

DWI Death: Family seeks justice for tragic loss

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RELIVING the pain of a DAUGHTER gone

The Livingstons were a tight-knit family due in large part to Raven Livingston. She was described by her family as talkative, caring, and a friend to many people. She would do whatever was necessary to help her family and friends be happy.

However, she did not live to see her 26th birthday. Raven was killed in a collision with an alleged drunk driver on Dec. 31 of last year.

Jeulina Livingston, Raven's mother, recalls hearing sirens that night but did not pay it much attention until Raven had been gone too long.

"She just went to the movies and never came home," Jeulina Livingston said through tears.

Jeulina Livingston works at KTNN in Window Rock as a DJ. When the news reached her, she felt the whole world stop as she called and sent messages repeatedly with no response.

Ray Livingston Sr., Raven's father, used to work for the McKinley Mine as a heavy equipment operator, but resigned after Raven's death.

"[We've been] hurting for the most, three months," Ray Livingston said during an interview. "I still am."

EARLY LIFE

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Raven was born Ray Livingston Jr. on June 18, 1992 at around 5:30 in the morning, Jeulina Livingston recalls.

“I was so happy when she got born, around 5,” Ray Livingston recalled. “[I was told] we need to name the baby. [I said] Ray Livingston Jr.”

He was asked why Raven was given that name, to which he responded, “I thought my name was going to go on for legacy.”

Raven was close to her cousins and they enjoyed many things together.

“We all grew up on the Red Rock Reservation,” Rashawna Livingston, Raven’s sister, recalled. “She always enjoyed family time. She really loved her cousins.”

The family talked about the common human activities they did with Raven, such as watching TV, having sleepovers, numerous games and sports, and arts and crafts. They recall how some of the family would even get their nails done by Raven.

Raven Livingston was described by her family as a beautiful child, humble and sweet at home. She attended Chuska Boarding School from 2nd to 8th grade, often staying at the dorm because she enjoyed it.

It was during her years at Chuska Boarding School that Raven Livingston surprised her family by coming out as transgender. Raven had been the only male in a class full of females, the family recalls, and while she initially tried to push it aside, she soon insisted she was a woman.

Ray-to-Raven Livingston transition helped the family to think about the LGBT communities in a different light. She would also meet with various pride groups around the Window Rock and

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Albuquerque areas.

“I love you guys if you want to be like that,” Ray recalled his words to Raven. “The way you want to be a person, I accepted it a long time ago. We all accepted it.”

After finishing at Chuska High School, Raven moved onto Wingate High School, becoming involved with numerous sports teams in an unexpected manner.

“One time she told me, ‘I’ll be in the game,’” Ray Livingston Sr. said.

The family attended to see what Raven would be doing.

“I was so surprised she came out of the bear suit, ‘I’m a mascot too,’” she said.

After finishing high school, Raven entered the job corps, got involved with office administration, and then decided to wait on committing to a path for her future.

Yet, she would not live to make that choice.

THE AFTERMATH

Ray Livingston Sr. said that the family had separated after Raven’s death, and that the animals and livestock on their property were removed as well. He said it was hard to be in the region where his transgender daughter’s life had been cut short.

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“Life was not right, family’s not together,” he said. “Part of me is gone, part of me was taken away early.”

The family was asked what they would say to the alleged drunk driver. Ray Livingston Sr. said that it would be hard to think of something to say because of the anger. The driver hasn’t been formally charged at this time.

The family instead wonders what was going through Raven’s mind in the last moments of her life. They concluded that she would have been thinking of her family.

“I want to see my dad, my mom, I just want to go home,” Ray Livingston said he was told those were her last words.

The court date has not been set yet, but the family expects an update by the end of July.

“We just need justice for Raven,” Jeulina Livingston said.

HONORING RAVEN

On June 18, the Livingston family gathered at the Gallup train station and held a candle vigil. They also released balloons into the sky during the gathering.

“I loved it, I know she’s looking down at us,” Jeulina Livingston said.

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The family feels that going on with life and helping out people they can, specifically through a commemorative walk and showing the effects that drinking and driving can have on a family, helps them to manage the pain. In that way, the family thinks of these actions as planting a new tree. The old one may fallen, they said, but they can choose to start over where they are.

“What she experienced, she tells us. [She] just tells us, ‘Be busy all the time,’ Ray Livingston said.

By Cody Begaye
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