her internal struggles.

Soon after the alcohol abuse became known to the rest of her family, Hilary was hospitalized three separate times.

Those stints did not last and although there were other attempts to address her issues, she continued to suffer.

Hilary died peacefully as the result of an accidental overdose of alcohol on Nov. 30.

In Hilary's place, only good memories and sadness remain.

"There's a great deal we'll never understand or put together," said Nanett. "We don't know when, but at some point in the last couple of years something happened. In retrospect, it's clear we didn't understand. She thought she could deal with it. She was ashamed of the person she thought she had become and so she hid that."

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