

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Station together. Two others, Stephen M. Libera of North Kingstown and John M. Longiaru, of Johnston, were unable to escape the fire. Mark's sister Melanie, who was engaged to John Longiaru, was hospitalized.

Growing up in Johnston, Mark was his mother's "ray of sunshine" because he was always smiling. His desire to grow his hair long occasionally got him into trouble at school. When he was a student at St. Rocco's, he tried to hide his long hair, his grandmother recalls. But he was sent home, and the hair was cut, she said.

Mark graduated from La Salle Academy in 1999 and took a year off before enrolling in law-enforcement courses at the Community College of Rhode Island. He hoped to be a police officer.

Because he was short and thin, he was working out to build up strength for the police physical exam. As a youngster, Mark had studied karate and earned a second-degree brown belt, but he did not pursue the sport after earning the belt.

Thanks to his grandfather Edmond Fortier, he discovered other sports: fishing and golf during visits to Florida.

His grandfather taught him to fish in the waters of Sarasota Bay. They went after snook, sea trout and redfish. "He was my fishing buddy," his grandfather says.

Mark was known for his generosity. "He'd give you his shoes and walk barefoot," his grandfather says.

Mark worked for three years at the Bickford Family Restaurant in North Providence, starting as a cook and working his way up to assistant manager on the night shift.

When Mark started school, he became a shift supervisor so he could work fewer hours. As shift supervisor, he was responsible for a crew of about 10 cooks, dishwashers, waitresses and others.

"He was always late" for the start of his shift, but he was always dependable, said Vicki Kettle, general manager.

"We're devastated," she said. "We still can't believe it. He was such a fantastic person. We haven't stopped crying."

— Bob Jagolinzer



Michael Fresolo, 32 Yankees fan and 'real softie'

Michael A. Fresolo was a carpenter and roofer by trade and tradition, and because of his abundant energy and strong work ethic, buildings he helped raise dot the Millbury, Mass., area where he grew up.

The tools on the 32-year-old's carpenter's belt also helped build a good life for his wife, Yvette, and his two little daughters, Emily, 4, and Maria, who turns 2 this month.

"When we were in the car, he was always pointing out different places, saying, 'Hey, babe, I did that roof, and that one over there, too,'" recalls his wife of five years. "He was always very, very proud of his work."

By all accounts, Michael was a generous, hard-working family man. Arthur Sisko, a colleague in the Local 107 carpenters' union out of Worcester, which Michael had belonged to for five years, said he was always ready to lend a hand to help out a buddy.

"On the day before the Rhode Island fire, he was up on a friend's roof helping to clean all the snow off," said Sisko. "That's the kind of a person he was, just a real good guy."

Michael had a bright personality that made him great fun to be around, except for one inclination that drove some family and friends nuts: he, a Massachusetts native, was a diehard New York Yankees fan, like his father, Albert, and he loved ribbing Red Sox fans whenever he got the chance.

"Living in New England, it was sometimes a little difficult, you know. But Michael, he really got a big kick out of rooting for the Yankees," says his wife, smiling at the memory. "He had hats, shirts, everything. He'd even have the kids going, 'Yankees, yay! Red Sox, boo!' He loved the New York Giants, too."

Always into sports, Michael took up golf about five years ago and threw himself into it with his characteristic gusto, playing Sundays with his brother, Joseph, and several friends at a nearby country club. A toy golf cart, which he pushed his baby daughters around in, sits in the snow-patched backyard of his home.

"He took his golf seriously, but he always had the ability to keep things light, fun and filled with lots of laughs," says golf partner Robert J. McFadden of Shrewsbury. "Golf can be a frustrating game, but everybody knew they'd have a good time when

COUPLE MARRIED LAST SUMMER



Dan Frederickson, 37 Shared his passions

Daniel John Frederickson was a simple man, with simple pleasures.

Dan liked nothing better than a barbecue, a back deck and sitting with family and friends around a fire, strumming a guitar, according to his older brother Gus, of Oakville, Wash.

