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DIANA PRINCESS OF WALES
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'A loss for the world'

Although thousands of miles away, Diana touched the hearts of Tristaters

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The Cincinnati Enquirer

She was beautiful, charitable, wealthy and famous, but in the end it was Princess Diana's humanity that touched people in the Tristate.

"Instead of people kneeling to her, she knelt down to them," said Sherry Weathers, 53, of Pleasant Ridge, who works for the Wellness Community in Blue Ash. "She captured our hearts because she was very human, very real, no matter which country you lived in."

"It was her physical beauty and her incredible glamour that first drew my attention, but she turned out to be such a human and sympathetic figure," said Tammy Reed of Bellevue, lunching in the Bonbrosier's of Olneyville Tea Room.

"Her warmth made her so believable, so much like us. She could have taken a royal position and sat behind the palace walls, but she got out there and touched people with the beauty inside," said Ms. Reed, an environmental scientist for Cinergy.

"It's true, she's not an American and we have no ties to the royal family," agreed companion Joe Jett of Bellevue, a work methods specialist at Cinergy. "But we do care, we all care, because her generosity and her humanity make her death a loss to all people, not just the English."

"I thought, 'What a loss for the world.'"

Area people responding

The Tristate responded to that loss. "Within two hours on Sunday we sold out of every book we had," said Alicia Kinder, an employee of Borders Books and Music in Springfield. Andrew Morton's authorized biography (*Diana: Her True Story and Diana Her New Life*) were being reprinted last week.

The tragedy was the topic of the week — on local talk shows, in beauty shops, schools, offices, on Fountain Square, in churches and synagogues — as people struggled to understand why Diana's death touched them so deeply.

Some, like florist Stuart Woolley, 72, at downtown's Flowers by Stuart, translated feelings into action. He carried a bouquet of gladioli and carnations to a Princess Diana floral memorial on Fountain Square. "I felt like I really had to do something. She did so much for the entire world just by being herself."

"And I'm not alone," Mr. Woolley said Wednesday. "I've had customers in here getting flowers, and I expect more as the week goes on. People just feel like they need to do something because of the way she touched them."

The human touch

Touch. More than one Tristate mentioned it when speaking of Diana's death.

Her causes were many and diverse. Publicly, Princess Diana embraced leprosy, AIDS patients and cancer sufferers and supported a Canadian-led campaign to ban land mines all over the world.

Less publicly, she visited the homeless in shelters and comforted the sick and dying in hospitals.

"You know she was the first royal to actually touch people," said Florist Dennis Butcher, 53, of Hyde Park. "The queen, the prince, no one's allowed to touch them. But Diana broke that mold. She reached out to touch commoners and she welcomed their touch. She didn't come off as 'one of them,' and I think that warmed people to her."

"Regardless of who you are, or where you're from, when a person does things from their heart it means a whole lot. She was a giving person," said Lisa Cooper, 46, of College Hill.

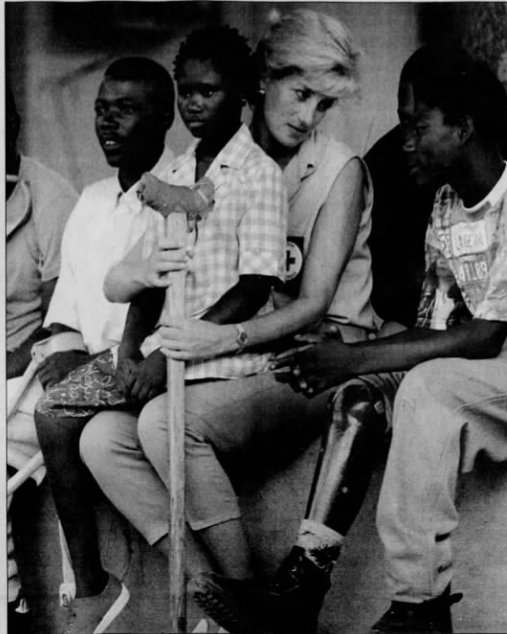
Rick River, 31, of Hyde Park and a volunteer at AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati, even went so far as to suggest that her touch changed the world.

"She always touched and hugged people with AIDS to show us she wasn't afraid. She showed people who knew nothing about AIDS and HIV that people with it still needed the human touch. The rest of the world learned from her."

