

Leslie O'Bannon, 27, Waukee

Leslie Nicole O'Bannon, 27, formerly of Pella passed away Nov. 13, 2006 as a result of a plane crash with three of her Two Rivers team and the pilot of the twin engine plane, 10 miles south of South Bend, Indiana. Her sudden and tragic death has shocked and saddened



L. O'Bannon

many. Funeral services were held Nov. 18, at the First Christian Reformed Church in Pella. Memorials can be given to the Gabrielle O'Bannon Trust Fund, C.R.W.M. or Nicaragua Christian Academy.

Leslie Nicole Van Hemert was born on June 1, 1979 at Pella. She was the oldest of three children born to Russell R. and Caryn (Vande Ree) Van Hemert. Leslie attended Pella Christian Grade School and graduated from Pella Christian High School with the class of 1996. While in school Leslie was an extremely active and vibrant part of her school, church and community. She was active in chorus, band, dance and drill team, flag team, softball, basketball, track and volleyball. While

this energetic schedule kept her focused, she also made sure that there was time to attend youth group at the First Christian Reformed Church in Pella, where she worshiped regularly with her family. Leslie was baptized at Pella One and found delight maintaining her membership there.

Leslie went off to college and attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She studied abroad in Spain for a semester. Leslie graduated from Calvin in 2000 with honors obtaining Bachelors degrees in business and art. At college Leslie was involved in dance guild and volleyball teams. Upon graduation Leslie began an internship with Two Rivers Marketing in Des Moines. In 2001, Leslie met her future husband John Adam O'Bannon at Two Rivers Marketing, where they both worked. Seven months later, they were engaged. They were married on May 18, 2002 at the church she grew up in. They were blessed by the birth of their daughter, Gabrielle Helene O'Bannon, affectionately known as Ellie. She was born on April 12, 2005. Leslie gracefully balanced being loving mother with also being an extremely gifted account executive with an innate sense of drive. She had the ability to foster relationships well and grow

her clients business as a result. Although driven to succeed at work she also made sure to put family and Christ first. Leslie coached the volleyball team for a season and the drill team for three seasons at Pella Christian High School. Leslie and John attended Westview Church in Waukee, where she was involved in leading youth in liturgical dance and being a youth group mentor, as well as participating in adult small groups.

Leslie leaves her loving husband John and her daughter Ellie, her parents Dr. Russ and Caryn Van Hemert of Pella, her brother Jonathan Russell Van Hemert currently residing in Managua, Nicaragua, her sister Brittany Noel Van Hemert currently attending Central College in Pella, her maternal grandparents Case and Helen Vande Ree of Pella, her paternal grandparents, Reuben and Marge Van Hemert also of Pella, along with many aunts, uncles and cousins. Of her husband John's family she leaves: her mother-in-law, Lyn R. O'Bannon of Johnston; her sisters-in-law, Mary M. O'Bannon of Stuart, and Elisha A. O'Bannon of Johnston; as well as her brother-in-law, Sean P. O'Bannon of Johnston. Leslie was preceded in death by her great-grandparents, and her father-in-law, John A. O'Bannon VII.

DT - 2007-08-08