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among her friends.

Or the way she lived her life with passion, urging others to "follow your heart." It was by that credo that Leigh lived her life, said her mother, Jean. Even when her family disagreed with some of her choices, Leigh would gently remind them that she had to follow her heart. As a testament to her belief in that motto, she had a tattoo on her lower back of Chinese symbols that expressed the phrase.

Leigh Ann — who was known affectionately as Leigh Lu, Leigh-Leigh, Leigh Ro or just Leigh — lived many years in Pawtucket and moved to Stadden Street in Providence in 1989. She attended Our Lady of Consolation School in Pawtucket, St. Patrick School in Providence and Classical High School, where she made the honor roll.

Last December, she received her bachelor's degree in art therapy from Springfield College, in Springfield, Mass.; she would have received her diploma in ceremonies this spring.

She had already applied to and been accepted by several graduate schools, her family said.

Leigh planned to pursue a career in art therapy. She dreamed of helping to heal people with physical or mental ailments by encouraging them to express themselves through art.

A dark-haired young woman and middle child, Leigh lived the way she painted — truly and vibrantly, with deep appreciation for the simplicity and beauty of life, her family said.

While art therapy was her chosen career, her love for the arts took many forms, including that of music.

Last summer, she celebrated Bob Dylan's return to the Newport Folk Festival by attending the event with another Dylan fan — her father, Richard.

"It was through her love of music that she truly connected with those whom she loved," Jean Moreau said.

Leigh had gone to The Station with a group of friends, only some of whom survived the fire.

Her family believes that Leigh remains with them, in another form.

"Every time you hear a dog bark, a bird chirp or some random critter scurry, you will know she is there, helping that critter through whatever woes it is experiencing, just as she will continue to do with all of us," her mother said.

— Karen A. Davis



Ryan Morin, 31 Explorer had found 'the one'

Jodi Zides met Ryan Morin at a bar on Nantucket nine months ago. Right away she liked him. He was funny — he told her he was from L.A., then amended: "Lower Allston," in Massachusetts.

The two sparred back and forth, using the old tools of flirtation: sarcasm and wit.

But she also felt at ease around him. A month later, they took a trip to Canada — a 12-hour car ride that gave them a lot of time to get to know each other. They hiked the coast and kayaked along the shore through heavy mist. It was something Ryan, an adventurer, had done before, but a whole new world for Jodi. "That was not my background," she said. "He was able to bring me up there and show me something new."

Ryan Morin, 31, was known as an explorer. He was a world traveler, looking forward to a trip to New Zealand at the end of the month. He drove a red Jeep Wrangler and loved hiking, kayaking and bungee-jumping. He surfed before work and snowboarded on the weekends.

Listening to a litany of Ryan's accomplishments at a memorial service, his boss, Maria Cirino, was amazed. "It sounded like you were listening to fifty years of activity," said Cirino, CEO of Guardent, the computer-security company where Ryan was an engineer. "When did this guy have time to do all this?"

But Ryan found time to stay close to his parents, Paul A. Morin and Susan Morin, both of Thompson, Conn., said Kevin Brown, a close friend. He'd visit his mother at least once a week, Brown said.

An amateur guitarist, Ryan also loved music — especially Van Halen and other classic rock bands. When a group of friends from work scored free tickets to the Great White show, he was excited.

Jodi talked to him as he was leaving work that Thursday. "I told him to have a good time," she said. "I told him to be careful and drive safely."

It was only after Ryan's death that Jodi heard from his friends and family that he'd been thinking about marriage. He was the one, he'd told them.

He was even trying to decide whether their children would be raised Catholic, like him, or Jewish,

like Jodi, Kevin Brown said.

Whether he would have spoken — and what she would have said — they'll never know. That was all in the future. They were just starting out.

— S.I. Rosenbaum



Beth Moczynski, 33 Ready to help a stranger

When a customer was upset with what he'd gotten from Temp-Flex Cable, it was Beth Moczynski's responsibility as quality control coordinator to figure out why.

And that wasn't easy, said Rose Baril, the South Grafton, Mass., electronic cable maker's director of human resources. The job demanded detailed knowledge of the company's manufacturing processes as well as a deft diplomatic touch, because Beth often had to call together everyone who worked on a job to find out who made the mistake.