"I think when she hugged that patient on camera that was a huge boost for people working within the AIDS community. And I think it made more people feel it was OK to work within the community, or even to work to work within the community."

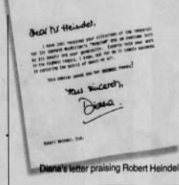
Inspiring good works

"We're talked about her inspiration. People are going to pick up and start doing (charity work) because of her influence," said the Rev. Paul Scott, 33, of the New Commandment Christian Fellowship in Norwood. "She demonstrated that a lot of good could be



With her look, her touch, Diana comforted amputees, people with AIDS and many others.

A meeting with Diana



Phyllis Weston, director of the art gallery at Closson's in downtown Cincinnati, met Diana in 1988. She toured an exhibition of paintings of the London City Ballet company with her in London's Royal Festival Hall. It featured the work of Diana's favorite artist, Robert Heindel, a native of Toledo.

"She was surrounded by so many security people, that at that time, I felt sorry for her," Mrs. Weston said.

Mrs. Weston was invited to the open-

ing because she had had an exhibit of Mr. Heindel's work at Closson's.

"She said to me, 'You know, I have waited for two years to see the Heindel paintings of my ballet company, and I am just so touched.'"

Then she invited Mrs. Weston to view them with her.

"I was impressed that she was not affected or acting. She was... looking at art the way it should be, and getting a real emotional experience with the artist, with the work."

"And we shared this together, so that made me very happy."

Phyllis Weston

done, and that's going to be missed."

At the offices of AVOC, which sponsors the AIDS Walk Sept. 27, "the phone has been ringing off the hook," Mr. River said.

"With people volunteering to walk, their friends of theirs."

"We've been asking if it's related to Diana's death and they say, 'Yes, we heard about it and want to do something.'"

The same thing happened when Princess Diana publicly admitted to suffering from bulimia. Her confession was a service to eating disorder treatment programs in this country, said Dr. Michael Maloney, 52, director of the Eating Disorders Clinic at Children's Hospital Medical Center.

"By Princess Diana discussing her bulimia in public, it was helpful over the years for families coming to us for medical help," Dr. Maloney said. "Not glamorizing it, but saying how difficult it was to deal with, helped other patients to get the treatment they needed."

Fears for the prince

Diana's death was a topic of conversation all week at the alternate Seton High School on Cincinnati's west side. "It was the first thing we talked about in class... then it was all we talked about in the lunchroom," said

17-year-old Katy Rogers of Price Hill.

"For me," she said, "it's because she was a true princess."

"People were drawn to her life, but I was generally a tragic life — a husband who didn't love her, but she's still trying to raise the kids right. Then, the royal family came to her and she keeps working for people, trying to keep her kids out of the public eye, so they could have some kind of real life."

"I feel really bad for her sons," said Seton senior Julie Johnson, 17, of Delhi Township.

The relationship between the children and the royal family is something that also worried Mr. Jett, a parent of three. "Will her kids get a chance to grieve? We all know there's no warmth or caring in the family. I can only hope the royal family learns from this."

At the Tea Room of Glendale, where the menu's Foulard de Princess honors Diana, the magnitude of the children's loss also was felt.

"We all loved to watch her," Tea Room owner Jean Wagner said. "She was a bright light who has been matched from us, we won't see her at William's coronation. I think everyone feels sad for the little prince without their mother."

"She was the warmth in their lives."

As he cut their hair, other parents expressed the same feelings. Salon XXII owner Bob Young, 29, of Walnut Hills said, "People keep saying, 'What about her kids? They had the best role model in the world, a woman who worked with hundreds of charities, and not just in name only."

"She showed them the other side of royal life, and she showed them about loving and caring."

A role model lost

"We thought a princess could not die," said Lauren Budd, 16, a junior at Wyoming High School, pointing to Diana's genuine goodness. "She could have taken the publicity of being a princess and done nothing. She went beyond the call of anyone in the public spotlight."

Donna Ochler, 40, marketing director of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, looked at her as a serious role model as well.

"She seemed to follow William Wordsworth's saying, 'Others will love what you love, and you will show them how in her work and her commitment to her children.'"

Diana the role model inspired Seton students as well. "Especially at Seton, where it's all women," said senior Kim McCabe, 17, of Delhi. "She was an important woman and a

really important role model for other women."

