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MU swimmer's life revolved around swimming, friends



Sasha Menu Courey's swimming coach Patrick Rowan said one could never ignore the swimmer when she was on the pool deck. Menu Courey died June 19. COURTESY OF LYNN COUREY

By **Jimmy Hibsich**

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Sasha Menu Courey died June 17.

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MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey was all about water – whether it be the water she “lived” in or the water she brings to her parents’ eyes as they recall their daughter’s life.

“I really believe she was here to make a difference,” her mother Lynn Courey said.

Menu Courey of Toronto, Canada, died June 17 after [a battle with borderline personality disorder](#).

She was about to enter her junior year as a psychology major. Her mother said she was confident her daughter was going to put her degree to good use helping others.

“If you needed someone to listen to you, Sasha was the first one in line to help out,” Courey said.

The family was touched by all of the stories her daughter’s loved ones have shared with the family. One story in particular encapsulated Menu Courey’s compassionate and caring nature, she said.

“Sasha gave a friend a necklace with a cross that she said had helped her through a hard

time,” Courey said. “Her friend gave it back to me at the memorial. She always encouraged her friends to look at the positive side of things.”

This was one of many stories that captured her personality, her mother said. More of these memories have been compiled [on a Facebook page](#), where more than 350 loved ones have gathered to share memories of Menu Courey.

However, kindness toward others wasn’t the only thing that defined Menu Courey. Her scent did that, as well.

“Sasha always smelled like vanilla,” close friend and track athlete Allyson Brown said. “If you walked into a room and you smelled vanilla, you were like, ‘Sasha is here.’”

Aside from her friends and family, Menu Courey’s second love was the pool. She had swam competitively since age 9, making her first national age group time when she was 11. She also held the fastest open short course 50-meter fly swim in Canada when she was 14.

“Everything she did, she needed to do it well,” Courey said.

Her drive led her to about 12 recruitment offers for her swimming, and she ultimately chose MU. Although she wasn’t able to swim her freshman year due to some paperwork troubles, she had been training with the team and swimming time trials in preparation for her sophomore year.

Her coach Patrick Rowan said he’ll always remember the passion and energy she brought to the swimming team. Menu Courey was eager to swim as a part of MU’s relay team, and Rowan said she got extremely excited about competing with her teammates.

“She’s one of those swimmers that when she’s on the pool deck, you knew she was on the pool deck,” he said. “There was definitely no denying her presence. Whether it was her boisterous laugh or her support for her teammates, when Sasha was there you knew it.”

Menu Courey’s close friends planned a memorial June 23 at Stephens Lake Park, a place where she often sought solace. About 40 people came to the memorial, dressed in white T-shirts and sunglasses, which was Menu Courey’s signature outfit.

“When you’re an athlete, you’re all pretty much in your own little world,” Brown said. “Sasha really did know tons of people and you saw that at the memorial. Sasha was a very upbeat, balls-to-the-wall type of girl and she loved to smile, so we didn’t want the memorial to be something sad.”

A little less than a month later, another memorial was held on campus at the Newman Center. Many loved ones said a few words to commemorate Menu Courey there.

Rowan was among those who spoke at the event, and he took a moment to recall his recruiting call with Menu Courey.

“Most recruiting calls to 17-year-olds are short and one-sided with the coach doing most of the talking and the recruit giving quick, timid responses,” he said. “But not Sasha. Her personality and laugh came leaping through the phone. She dominated most of the call. By the end, I was a little worried my battery was going to run out.”

Menu Courey is survived by her father Mike Menu, her mother Lynn Courey and her sister Kayla.



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