And that, her friends said, was what the 33-year-old Millbury, Mass., resident was best at.

"She had to get to bottom of problems," Baril said. "You had to be able to bring people together."

"She was a great person," said Mark Parella, a friend of several years who wasn't able to get to the Great White show at The Station that night. "She was always smiling, always there for you."

She had been looking forward to the performance at The Station, heading down from the Worcester area with friends Michael Fresolo, who also died in the fire, and James Dufresne, who was hospitalized.

"She loved the '80s," Parella said. "I was supposed to be with those guys that night. That was her kind of music."

She played soccer in high school and kept at it well beyond her school years, Parella said. She'd play in assorted recreational leagues and other games, usually playing three or four times a week, in season. She kept in shape.

"Beth didn't drink, she was in bed by 9 p.m.," Baril said. "Everything that went into her mouth was healthy."

"Beth was the type of person who would go totally, go out of her way for anyone and everyone," Baril said. "She always liked to help the underdog."

Once, she remembered, Beth was at a company party and wound up talking to a man and his wife. The man worked a different shift than she did and she'd never met them before. During the conversation, the couple mentioned that their dog was sick.

The next day, Beth brought in some things she thought might help the couple's pet, a favor for someone she had never met before in her life.

"She was a giant," said Baril. "She was the glue that held us together." No one will get Beth's office at Temp-Flex, Baril said. The company plans to leave it unoccupied.

"We're going to use it as a resting room," she said. "When someone needs a little time alone, they can go there."

— John Hill



Katie O'Donnell, 26 Loved to be around kids

About a year ago, Katie O'Donnell was over at Renée Bourque's house when they got to talking about the time in the late 1980s that they had these huge crushes on New Kids On The Block. It made them laugh to think they were that obsessed with a group that was so junior high. Then one of them said that, nevertheless, the New Kids sure were cute, and at that, they put on the group's old music and began to dance, using all the '80s moves, just to be silly, because even in their mid-20s, that's how Renée and Katie liked to spend time together.

The two became best friends at St. Mary Academy-Bay View in the seventh grade. They were best friends still.

Renée remembers Katie as a bit of a tomboy at age 12, no surprise since she had five brothers. And a sister, too. It was this big Irish family, and starting early on, Katie told Renée she wanted to have a ton of kids herself. Her plan was to get married in her 20s, and start a family right away.

Katie eventually began working at Riverside Pediatrics, in part because she loved being around kids. She continued there after college and

became a full-time administrative assistant, right up until recently. She was 26.

By the time the two were in high school, Katie wasn't a tomboy anymore. She and Renée got into make-up and clothes, though neither minded the dress code at Bay View. It meant you could sleep a little later, roll out of bed and right into your plaid skirt.

The two went through everything together; boys, music, dreams. They went through a hair-coloring phase, which Katie's dad didn't love. Along with other friends, they liked dressing up in funny ways and taking Polaroid pictures of each other.

Both got into theater. Bay View had a big Broadway-style revue every year with more than 100 students, and Katie was a regular cast member. She loved the dancing part of the shows. She had pursued Irish step dancing since she was little, winning prizes at it and continuing into her 20s.

Whenever there was a forecast of a snowstorm big enough to cancel school, Katie would go to Renée's beforehand and make a night of it. She'd put on her favorite flannel PJs, and the two would watch late movies. Katie always brought along a tattered "blanket" she'd had since childhood.

Katie went to Green Mountain in Vermont, where she played rugby, and later to Becker College in Worcester. She liked being near home. She talked a lot about how tight her family was. "Actually," says Renée, "her mom's the best friend. I'm number two."

Sometimes, when alone, Renée will talk aloud to Katie, asking her to help her through this, or even through smaller day-to-day challenges.

"There's nobody that will ever be my best friend like that," Renée said.

— Mark Patinkin



Nick O'Neill, 18 Actor, 'amazing songwriter'

Tall, slim, blond, and 18 years old, Nicholas Phillip O'Neill dreamed of being a rock star in a "hair metal" band, his friends say. Party anthems from the '80s were in his blood. He wrote more than 50 of his own songs, catchy tunes about girlfriends and hanging out, and performed them as the lead singer of his band, Shryne.

