Taryn Datsko...

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"I'll remember her smile. I never saw her unhappy. She wasn't selfish at all. She lived to make others happy," said Broderick.

Marinne Dibble, one of Taryn's closest friends, spoke about special moments the two had shared during a funeral service Aug. 31 (See her eulogy on page 6). When Dibble was a freshman and new in town, Taryn befriended her. "Taryn was the most amazing person I ever met. She was so full of joy, happiness and energy. Everything she did was out of love," she said.

Dibble remarked how Taryn would raid the cabinets and eat a lot and never show it. She was 5'10" tall and wore a size one.

Taryn was a girl of many talents, many gifts. "Taryn is this sweet, affectionate, happy child on the one hand and a wise old crone on the other combined together in an incredibly beautiful package," Dibble quoted her mother as saying.

"Whenever she saw me in school, this wild, joyful person would come flying into my arms," said Deborah Dibble, Marinne's mother.

Pam Kron, another close friend of Taryn's, who also spoke at the service, said, "Even on my worst days, she made me smile."

Kron was on the math team with Taryn. This year, the two would have been co-captains. Last year, on the day of the meet, they gave each other candy for good luck.

"Everyone took it seriously; we had fun with it," said Kron.

Taryn was also on the Debate Team and the Junior Classical League, which is a Latin Club. She planned camping and ice skating trips, the spring banquet and a Halloween party last year.

She participated in many school activities and was always listed on the honor roll. In addition to accomplishing a full day's schedule of high school courses, orchestra and activities, Taryn got up early on Saturdays to attend physics classes at Columbia University in New York.

"She would take the train in and then brave the subway," said Marinne Dibble.

Lizzie Swanson knew Taryn for only one year but what remains clearly in her mind is Taryn's smiling face when she participated on the High School Bowl team.

"I was so nervous and felt apart from this group of people that seemed to have known each other a lifetime. They had some sort of bond that I didn't feel apart of, but Taryn came to my rescue. She was so happy and vibrant that I just couldn't stop smiling. I decided to stay with High School Bowl and I, too, felt the bond that the others shared, the bond we still share today," she said.

Perhaps her favorite memory of Taryn was right after she joined Hand when the High School Bowl members were picking their mascot for an upcoming meet.

"One of the choices was a cute stuffed cat that Taryn brought in. We called it a tiger so it would be related to the school (a tiger is the DHHS mascot). The other choice was 'The Severed Hand' belonging to Ms. Chabot. The hand was an arm and hand that extended to the elbow and had a sleeve as well. Since HSB was primarily a guy club, they of course all voted for the hand. Only four people, Taryn, me, my friend Katy, and another friend Tom, voted for the cat. She couldn't believe it. She went on for a good [illegible] about how her cat was so much better

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- Deborah Dibble

Day as they called it this year. She was very busy all day so I didn't see that much of her. The last words she said to me were, 'See you on Monday!' meaning the first day of school. That was the last time I heard from her," wrote Lizzie Swanson, a student at Hand in a letter.

Swanson dedicated a website in memory of Taryn: http://www.geocities.com/Petsburgh/Zoo/6326/taryn.html. She has included a memorial guestbook for anyone wishing to write in and share their memories of Taryn.

Laramie Wilcox, a senior at Hand, said what set Taryn apart from others was "A lot of people generally complain a lot and believe the world is something they can't change. She had the perspective that the world is what you make it and it doesn't have to be a bad place."

Taryn had a deep commitment to the arts. Her ballet took her to Paris for the summer. She spoke fluent French. She also played violin in the Hand orchestra.

"Taryn was one of the most determined people I knew. She loved to play the violin and put all her heart into it ... just like she put all her heart into dancing," said Leah Nollenberger, a student at Hand. "I think a friend put it best when he said she was always smiling. That was Taryn. If you needed a smile, she was there, along with a hug and a few good words. I hope she holds on to those traits wherever she is, and never lets the music die."

Swing dancing was one of Taryn's favorite pastimes. She had gone to a swing dance camp and tried to teach her friend, Pam Kron, to swing.

"I went swing dancing with her and she tried to teach me and I was stepping over her feet," said Kron.

Taryn liked to swing dance with her father, John T. Datsko. They were part of the Connecticut Swing Dance Society's monthly dances.

In a Jan. 13 Shore Line Times article on swing, the then 15-year-old Taryn was quoted at a dance with her dad as saying, "I really didn't know how to dance at all - I didn't have anybody to practice with. I danced with a lot of older people. It's fun. It was so much fun ... You like smile the whole time."

Taryn had many male friends but she adored Vin Conti, who is now a sophomore at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Conti grew up in Madison but his parents later moved to Maine.

"We were completely in love with each other," he said. "We would bike ride together and mentally spar each other. She would teach me about (particle physics), and I would teach her how the Internet worked."

John Brooks, a U.S. History teacher at Hand, thought Taryn was "something special."

"In my 32 years of teaching, she was the most special kid I ever knew and her friendship was a gift from God," he said.

[illegible] with candy