

A Celebration of Debbie's Life

6th June 2010
Lusaka Zambia

smile
understanding
amazing
determined
laughter
enthusiastic
positive
adventurous

talented
fearless
spirited
beautiful
energetic
smart
patient
athletic
bright
dedicated
incredible
kind
joyous
gorgeous
leader
inspirational
cheerful

gifted
lively
confident
intelligent
strong
awesome
loyal
brave
generous
carings
fun



Deborah Marie Miller
27th April 1984 - 31st May 2010

Debbie's Life



Deborah Marie Miller, better known as Debbie, was born 27 April 1984, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA to parents William C. and Marcia L. Miller and older sister Deanna. Within a year, the family moved to Fairfax, Virginia, where she attended St. Timothy's School in Chantilly for eight years and was active with the Girl Scouts and various community and private swimming clubs.

Having excelled in school, she attended Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, where she also participated on the swim team, winning a state championship. Debbie moved to Houston, Texas, to attend Rice University, known for its engineering school, and majored in Computational and Applied Mathematics. Summer employment during her college years included internships at Northrop Grumman and World Teach (where she taught adults to use computers in a village in Namibia, Africa).

After graduation with distinction at Rice University, Debbie attended the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, where she earned a Masters in Political Economy of Development. While living in London, she ventured off to European countries, visited her Uncle Thad in Vietnam, and ran a marathon in Copenhagen, Denmark. She went to work for the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation in London for a few years and contributed significantly to development work in the field of radio communications and connectivity in Africa. At a conference for African Government Ministers that she helped to organize in Livingstone, Zambia, in August 2009, she was offered work with ConnectAfrica that she accepted. This enabled her to move to South Africa and Zambia -- her life's ambition -- and work to provide communications (phone and internet) to even more Africans. Debbie passed away on 31 May 2010 (only a few days after her 26th birthday) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Quotes



Debbie's enthusiasm, skill, passion for her work and obvious love of Zambia meant she settled in immediately and had made more friends in a week than I had in a year.

"Debbie is at peace now and no longer in pain. I believe she made a decision, the right decision (she always did), and chose peace. A profound respect for her incredible courage, stoicism, pragmatism, concern for others and total lack of self pity throughout her terrible ordeal will remain with me forever". - **Dion Jerling**

"Debbie always knew what she wanted and went out there and got it."
Eilene Dougherty

"Debbie was one of the most genuine people I've ever known." - **Karen Brooks**
"People were just drawn to Debbie and to her contagious laugh." - **Karen Brooks**

"Debbie touched so many lives, no one can ever forget meeting her, and feeling this strong, vibrant, wonderful person." **Lee-Anne Singh**

"Debbie was pure quality." - **John and Betty Crockett**

"I remember Debbie's uncanny way of making friends in any and every situation, and just making herself so loved within a matter of minutes because that's just who she was." - **Lei Liew**

"People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.' Debbie always had that special warmth and glow from within, and her bright, cheerful smile was evidence that she had a great spirit, full of compassion." - **Aunt Holly**

"Zambia feels like it has lost a ray of sunshine [now that Debbie is gone.]" - **Dion Jerling**

"May Debbie's smile shine with the stars at night and her laugh be carried by the breeze." - **Mary Foxall**

"Debbie, a bright wonderful star - always joyful - now shining on us - thank you for the brief, but enduring friendship." - **Rosanna Price-Nyendwa**

And finally, my favorite, a poem about Debbie from her friend in London,
Isla Falconer:

In my world (by Isla Falconer)

I will always dance
The floating sticks will always be crocodiles or hippos
I will take every life-changing experience, just like you
And one day I will transport live fish on the back of my bike

Bon voyage Debbie.