Larkin

Lauren Jennifer McCluskey

February 12, 1997 ~ October 22, 2018

Lauren Jennifer McCluskey, 21 years old, a beautiful young woman in all respects, was murdered on the University of Utah campus on October 22, 2018. A worldwide outpouring of grief testified to the light she brought during her life , a light that somehow still shines during these dark days.

Lauren was born in Berkeley, CA on February 12, 1997. She moved to Pullman, WA August 1998 when her parents, Matt and Jill McCluskey, joined Washington State University as professors.

From an early age, she was bright, sensitive, and very active. She fearlessly climbed trees and climbing walls.

She entered her first Junior Olympic (JO) association track meet at 8 years old and set JO records in high jump, long jump, and 400 meter run. At age 9, she was told that if she qualified for nationals, she could go. So, of course, she qualified for nationals in the 9-10 age group. She continued to compete nationally in high jump, hurdles, and multi-events, earning USA Track and Field All American (top 8) 19 times and setting many USATF association youth records, 12 of which still stand, and the Junior (U20) association record for heptathlon. As she competed nationally, she made friendships with athletes, their families, and coaches from across the U.S.

As a high school freshman, she was WA State High School Champion in High Jump and 2nd in 100 meter hurdles. She high jumped 5'6" in her sophomore year before pulling her hamstring. She spent her junior year training at SPIRE and attending Andrews Osborne Academy in Ohio. She returned to Pullman for her senior year of high school. At the 2015 WA State High School meet, she qualified in four events, scoring in three, helping her team place third overall in the state. She set the Pullman High record for the 100-meter hurdles. She placed 9th at U.S. Junior (U20) Championships in the heptathlon that year.

She loved animals and volunteered at the Whitman County Humane Society helping to socialize cats so they would be more adoptable. She had two beloved cats of her own, Fuzzy and then Victory. She completed her Pullman High School senior project at the WSU Center for Animal Wellbeing. She also volunteered for the YMCA and Special Olympics.

Lauren graduated from Pullman High with honors and accepted a Track and Field scholarship at the University of Utah to compete in the PAC-12 Conference. At Utah, she competed in the multi-events and high jump. She was a loyal Ute and rooted for them with gusto. She earned PAC-12 (hon. mention) and MPSF All-Academic Awards and is 10th on the all-time performance list for the Utes in the pentathlon.

Her work ethic, in the classroom, weight room, and on the track, was exceptional. Her teammates and coaches were inspired and amazed at how she never complained, even when the weather was foul or practice was especially tough.

Lauren has been described as quiet but, more accurately, she chose her words carefully. Her professors were delighted by how she was engaged and made incisive, on-point comments. In college, she truly blossomed.

Lauren never had an unkind word to say about anyone. She loved being with friends and was a great dancer. She had a strong singing voice, loved karaoke, and even did standup comedy.

Lauren was a Christian. She grew up attending Community Congregational United Church of Christ and in college attended Capital Church in Salt Lake City. She was a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at the University of Utah.

She was a deep, independent thinker with an interest in philosophy and a strong sense of right and wrong.

She was a gifted writer, winning a high school award in her junior year of high school as the top writer at her prep school and excelling in college. Even her texts and e-mails were beautifully composed. Lauren enrolled in electives on grammar and logic for pure intellectual enjoyment. She was looking forward to graduating and finding a job in public relations or academic advising, preferably some place warm.

Lauren served as a Communication Intern at Courtland Place Retirement Community, where her grandparents live. In this internship, she designed and completed a picture directory with stories that she wrote about the residents. She enjoyed interviewing them and taking their pictures for the project. Her grandparents received wonderful feedback from their neighbors that they loved the book and interacting with Lauren.

A model student-athlete, Lauren had a 3.77 GPA and applied to graduate in spring 2019. Recognizing her academic accomplishments, the University of Utah conferred a posthumous B.Sc. Degree in Communication.

Lauren is survived by parents Matt and Jill, brother Ryan, grandparents John and Linda McCluskey, Ross and Joyce Rudeen, uncles Jeff and Steve Rudeen, aunt Jennifer McCluskey, cousin Madison Bryant, and her cat Victory.

In lieu of flowers, Matt and Jill suggest donating to the Lauren McCluskey Memorial Fund for student athletes in track and field, https://giving.utah.edu/lauren-mccluskey/ or the Whitman County Humane Society https://www.whitmanpets.org/how-to-help/donate/monetary-donation.html.

Let her light shine.

A celebration of life for Lauren will be held on Sunday, November 11, 2018 from 4 to 6 pm at the SEL Event Center in Pullman, WA 99163.