

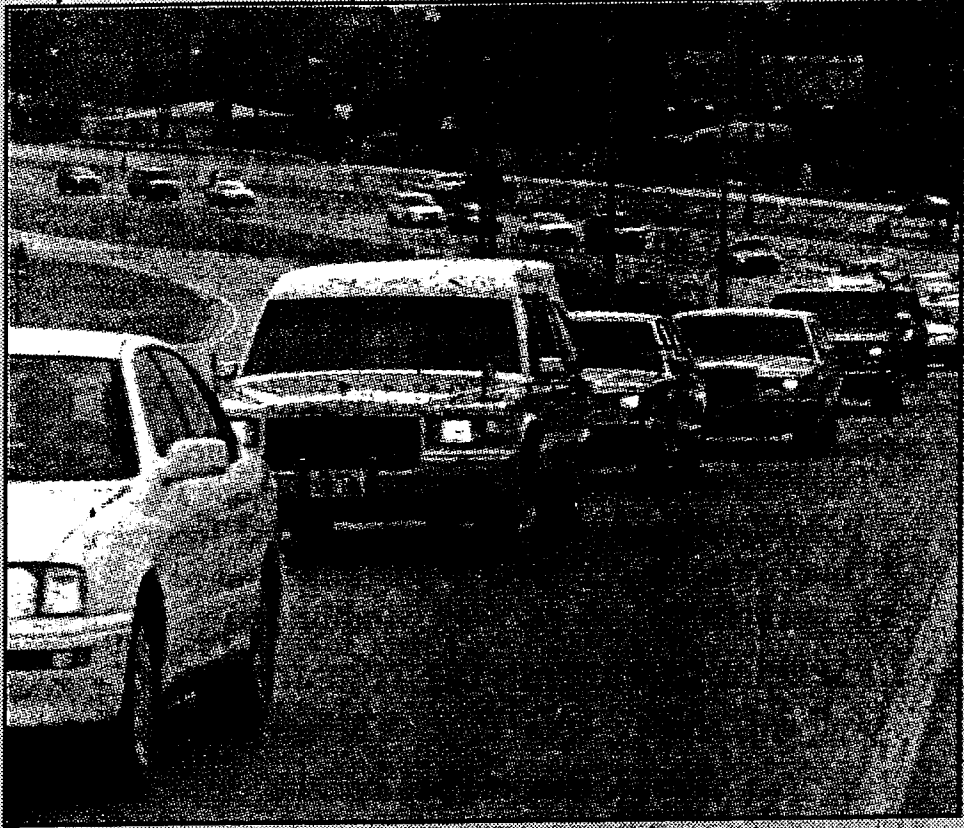


RON BASLICE/News Staff

During an August 1995 fund-raising event, Jennifer Yeakley was all smiles.

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Jennifer Yeakley's funeral procession makes its way to State Highway 183 from Irving Boulevard. Police closed the freeway from Beltline Road on the way to Bear Creek Cemetery in Euless.

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Goodbye to 'the most courageous little girl'

Citizens throughout Irving mourn death of 8-year-old leukemia victim

By **LIZABETH CARDENAS**

News Staff Writer

Several hundred police officers, fire officials, city leaders, medical personnel, teachers, children and citizens Tuesday morning mourned the loss at the Plymouth Park Baptist Church of a daughter, a student, a patient or a classmate.

But to all of them, 8-year-old Jennifer Leigh Yeakley - Irving Police Capt. Mark Yeakley's daughter, who died Saturday from complications arising from her leukemia - will always be an inspiration.

"I have never known a family or little girl with such inner strength," says Kitty Estes, PTA president of

Townley Elementary School, where Jennifer was a third-grader and whose son was in her class. "Jennifer kept up with her schoolwork to the very end. She was such an intelligent girl. Jennifer was such a fighter and such an inspiration. I am happy that at least she passed away with dignity."

Jennifer was diagnosed on May 8, 1995, with a rare form of acute lymphoblastic leukemia, which is complicated with a Philadelphia Chromosome, which necessitated a bone-marrow transplant. Because no bone-marrow match was found, she had a cord blood transplant in

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Yeakley: Community mourns death.

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August 1995. She was the fourth child in Dallas to undergo the new type of transplant.

Jennifer recently suffered a relapse of the cancer and decided to undergo a second cord blood transplant scheduled for November. However, she developed a fungal infection in her lungs that is almost impossible to treat. Jennifer died of pneumonia.

"We may have lost the war, but we won the fight," Mark Yeakley says. "It was a team effort. It's unbelievable how many lives were touched with this - how many lives Jennifer touched by her fight. In this day and age, it seems like there's all this bad stuff, but I can honestly say there's a lot of good stuff in Irving."

What has been inspiring to a community that raised more than \$120,000 to help foot the family's doctor bills was Jennifer's strength, determination and her attitude, says Rose Cannaday, wife of Irving Police Chief Lowell Cannaday, who coordinated a city-wide "county fair" type of a fundraiser that raised \$11,000.

"Jennifer fought a long, hard battle and lost," Rose Cannaday says. "She may have left this earth, but she will never leave the hearts of all who knew and loved her. Jennifer is the most courageous little girl that I have ever known and died with her family and friends at her side."

Rose Cannaday says the hardest part for those close to the situation has been accepting this conclusion, because Jennifer's relapse came after she had been doing well.

On Aug. 5, 1996, almost a year after the transplant, Mark Yeakley reported that Jennifer was physically doing very well. She had been traveling, attending camp, swimming and playing softball.

