

Young Woman Loved Life and Music

continued from Front

Barbies — we must have had every Barbie made."

Kendra's father Kenneth bought his daughter a 1957 Chevy Barbie car and one of her Barbies, a 1951 special edition, turned out to be worth \$5,000. But when Isadore went to sell it she found it in the dog's mouth. The legs were detached and the body was chewed up. Isadore remembers her daughter being understandably upset.

If there was anything Kendra loved more than Barbies it was music. She grew up with music in her blood. Her father started play-

ing the bass when he was 14 and never turned back. Kenneth remembers as soon as she could speak she started singing. All though her school days she sung in choir.

"She liked to sing — that was her thing," he said. "She had a loud voice. Just like me."

Dancing was also top on her list of favorite activities. One day after a choir performance James' parents surprised her with tickets to MC Hammer. She brought him a rose and gave it to him at the concert.

"That was one of her finest moments," Isadore said. "She stood in the aisle right in front of him and

She always told me, 'I'm going to get myself together together.'

— Judith Badou, Kendra James' stepmother

danced her little heart out."

After Kenneth and Isadore separated, Kendra's stepmother, Judith Badou moved into the picture. Kendra was 13 and Badou remembers feeling an immediate connec-

tion with her stepdaughter. Badou said she was a sweet girl who loved to have her hair done and who accepted her four stepbrothers and sisters like her own blood.

"She was really close to them," she said. "I loved her just like one of my own kids."

Kendra also has children of her own, Melvin James, 3, and Marques Farris, 1, who are now in the care of Kenneth and Badou. The family describe Melvin as a youngster full of life as his mother was and Marques as always a happy baby.

The last time they saw their mother was the day before her

death. She came over to visit and kissed Melvin before leaving.

Although Kendra had run-ins with the law for drugs and theft issues, her family swears she was trying to turn her life around. They hold no doubt in their minds that she would have finished school and cleaned up.

"She always told me, 'I'm going to get myself together,'" Badou said.

Unfortunately, she never got the chance. Now her family is faced with picking up the pieces. Her sister Karisa is coping as well as she can, Isadore said.

Kenneth can't help but shake his head and wonder why the

police had to shoot his daughter. Isadore makes a stoic effort to fight back tears. But the most unsettling thing, Badou said, are the surviving children.

"They know something's not right," she said. "It's so sad."

Last week the family attended a prayer vigil on the North Skidmore overpass where Kendra was killed. The weather was chilly and Badou took the children to the car. She told them they could have their own prayer session inside.

"Melvin clasped his hands and lowered his eyes and then he said, 'God bless my mom,'" Badou said. "It broke my heart."



PHOTO BY RON WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Helen Sherman, a local representative of the NAACP, answers a reporter's question during a downtown rally. The civil rights group is calling for changes in police practices and asking all concerned residents to seek justice in the police shooting death of Kendra James.

Community Casts Doubt on Police

continued from Front

Rev. Roy L. Tate of Christ Memorial Church of God in Christ, who led one of the vigils, told The Oregonian, "It appears that when it comes to people of color, it's shoot first and get acquitted later."

North Precinct Officer, Rick Bean, pulled over a 2002 Chevrolet Cavalier carrying James, her boyfriend, Darnell White and the driver, Terry Jackson, at 2:40 a.m. Monday, May 5, east of North Interstate Avenue on Skidmore Street, for

failure to come to a complete stop.

Officers Kenneth Reynolds III and McCollister also responded to the call.

As Jackson was taken into custody for having no license, officers and witnesses say James climbed into the driver's seat. Then three officers struggled with James, who started the car with the driver's door still open. Reynolds fired a stun gun at James, but the probe failed to pierce her skin.

As the car began to move, McCollister fired one fatal shot

from his 9 mm into James' side.

James had a recent warrant for her arrest for failure to appear in court on a drug charge.

"That did not have anything to do with the shot," said Larry. "I think it tells us where we truly are as a community and a society. This young lady was going through some growing pains, but now she won't have a chance to turn her life around."

McCollister is on paid leave while the police bureau conducts an internal investigation.

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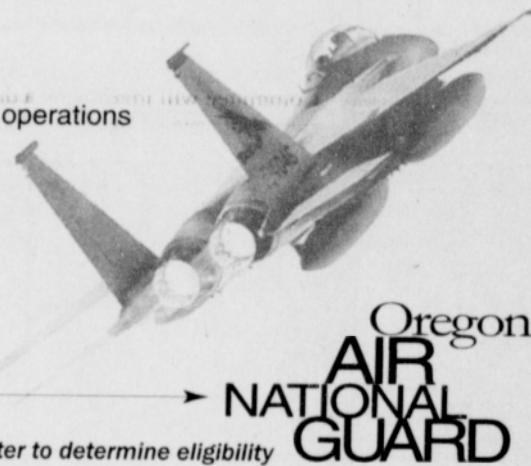
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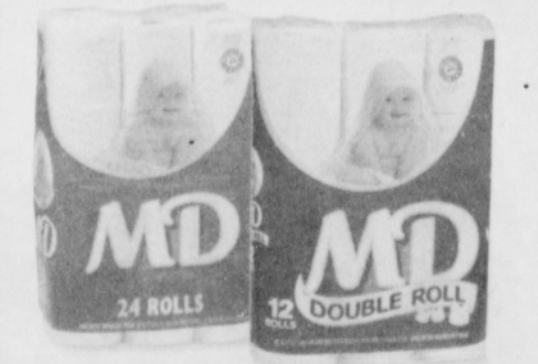


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