His father, radio personality and "Father Misgivings" creator Dave Kane, said his son was a natural musician from when he was a small child. By the age of 18, he had recorded a CD.

"We got him five guitar lessons and he just took off," Kane said.

"What really hurts about it," said friend Dave Tessier, 32, "is this kid was just an amazing songwriter. When I met him, the kid was 16 and he'd written all these great tunes. I was in awe of him."

Nick was expecting to hear some more good music when he went to The Station on Feb. 20 with bandmate Jon Brennan. Jon made it out alive.

"He was actually with Nick until the final moments when it went black, and they got separated," said Jon's mother, Kari Tieger.

Nick was born in Warwick, a son of Joanne O'Neill of Pawtucket, formerly of Cranston, and Kane, of North Providence. He lived most of his life in Cranston, attending Cranston High School East before moving to Pawtucket several months ago.

In addition to being a talented rocker, Nick is remembered as a gifted performer for All Children's Theatre, according to Wrenn Goodrum, the East Providence group's artistic director.

"He was always so full of life," Goodrum said. His jokes would break the tension during a tough rehearsal. His smiles would encourage even the younger members of the troupe, who admired him. "He had a special way of working with them so they could find their parts, their character," she said. "Even some of the kids we adults couldn't reach."

"Nick and I, we used to goof around," said a friend from the theater troupe, Dan Kenner, 16. Kenner remembers that once, while they rehearsed for a play about the Holocaust, O'Neill's role called for him to come onstage and greet the other people in the room with a kiss on the cheek. It was supposed to be a somber moment. But as he entered, he whispered jokes in the actors' ears, sending them into stitches. "All the other kids would get in trouble," Dan said, laughing. "You could always count on Nick for a joke."

— John Hill

— Drawing courtesy of Charlie Hall



Matthew Pickett, 33 Music 'made his heart soar'

It took three years for Matt Pickett to ask Wendy Weinberg on a date and another three to propose marriage, but he was worth the wait, she says.

"He was my soul mate. He was the most fantastic person I have ever known in my entire life."

The two met seven years ago at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, and had been dating for three years when they found a split-level house in Bellingham, Mass. Wendy said she didn't want to close the deal on the house until they were at least engaged.

He proposed last June 30, her 30th birthday, on the Echo Bridge over the Charles River in Newton, where they grew up. They closed on the Bellingham house the next day.

Wendy said her fiancé collected everything — newspapers, tapes, CDs, records — which he shared with his hundreds, if not thousands, of friends all over the world. "He had not one enemy, ever," she says.

He went to The Station with his friend Joe Cristina, who survived the fire but suffered second-degree burns, Wendy said.

Matt loved music; it "made his heart soar," she says.

Matt was a giver, she said, who would drop everything to help a friend.

"He gave so much of himself, even if he had nothing."

Wendy said her fiancé had just celebrated his seventh year of sobriety.

"He and I were each other's support systems. He gave me hope, he gave me strength, he told me about life."

Most of all, she said, "He was my best friend. My very best friend."

She already had her dress for their wedding. It was to be held Oct. 19.

— Katherine Boas



Carlos Pimentel Sr., 38 'His kids were his life'

Carlos L. Pimentel Sr., of West Warwick, a heavy machinery driver, spent most of his spare time on the sidelines of his children's sporting events or in his yard landscaping.

"His kids were his life," said his sister-in-law, Heidi Catalfamo, of Coventry.

Mr. Pimentel, 38, leaves two sons, 12-year-old Carlos Jr. and 9-year-old Cullen, and two daughters, Savannah, 15, and Cheyenne, 10. He watched their soccer, basketball and softball games.

Born in Sao Miguel, the Azores, he came to this country as a young child. His family settled in West Warwick.

He and his wife, Dorothy L. (Ferrara) Pimentel, married 16 years ago.

Mr. Pimentel had been working for C. Spirito Inc., of Massachusetts, for four years. He previously owned the former Cheyenne Construction company.

