

In Memoriam: Jaime Smith Gault '00, '08G

In her short life she accomplished much and was admired by all who knew her.

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When Jaime Gault's lupus worsened in her 30s, one of her priorities was to explain the disease to her two sons, Jack and Sam. Realizing that other children with an ill mother might have similar questions, she joined with friends Molly McCabe and Nicole Lawry to co-author and self-publish a children's book, "The Fairy and the Wolf." The wolf in the

story is lupus, while the fairy is a mom staying positive and happy despite the challenges of the disease, explains Jaime's mother, Lynn Carpenter Smith '02.

Jaime was a positive person since childhood. She was "a bright and shining star," says Lynn, a kind and gentle person who loved her family and many friends, and especially enjoyed family vacations at Lake Sunapee with her brother, Jesse, and her many cousins.

Jesse says that his sister may have been the best athlete in the family — which says a lot given that their late father, Guy Smith '74, was a professional hockey player and UNH Athletics Hall of Fame inductee, and he is a professional golfer. "She was a great athlete and competitor, but she was an even better person," says Jesse. "She was one of the kindest, most caring and fun people I have ever been around, and I was lucky enough to have her as a sister and best friend."

At Durham's Oyster River High School, Jaime captained the soccer and tennis teams and achieved All-State honors in both sports. She graduated from UNH with honors and married Christian Gault '94 in 2004. The couple lived in Portland, Oregon, where she enjoyed the beauty of the state and the opportunities it presented for outdoor life — even when those took her "way beyond her comfort level" says Christian. Hunting and fishing with him often required her wearing camouflage and waders but "she was a trooper about my outdoor activities," he says. As a family the Gaults enjoyed traveling together, most recently to national parks, including Zion and Yellowstone.

Her proudest accomplishments in life were her two sons. "Her eyes would light up whenever she saw those boys, and she would do anything for them," says Christian. "She was a wonderful mother and wife." She was very active in Jack and Sam's sports and school activities, often volunteering for both. Her fierce competitive side could be seen and heard from the sidelines of her sons' games.

In addition to caring for her family, she was active in several lupus organizations and worked as a research assistant for the National Indian Child Welfare Association. The organization sets federal requirements in child custody proceedings involving a Native American child, with the goal of keeping the child with a Native American relative whenever possible. She felt a strong commitment to the organization and its goals, based in part on her own heritage. Her father was Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, where that side of the family still resides.

Jaime passed away from complications of lupus on May 26, 2019. More than 400 mourners attended her celebration of life in Oregon, and an additional 700 plus attended a service at Oyster River. At last year's annual Walk to End Lupus Now in Portland, several friends established a "Jaime's Army" to raise money in her memory. It came as no surprise to the family and friends who dearly love and miss her that the group was the event's top fundraiser.

- WRITTEN BY:
[Karen Tongue Hammond '64](#) | UNH Magazine



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