Princess Diana's personal demons — infertility, her eating disorder, divorce, losing her crown — all resulted in her bouncing back, stronger than ever. Americans could identify with that.

Her imperfections are something that intrigued Mr. Jett: "Here was a woman who had her failures and her successes from the very beginning, but she still did a fantastic job showing us how a woman can work through failures and still be regal."

"What I'm hearing here," said Pigalis, cafe general manager Jim Walter, 36, of downtown, "is that people admire her because she had guts. She had guts enough to get out of a bad marriage. She had guts enough to take on the royal family. She had guts enough to take on world leaders on the land mine issue."

Ms. Reed, for example, admired her so much she had to stop watching the coverage. "I never met her, but I know I'd feel comfortable with her. I love the way she carried off that 'in your face' with the royal family and still came out smelling like a rose."

Close to her nanny

"I have cried so much," said Bernice Robinson, 65, of Mount Adams, who is a British citizen. "My English friends are grieving, because only after she's gone do you realize what an enormous part of your life she was."

She knew one of the nannies in British aristocratic circles.

Children of aristocratic families rarely see their parents, Ms. Robinson said. Born Diana Spencer in 1961, her childhood was scarred by her parents' divorce when she was 6.

"The nannies became close to their charges. When her nanny moved to another family, Diana kept in touch."

"The tale is, she was a gogetter from when she was a small child. Her mother's second husband had an estate next to a royal castle in Scotland, and one day when Diana was 6 or 7, she announced to her playmates she'd marry someone over that wall. She felt there would be security for herself and her children."

"It sounded crazy to want to be the queen of people's hearts, but that's what she did," Ms. Robinson said. "She cared for people and they cared back."

She stole the show

Will the British monarchy be different now?

"It's got to have an impact. There's a lot of emotion, a lot of public feeling in England. It may well have repercussions in the future for the royal family," said John Mason, 36, a native of Liverpool, England, who lives in Madeira.

It was Diana, rather than Prince Charles, who stole the show in public appearances. The camera loved her, but in the end, it may have contributed to her death.

"I am sad, I was devastated when I heard," said 17-year-old Lori Centry of Delhi. "I am angry that it happened the way it did, paparazzi hounding her to death. I hope her death can serve as an example that people deserve their space and their privacy."

"They do, but it was greed that killed her," said Seton High senior Laura Bernstein, 17, of Western Hills. "People drive the machine. They want to see the pictures, so the press takes them. But now, because of Diana's death, we can see the extremes these people will go to, and that makes me sad."

"People must stop buying tabloids," agreed Tammy Bailey, 30, of Hartwell, a native of Derby, England. "If they really want to show respect, they should set up donations in stores next to the tabloids. Give people a choice: buy this magazine with trash, or make a donation to a good cause."

But some feel there is more tragedy to the story.

"To me it's kind of sad that the other two people got lost in the shuffle. There's so much focus on Diana, but there were two other people that got killed, plus another hurt," said Gary Root, 48, of Wyoming who works for AT&T downtown.

Said Tricia Gallagher Hempel, 38, of Cincinnati's Catholic Telegraph: "Last night, my 6-year-old daughter asked me to help her pray for Diana's sons, William and Harry. I did gladly, and while we were at it, I threw a few in for Charles, that he may protect his sons as their mother might have wished. I have added Diana to my evening prayer list as well."

"I also spoke at length to my daughter about princesses and fairy tales and reality."

Mrs. Hempel said last week she planned to rise once again at 5 a.m. to watch the funeral for Diana in London. This time with her daughter at her side. Perhaps it will serve as a cautionary tale for her — and for all of us."



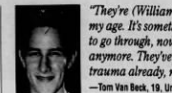
"I don't know if it will inspire people to join in and do charity work, but she definitely inspired people to show compassion, love and understanding. Why? Because she was a role model. She led by example."

—Kim McCabe, 17, Seton High School senior



"She was always smiling. She wasn't afraid of people. Some are kind of stand-offish, but she hugged people, she shook their hand, she waved, she was a people person."

—Joni McMillan, 28, Arganda



"They're (William and Harry) about my age. It's something that they have to go through, now that she's not around anymore. They've been through so much trauma already, now this."

—Tom Van Beck, 19, University of Cincinnati student