Music was a passion since Dan hit his teens. He spent hours spinning 45s on a turntable in his upstairs bedroom, his brother said. He didn't have a favorite. "He just liked them all."

At 18, he taught himself to play guitar, taking time each day to practice. "It was his peace of mind," Gus Frederickson said. In later years, he often played Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man."

Dan grew up in Elma, Wash., where he learned to fish and bowhunt with his three brothers — pursuits he continued after he moved away from the area upon joining the Navy in 1983.

"We were like 'The Three Amigos,' but there were four of us," his brother said. He also cultivated his cooking skills, mastering marinated pork and

chicken on the grill and homemade pizza.

A chief petty officer in the Navy, Dan planned to retire and return to Washington in six months, his brother said. Since May 2000, he had been assigned to the Naval Submarine Base New London, in Groton, Conn.

Dan, 37, and his wife, Tracey Romanoff, 33, of Coventry, attended the show at The Station Feb. 20 because Great White was a favorite band, Gus said. For Dan, it was probably his seventh show.

Dan's career was marked by generosity, as he often worked holidays and weekends for his staff, his brother said.

"He was a person who was younger than me, but I looked up to him."

The 20 to 25 staff members Dan supervised within the quality assurance division in New London revered him as well, said Chief Petty Officer Yvonne Stoner, who worked with him for three years.

"He had a lot of respect for people and in turn he got a lot of respect," Stoner said. "He always remembered where he came from in applying his leadership."

While he was extremely skilled as a technician inspecting submarines, his interests crept into the workplace. He tantalized his coworkers with homemade meals; photographs of his four children and his motorcycle adorned his desk.

"He missed his kids a lot," Stoner said of Dan's four children from a previous marriage — Kenneth, 17; 14-year-old twins Amanda and Ryan;

and Amber, 12 — who remained in Washington. "He was a real family man."

— Katie Mulvaney



Tracey Romanoff, 33 Strong, independent spirit

Family members laugh about the little mischief Tracey Romanoff, 33, of Coventry, used to get into as a kid.

When she was still in diapers, she would crawl up on a chair and open the front door when her parents weren't looking. Once, she escaped and the police found her walking down her street. Her parents took to putting a crab shell on the door latch to scare her away from breaking out.

"She was a hell-raiser," says her father, Terry Romanoff, laughing. "You name it, she did it."

It was just that independent spirit that Tracey's family loved about her.

She was a good mom, they say, who loved getting tan at the beach, sitting in her Jacuzzi, partying, playing softball, and music — the louder the better.

Tracey had two children, Joshua, 10, and Lindsey, 8, both students at

Washington Oak Elementary School, where she was a teacher's assistant.

She also worked in the Coventry office of H & R Block.

Last summer, she married Daniel Frederickson, 37, a career non-commissioned officer in the Navy stationed at the submarine base in Groton, Conn.

Tracey was a member of the Coventry Girls' Softball All-Stars team that finished ninth in the 1985 national tournament for the 13- to 15-year-olds division. A shortstop and a second baseman while she was at Coventry High School, she was named to the All-State team.

She continued to play in a local women's softball league in which she developed a tight circle of friends, including her best friend, Chris Van Leuven, according to her sister Lori Romanoff.

Tracey was the oldest of Susan and Terry Romanoff's three girls. Lori Romanoff and Wendi McDonald live in Florida, but they say the distance didn't keep them from being close to their older sis.

"She was a free spirit," Wendi McDonald said.

"She was independent and very strong," Lori Romanoff said. "She loved that she owned her own home and did it by herself."

Tracey and her husband planned to move to his home state, Washington, this year. Dan wanted to build them a log home.

— Meaghan Wims

they played with him."

Surrounded by photographs of her grinning husband in the family's dining room, Yvette says simply, he was "one of those people who brightens up a room."

"On the outside, Michael could seem like he was one of those rough-tough sort of guys, but he wasn't that at all," Yvette says. "He was a real softie, and there wasn't anything he wouldn't do for his kids. I think he's our guardian angel now."

