

## **Mike Moore: A knight's enduring tribute to his princess**

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When young Jonathan Mutchie drew himself in shining armor exiting a castle, he cast Lauren Krohn as the princess in the window. Had to be a knight in the defender-of-honor sense, because he confided to his diary that he loved her as a best friend rather than a crush.

They met in kindergarten and bummed around the playground at Jerstad-Agerholm Elementary. There were lots more soccer balls to boot at Cheska Park before they would graduate together from Horlick High School.

That plan ended in 1998, when 9-year-old Jonathan died in a bicycle accident.

His mom, Maggie Skovera, became wrapped up in advocacy for helmet laws and added more children to the family. The years snuck by, but she still heard from friends of the boy she calls a "silly, giving, little nerdy guy."

"The kids haven't forgotten, which is what every grieving parent worries about," Skovera said.

Knowing Jonathan would've been putting on the cap and gown this spring, family members scraped together the cash to offer three \$1,000 scholarships in his name. If it becomes an annual thing, they might open it up to all students, but because of the timing they specified Horlick students this time. Beyond that, they turned the decision over to the judges and the scholarship coordinator.

A sizeable family contingent arrived at Monday's Racine Unified PTA Council scholarship banquet, with Skovera eager to meet the winners and hand over the checks from the podium. Like they do at most big events, the clan wore artistically designed luna moth pins. That's the kind of bug Jonathan's science class released the day he was killed.

One award went to Amelia Fawcett, who's interested in doing illustrations for things like science textbooks. Good way to honor a boy who mixed a love of art with an aim to succeed "Bill Nye the Science Guy" as "Jon Mutch and the Science Hutch".

A second scholarship went to Eric Post, who whispered to Skovera that he'd been in Cub Scouts with her son. Later he thought back to the soap and wood carvings Jonathan would bring to den meetings at Jerstad, where he said they had a "pretty good group" of kids.

Like all of the students who apply for the PTA Council's awards, Eric had no idea whose he might get.

"It was pretty surprising to see the connection after all these years," he said.

That left one other winner, a young woman who's headed to UW-La Crosse. After that, she could end

up either a math teacher or a camp director.

Either way, it's time for her to ride off and leave the walls of the castle behind. The last of the scholarships named for Jonathan found its way to the maiden he'd drawn in the window, his best buddy Lauren Krohn. In the picture, she's saying goodbye to him.

"It was very touching," she said after receiving the prize. "Just being his friend and being with him changed my life forever."

A knight never ceases to do good deeds for his princess, even after he's gone.

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