

From Leslye Alexander

Celia and Jim asked me to write something about my friendship with Shona to be read at her memorial. Since she was my oldest friend, having known her since we were two years old, I was honored to have been asked. I am so sorry to not be in attendance today, as I would have loved to have shared stories and tears with all of you present about our dear friend. I have tried so hard to write something worthy of Shona's memory, but find that I cannot. There is nothing about Shona I can write that will do her justice; she was the most genuine person I have ever known.

Shona loved music and introduced me to a lot of new artists, starting with the Monkees when we were about 5. We knew all of the lyrics to their songs, mooned over Davey Jones and danced our hearts out. Later on she introduced me to swimming, gymnastics, and new musical artists.

Shona and I shared possibly one of the worst middle school experiences ever. We went to an overcrowded, overtly violent school where you could rarely find a seat in a classroom and I had my hair lit on fire everyday on the school bus. In a mash up of hundreds of teenagers trying to find our way about in a middle school that often felt like a war-zone, I was often terrified. Shona, always finding the solution to any problem, pulled me aside one day and told me I should just come and stay with her in the library everyday at lunch. From that day on Shona and I would hide out in the library. Shona also figured out a way to get us home safely by taking a later bus with very few students on it. She never seemed to worry about a situation, she just simply figured out a way to deal with it.

Later, as we grew older and geographically apart, Shona always kept in contact. Our relationship may have not stayed the same as it had had it not been for Shona's incredible dedication to friendship. We got married and started families around the same time and it was always wonderful to get together and watch Shane and Alina grow up. In part of becoming adults our lives grew crazier and crazier but in between work, running kids to school and other activities Shona somehow always managed to keep in touch with old friends. She always stayed interested and cared for everybody who entered her life.

Shona never cared too much what other people thought about her, but cared deeply for other people. She had her own style. She was an extraordinary and unique person. She was genuine, honest, caring, intelligent and humble. She loved history, teaching, summers in New York, Italy, good food, good wine, music and first and foremost her family.

At my dad's memorial service, Shona talked about her upcoming year in Italy. She simply said that she would be taking a research year in Florence. She did not mention that this year was at the Itatti, or the prestige of having been accepted. There is a picture of Shona that sits on the mantel at the Kelly's . In it Shona is wearing a t-shirt and a simple overcoat, no make-up or styled hair in evidence. Around her neck is a beautiful, colorful set of beads. Shona's style exemplified her personality. She was always understated but colorful and vibrant.

Shona's loss is most profound for Randy, Shane, Alina, Jim, Celia, Maggie and Brian, but for all of us there is a void in the universe where her star once shone.

- With love, Shona, we will miss you.