His hobby was landscaping, and his sister-in-law described his yard as "like a park" — with two fish ponds, a little river and a bridge. The ponds once had frogs, but the frogs were eating the fish, she said. He watched over "tons" of plants and built a stamped concrete patio.

A motorcycle enthusiast, Mr. Pimentel was looking forward to buying a bike soon.

— Cathleen F. Crowley



Chris Prouty, 34 Kind, funny, loved cars

When Chris Prouty was about 11, he got an award as the most unselfish player on his basketball team. In the dedication, his coaches credited his "willingness to learn" and his improving defensive skills as a major reason behind a winning season.

His generosity was a trait that defined Christopher Karnig "Squigg" Prouty as an adult.

"If he had a hundred dollars and you needed a hundred and ten, he'd go out and borrow the other ten," says John J. Speranza, owner of Real Deal Auto Sales and Service in Uxbridge, where Chris worked.

Just last week, Chris sold a Mustang and gave the customer back \$20 of the sale price. "He said, 'Here, the first tank of gas is on me.'"

Tall, handsome, and funny, Chris was a ladies man, Speranza says.

He "wore his emotions on his sleeve," Speranza says. "If he liked you . . . there was nothing he wouldn't do for you."

Speranza says he had only known Chris for about a year, but it seemed like a lifetime. He bought and sold automobiles for Speranza, bringing to the job the expertise of a certified mechanic.

"He was a smart guy. He was gifted . . . the computerized end of things . . . and he loved it," Speranza says.

And a deal he sealed with a handshake was just as good as a written contract.

"When something went his way, he would put his fingers together and go, 'Excellent,' just like Mr. Burns on The Simpsons," Speranza says.

Chris, 34, had two sets of friends, a whole "family" of them in central Massachusetts and another — the ones he grew up with — in Rhode Island.

Chris loved video games so much that his Massachusetts friends called him "the gamer." He had to have the latest release the moment it came out, Speranza says.

That he loved cars almost went without saying. In his garage on Walcott Street in Pawtucket, he left an old Camaro primed and ready for a part job.

His mother, Nancy A. Lee, says she will make sure it is painted the canary yellow Chris wanted.

— Gina Macris



Jeff Rader, 32 Roadie found true love in R.I.

When Jeff Rader was a teenager, his mother would come home to find the house full of kids playing music. Jeff got his first drum kit at 13, and at one point had as many as three sets, says his mother, Jeannie Rader. She had to soundproof his room.

Jeff, 32, didn't grow up in a musical family, but he fell in love with rock 'n' roll at an early age. "Jeff always wanted to march to a different drummer and be his own person," his mother says.

Jeff became a professional roadie in the mid-'90s, traveling with bands like Great White and Tesla. It was a lifestyle his mother didn't understand.

But immediately after the tragedy at The Station, the Rader family began to receive phone calls and e-mails from musicians and fellow roadies who had known Jeff. Jeannie Rader was amazed at how many people loved and respected her son. "It made us in the family feel very good," she says.

Jeff was at the Great White concert as a fan, with his girlfriend of six months, Becky Shaw, 24, of Warwick. Jeff and Becky met at a previous Great White concert, his mother says. Becky is why Jeff, who lived in Danville, Calif., with his mother, visited Rhode Island as often as he could.

Becky's roommate, Megan C. Connelly, 24, of Warwick, said the couple were crazy about each other. When they were apart, Jeff would take his video camera on mountain hikes and send the tapes to Becky. He'd also send her photographs, including a beach picture with "Wish you were here" written in the sand.

The night of the fire, Jeannie Rader got a call from Becky's roommate at 5:30 a.m. California time. She turned on the television news and saw her son. In the news footage, she watched him turn and point others toward the exit. He was one of the first to react. "He knew the club, he knew the band," she says.

She's heard accounts from survivors that Jeff made it out of the club, but went back in for Becky. Both were lost.

In the days after the fire, Jeannie Rader said, Jeff's family has been comforted that their "free spirit" had found his place in life.

"The last couple months have been the happiest he's ever been in his life," she said. His emotions-and-merchandising business, Iwear, was taking off, she said. And he was in love.

"That's our one consolation in all this," Jeannie Rader said. "He was doing exactly what he wanted to do, and he was happy."

— S.I. Rosenbaum