However, the results of what was to be

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— Rose
wife of IPD Chief Lowell

her last scheduled bone-marrow biopsy and spinal tap, which Jennifer received Aug. 9, revealed a 10 percent concentration of leukemia cells in her bone marrow. The re-emergence of the Philadelphia Chromosome also was confirmed.

"I thought that we had won the battle, and we were getting ready to celebrate her first year of being in remission when the bad news came," Rose Cannaday says. "Jennifer made the decision to fight this terrible disease again. Her spirit was willing, but her body wasn't strong enough to carry her through this fight. As I reflect over the events of this past year I prefer to remember Jennifer's smile and laughter as she played with the Barbie dolls that she loved so much."

Mayor Morris Parrish says he wants to thank all of those who offered their prayers and contributed to raising funds a year ago, because the effort helped extend her life.

"It is through their efforts, and because of her loving parents, caring medical staff and the fighting spirit of Jennifer, that she survived this long," Parrish says. "I am deeply grieved upon the loss of Jennifer Yeakley. I hoped and prayed that she would be one of the few to survive this tragic dis-

ease. She was a real treasure with a wonderful personality.

Police officers of Irving are in their second family. Tull, Irving Police Department's information officer, Irvin felt pain through the loss of one of their own. The community's support has been a great help.

"At one point or another, we've pulled together and supported each other. It's been extremely hard, but we've tried to give a little support to the Yeakleys as we could. We're appreciative of the community's support and we'll keep everyone's spirit strong."

Tull says he is proud to be a police officer in Irving.

"If we ever lose another person, we'll pull together in hard times. We'll support each other in our department or a community. We've reached a bad point, but we've reached a bad point. I am happy to be here in Irving."

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— Mayor Morris Parrish

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family are doing “OK,” he says one thing
that troubles him: the future for other chil-
dren with leukemia.

“I’m worried about the kids who follow
Jennifer,” Mark Yeakley says. “That’s why
we’re requesting memorials be sent to
Children’s Medical Center’s cancer unit.”

He says the unit only has so many instru-
ments, so he wants the money to help buy
additional equipment that is needed.

The idea that a grieving father who just
lost his little girl is worrying about other
people’s children may shock most people,
but Estes says it comes to no surprise to any-
one who really knows the Irving officer.

“Through it all, Mark and his wife Judy
were always worried about how it affected
the kids (at Townley Elementary),” Estes
says. “They constantly asked ‘How are the
kids?’ and ‘How are they taking it?’ I have
never met a family that had so much dignity
and style.”

Estes says Mark Yeakley also has agreed
to conduct the garage sale on Jennifer’s
behalf scheduled for Saturday. Estes says the
proceeds from the garage, which will, be
held from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot
of the South MacArthur Church of Christ -
located at the corner of MacArthur
Boulevard and Shady Grove Road - will help
purchase a headstone for Jennifer.

“Mark thought that, when Jennifer’s
classmates would visit, they would be able
to see the headstone and think they had
helped in some way,” Estes says.

Jennifer was born May 5, 1988, in
Irving.

She is survived by her parents, Judy and
Mark Yeakley of Irving; sisters, Nikki and
Bridgette Yeakley, both of Irving; grandpar-
ents, Betty and Murray Yeakley of The
Woodlands and Bill and Nita Barber of
Lewisville; aunts and uncles, Carol Shehan
of The Woodlands, Bill and Bridget Barber
of Lewisville and Sam and Nancy Ramsey
of Riverbank, Calif.; and the many support-
ive and caring friends including staff and
students at J.F. Townley Elementary, Irving
and Morgan Private School, the City of
Irving, the Irving Police Department and the
staff, children and parents at Children’s
Medical Center in Dallas.

Funeral services were held Tuesday
morning at Plymouth Park Baptist Church,
with Revs. Ken Branam and Milfred
Minatrea officiating. Burial followed at the
Bear Creek Cemetery in Euless.

The family requests memorials be sent
to Children’s Medical Center, 6 East, c/o
Children’s Medical Foundation, P.O. Box
650473, Dallas, Texas 75265-9868.

Chaplain John Dickey officiated. Burial was at Boliver Cemetery in Boliver.



Linda Sue Young

Linda Sue Young, of Irving, died Sunday, July 7, of natural causes. She was 48.

Ms. Young was born August 3, 1947 in Gadsden, Ala., to Vear and Ada Lee Quarries Amos. She worked as a manager for the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Dallas for 17 years.

She is survived by her daughter, Diane Young of Denton; her mother, Ada Lee Quarries Amos of Alabama; three sisters, Helen Wiggins of Alabama, Carolyn Spiva of Florida and Willodean Beshears of Alabama; four brothers, Elbert Amos of Alabama, Hiluard Amos of Oregon, Clyde Amos of Georgia and Jerry Amos of Alabama; and two grandchildren, Jeffrey and Chelsea Young of Denton.

Services were Tuesday, July 9, at Donnelly's Colonial Chapel.

Linda Sue Young

Services July 9

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*Earlene W.
Zimmerman*

Earlene W. Zimmerman, of Irving, died Oct. 28 in Arlington. She was 67.

Mrs. Zimmerman was a homemaker, born on Oct. 19 in Oak Grove, La. She was a member of the Rebecca Lodge and Order of the Eastern Star.

She is survived by her husband, William "Zip" Zimmerman, and her daughter and son-in-law, Zee and Darrin Reno, of Arlington.

Services were held Wednesday, Oct. 30 at Brown's Memorial Chapel, the Rev. Chris Allen officiating.

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