— David McFadden



Jimmy Gahan, 21 Carved a niche in radio

Jimmy C. Gahan, a high school athlete turned college disc jockey, was gearing up for a big interview with Great White on Feb. 20.

Jimmy, 21, of Falmouth, Mass., planned to air the interview on his college radio show at Nichols College in Dudley, Mass.

"When he gave up whatever dreams he had in sports — the music filled that vacuum," his father said.

James Gahan III, 58, said his son was trying to carve out a niche in the music industry.

Jimmy had launched his first show on college radio last fall, and was running three shows a week.

His mother, Carol, said two of her son's shows focused on '80s rock music, including his favorite big '80s band, Poison. The disc jockey liked the song, "Every Rose Has Its Thorn."

But Jimmy also had an interest in country music. He had negotiated some interviews with singers Blake Shelton and Mark Wills. He had tried, unsuccessfully, to land an interview with Tim McGraw, following a concert at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut.

Jimmy grew up in a cottage on Katharine Lee Bates Road in Falmouth. He was his parents' only child.

He was a standout athlete at Falmouth High School, his parents said. He played football, basketball, baseball and golf. He dreamed of a professional baseball career.

He relished the Patriots' Super Bowl victory in 2002. For reasons that no one can explain, Jimmy was an avid fan of the Ohio State Buckeyes.

After graduating from high school, he spent time at a prep school and moved on to Stonehill College, in North Easton, Mass.

A year later, he transferred to Nichols. He had made the dean's list last semester. His major was business, his mother said.

Jimmy went to The Station with a close friend, Michael Richardi, of Worcester, who escaped the fire by jumping out a window.

Pictures from Jimmy's childhood cover the walls in his parents' kitchen. The framed photographs take up nearly every inch of wall space.

The sight of them brought his mother to tears.

"He's a real good kid," she said.

"He's up in heaven now."

She wants a special message engraved on her son's tombstone: "My shining star."

— Mark Reynolds



Melvin Gerfin, 46 Passion for racing, music

Melvin A. Gerfin Jr., 46, of Groton, Conn., was a father of three who liked heavy-metal music, computers and NASCAR races.

He had been laid off from Wyman-Gordon in Groton, a metal components factory, and was working at home and cleaning the offices at New London radio station XL102. When the station gave out free tickets to the Great White show, Mr. Gerfin was among the recipients.

He loved race cars and the Washington Redskins. He also loved to laugh. He used his knowledge of computers to help friends and family members.

Mr. Gerfin was the husband of Deborah DeCosta and the father of three daughters, Meagan, Kelly and Laura.

"He was a great father and husband and was loved very much by his family and friends," said his sister, Terry Robertson.

— The Associated Press



Laura Gillett, 32 'Like a big kid'

Laura Gillett could draw a pretty good Twenty Bird.

Her life in Pembroke, Mass., focused on her kids, 6-year-old Jake and 3-year-old Jared. And she seemed to understand children well.

"She was like a big kid. She loved the Looney Tunes" cartoon characters, says her brother, Michael Paterino, of Milford, Mass. "One of the things she used to do was draw Twenty Bird — drawing cartoons and doing crafts with the kids.

"Neighbors always saw her around the yard, out making sledding runs. Family was always her top priority."

Laura also loved cats. She brought one home from a local shelter and named him Petie, Michael said.

"I miss her greatly. I always want to make sure I have the same attitude toward my two children."

Laura, 32, helped build the Hobomock Elementary School's first wooden playground, another example of her commitment to kids.

She was a claim representative at Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Rockland, Mass., often working night shifts to support her children, Michael said. She lived in the house where she

grew up.

Laura was dating Shawn Sweet, of Pembroke, who was with her at The Station and also died in the fire.

"They were dating for like two years. They both had the same passion for the same type of music. They spent a lot of time together," Michael said.

Carol Dodge, who lives across from Laura on West Elm Street, said the small community of Pembroke is devastated by the loss of two people. Laura's little daughter played with her daughter, Dodge said. "They have been friends forever," she said.

— Michael P. McKinney



Charline Gingras-Fick, 35 'A tomboy from day one'

Charline Elaine Gingras-Fick was not just a professional dog groomer. She was also a Gulf War veteran.

