



He was a respected police officer. A proud father. A loving son and brother. A loyal friend.

Const. Joe Mellen Jr. held many titles, all of them admirable, among those who knew him best.

The life of the 33-year-old Niagara Regional Police officer will be celebrated Wednesday with a funeral service at Faith Welland, 380 South Pelham Rd., at 11 a.m.

He was killed Friday morning when the motorcycle he was riding collided with an oncoming car on Hwy. 406 near Woodlawn Rd. in Welland.

Growing up in the Rose City, Joe had many friends, but always maintained a close relationship with younger sister Michelle Mellen.

The pair ran in the same social circles, though Joe's vibrant personality often made him the star of the show.

"He had a ton of friends, a ton," says Michelle, 30.

She laughs as she remembers always being referred to not by her name, but instead as "Joe's sister" — a title she held proudly.

Michelle always admired her brother's passion.

"When he loved something, he put his whole self into it," she says.

Never one to sit around, Joe was always learning something new or trying something for the first time.

He was a self-taught musician, had an eye for photography and had once been a talented mixed martial arts fighter, though that was ultimately curbed by a knee injury.

Michelle quips that she would often get mad that her brother was "just so good at everything."

It seemed there was nothing he couldn't master.

"He had big dreams," Michelle says.

"He would always say 'I'm going to be famous someday.'"

Joe had an area in his basement set up for him to play and record music. He often shared videos of himself performing on Youtube.

He had an unwavering love for music — topped only by his love for his two children, seven-year-old Nolan and five-year-old Kaya.

The many videos he filmed over the years have become invaluable keepsakes to his family.

In one clip, Joe pretends his young daughter, a performer in her own right, is on America's Got Talent and has made it to the Las Vegas round.

"She was so excited," Michelle says. It's one of many memories she's grateful to be able to share with Joe's children as they grow older.

Family was always important to the nine-year NRP veteran.

He was close to parents Joe Sr. and Carole, making sure to speak with them nearly every day.

Family dinners were a frequent event and Joe always came prepared with stories to tell.

"He was a great storyteller," Michelle says.

"He'd take over and everyone would just laugh."

While he was serious when needed, Joe was the "typical class clown" who "always had his friends laughing," she says. That is apparent from the many stories that have been shared with the family over the past few days.

"That's the part that makes it easier, hearing the stories," Michelle says.

"That's the part that stops the tears."

In the next few weeks, the Mellen family hopes to gather together with Joe's friends to share their memories. They will be written down and kept as a reminder of the type of person Joe was, Michelle says.

"There is no one like him."

Though outgoing in his later years, Joe was timid as a child, his sister says. That made it surprising to the family, she adds, when as a teen he announced he wanted to become a police officer.

"He knew what he wanted to do and, in typical Joe fashion, he went all in," Michelle says.

"He dove into it head first. He was very good at his job."

She believes it was Joe's love of people and passion for helping others that led him toward a career in policing.

Michelle admits her brother's death "still doesn't feel real" and has left the family devastated.

But the Mellens, who have long attended Faith Welland, have found comfort in the church.

"Everything happens for a reason. We know God has a plan," Michelle says.

"We know where Joe is and that we'll see him again someday."

The Mellens expressed gratitude to Niagara Regional Police and the many officers who have visited their home since Friday. The family also thanked everyone who has offered their support during this difficult time.

Following Wednesday's service, there will be a funeral procession with a Niagara Regional Police escort to Pleasantview Memorial Gardens and Visitation Centre.

South Pelham Rd. will be closed from Fitch St. to the funeral home as officers line up on both sides of the road in ranks to pay their respects.

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Funeral details:

Visitation will take place at Pleasantview Memorial Gardens and Visitation Centre, 2250 Hwy. 20 at Merrittville Hwy. in Pelham, on Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A funeral service to celebrate Mellen's life is scheduled for Wednesday at Faith Welland, 380 South Pelham Rd., at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at Pleasantview.

People are asked to share their memories and photos of Mellen, as well as their condolences, online at www.pleasantviewcemetery.ca. Memorial donations are accepted to Special Olympics Ontario.