



Vanessa White and husband Jeff display a photo of Chantel Still, who died in a motorcycle accident in 2007. The mother and stepdad, along with Chantel's biological father Jeff Still and others, started the Motorcycle Victims Accident Fund and offer a \$1,000 scholarship in her name to a Juanita High female athlete. FUMIKO YARITA, Bothell-Kenmore Reporter

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## Chantel's spirit is alive on court

By [ANDY NYSTROM](#)

**Bothell Reporter Editor**

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### Family offers scholarship in her memory

Vanessa and Jeff White's eyes lit up like the numbers on a basketball scoreboard when they perused a

scrapbook filled with photos of Chantel Still.

On one page, there's a young Chantel, smiling at the camera with a ball in hand and sporting a YMCA T-Birds jersey.

"Remember when they beat that boys' team?" mom Vanessa asked stepdad Jeff last Thursday morning in their Bothell living room.

She continued, "She played basketball since she was 5. She just loved it. She was a guard — a tough guard. Her nickname growing up was 'Dozer' ... she didn't let people stop her — she was aggressive." But if someone fell down, Vanessa noted, Chantel was quick to ask, "Are you OK? Let me help you."

Chantel died July 27, 2007 at the age of 19 when she was the victim of a motorcycle accident. The Bothell resident and Juanita High graduate, and passenger on the bike, worked jobs at Hopelink and TGI Fridays and was preparing to enter dental school at the time of the crash.

She lived a full life, always lending a helping hand, Vanessa and Jeff said, and they wanted to keep her name alive.

"A lot of young people were asking us questions ... it was their first experience with death," Jeff said. "We had to do something to make it positive and help other people. We had to direct our energy some place."

So the Whites and four others — including Chantel's biological father Jeff Still who lives in Kirkland — formed the nonprofit Motorcycle Victims Accident Fund (MVAF), which educates people about motorcycle safety and focuses on community service and education. It's also in its second year of presenting The Chantel Still Scholarship, which last year went to Brianna Rinehart-Young. This year's \$1,000 scholarship will go to another Juanita High senior female athlete who demonstrates constructive extracurricular involvement throughout the year. Entry deadline is April 17 at [www.mvaf.org](http://www.mvaf.org).

MVAF is looking for a girl who exemplifies Chantel's demeanor, on and off the court. Tops on its list is a well-rounded student-athlete who may not be No. 1 at everything, but works hard to achieve success.

"She played fair and didn't hold grudges," said Jeff's sister Robin Valeson of Kenmore, summing up Chantel's best-of-both-worlds qualities. Jeff and Vanessa noted that Chantel wasn't materialistic, tried to make an impact with everything she did, had a sense of humor and treasured her friends.

"She had a passion for basketball, that was her center. But she also wanted to reach her educational goals," Vanessa said. "I appreciate the way she treated everyone the same. She didn't see (skin) color and didn't see a difference between classes at school."

Added Jeff: "I'm proud of Chantel's tenacity. I told her, 'If there's something you want, go get it.' But be responsible for your actions."

The Juanita High community has rallied around MVAF's cause with donations galore. Last year, the organization surpassed its \$500 goal with \$3,500; this year, MVAF is shooting for \$1,000 as a starting point through sales of Papa Murphy's pizza coupon cards and other fund-raisers. The Whites noted that \$1,000 goes to the scholar and anything more will be invested in the fund to keep it going well into the future.

“It was amazing, the outpouring from them. It was a wave of warmth around our family,” Vanessa said. “It has not only affected our individual life, but people in our community.”

As an added tribute to Chantel, Jeff and some friends built a 17-foot-by-19-foot garden adjacent to the family home. It features a pink-and-white birdhouse that Chantel painted as a youngster, a fountain, plants, a bench and more.

“People can come and sit in comfort, knowing their loss isn’t the only one,” Valeson said. “Having Chantel in my family is a big thing.”

As Jeff walked out of the garden to the front of the house, he noticed a basketball hoop that still stands near the driveway. Chantel used to shoot around out there, and it remains in place for neighborhood kids to use — and learn to play ball like the “Dozer.”

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