So, even when the dog was a real-life "Cujo" — the rabid St. Bernard in the Stephen King novel — Charline wouldn't hesitate to give it a bath or shampoo, or trim its toenails, said Tarah James, a coworker at the Petco store in South Attleboro.

"She got bit. She got bit several times," said Charline's mother, Lorraine (Paquette) Desrochers.

Was she discouraged? "Are you kidding?" Desrochers said. "She couldn't wait to go to work."

Charline was one of four children of Edward G. Gingras, who lives in Bellingham, Mass., and Desrochers, who remarried after she and Edward Gingras divorced.

She rode a motorcycle at age 14, brought home stray animals while she was growing up in Pawtucket, and went to William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School in Lincoln, where she learned cabinet-making.

In 1988, a year after she finished at the Pedigree Professional School of Dog Grooming in Lynn, Mass., she enlisted in the Army and became a diesel mechanic.

"In other words," said Desrochers, "she was a tomboy from day one."

Specialist Gingras took part in Operation Desert Storm, repairing Jeeps, trucks and Humvees.

While she was in the Army, she married another soldier, Larry Fick, of Merrill, Mich. After they divorced, she and Fick agreed to share in the upbringing of their two children, Samantha, 12, and William, 10. Each parent would have custody for seven years.

In 1995, Charline moved back to Rhode Island and went into the dog-grooming business. She bought a two-family house in Central Falls and had her mother and stepfather, Henry D. Desrochers, move in downstairs so the children would have someone to look after them while she was working.

Samantha and William have been back with their father since September.

Charline worked the 1 to 9 p.m. shift at Petco that Thursday night,

then went with a friend to The Station. She wasn't in the nightclub more than five minutes, Desrochers said, when the fire broke out.

— John Castellucci



Mike Gonsalves, 40 'The Doctor' of heavy metal

He was the man whose voice kept Rhode Island rock 'n' rollers company through night's darkest hours. The Doctor — also known as Mike Gonsalves, 40, of Warwick — has been described by colleagues in the radio business as "a real Rhode Island character," a "true original," and simply as "a franchise" radio celebrity.

There are few people who could draw 4,000 people to the Dunkin' Donuts Center for a service; Mike did that. On March 1, fans and friends came to the arena for a memorial vigil.

"I liked his attitude," said one fan, Steven Coletta, 34, of Cranston. "He's funny. Anyone can call him."

For 17 years Mike hosted The Metal Zone, a Saturday night radio show dedicated to heavy-metal music. It was the longest-running heavy metal show in the country. The Doctor also took to the airwaves every Monday through Friday from midnight to 5:30 a.m., playing rock and heavy metal for nightshift workers and insomniacs.

On Friday mornings, he hosted the Legs & Eggs breakfast at the Foxy Lady strip club.

Mike broke into the radio scene with WHJY in 1986, the year he graduated from Rhode Island College. He hosted a program called "The Dr. Metal Show" for WRIC, the college's low-wattage radio station.

At WHJY, Mike first used the sobriquet "The Metal Doctor," which over time was truncated to The Doctor; around the station, friends just knew him as Doc.

Mike grew up in Providence in a white bungalow on the corner of River Avenue and Pleasant Valley Parkway, not far from Rhode Island College. His father, Neil, still works at the college as a biology professor.

Mike graduated from the former Our Lady of Providence High School, where he lettered in baseball and won All-State honors in tennis. He captained the Rhode Island College tennis team, and continued to play tennis throughout his life.

"Mike was very gracious in victory and defeat, and was very generous with line calls," said Paul Fuller, his tennis partner.

The Doctor's knowledge of rock 'n' roll and metal music was matched by his knowledge of baseball: last year, he assembled the best team in a baseball rotisserie league, winning the Federal League title with his entry called Legs and Eggs.

He also played softball and tennis at a high level. Although less than 5-foot-7 inches, he played basketball in a men's league; one player described him as "a waterbug" for the way he skimmed across a basketball court.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE