

Class of '95 creates memorial bench for classmate



Above: Completed bench resides at Heppner High School. Below: Work in progress as the bench was being built.

By members of Heppner High School, Class of 1995.

The last time Deanna Nadine Peck spoke was in the spring of 2004. Over 15 years later she finally left this world behind. This is a story about inspiration, friendship, and school spirit. This is Deanna's story.

Deanna was loved by everyone, not just her family. Kindhearted, generous and fun loving are words all of us would use to describe her. Saying she was a good friend would be an understatement. She was full of life and whenever she was there, she brightened the room for all of us.

Deanna was a great classmate and an even better person. She loved outdoor activities, hunting, camping, etc. She loved being around her friends. Going to the speedway was by far one of her most favorite things to do.

On Saturday, May 1, 2004 Deanna set out to do what she loved most, spend another day at the racetrack. On the drive she was joined by her father, her sister, her nephew, and her beloved two-year-old son. This was meant to be a fun-filled family day at the races. Unfortunately, and tragically, what happened along that



Deanna Peck (left) and her friend April Rollis played volleyball at HHS.

drive would change their lives forever. They never made it to the track.

Deanna was in the driv-

er's seat when her car was struck by a pickup truck on Highway 207 outside of Hermiston. Everyone



Deanna and her son Damon.



in the car survived, but not without severe injuries. The driver of the truck by all accounts, walked away.

Deanna was air-lifted, along with her sister, to OHSU in Portland, where she was treated for multiple and massive injuries, including severe head trauma. She was eventually placed in a medical coma and was never able to speak again. That was the day she began the long fight for her life. From that day forward, her life story changed but her courage and spirit for life endured.

She later was transferred to Marquis Mt. Tabor long term care facility in Portland. Friends and family visited often. She was conscious but had no awareness of her surroundings. She remained there from 2004 until her passing on February 10, 2020.

Deanna will forever be remembered in the hearts of all of us.

Within days, the news of Deanna's passing circulated amongst all of her classmates. We learned more about the depths and years of struggle she endured. Ideas started flying back and forth. How could we memorialize Deanna's

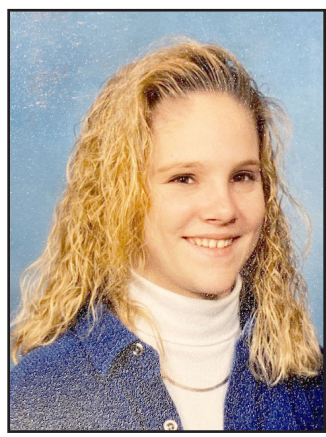
life? A scholarship perhaps? After brainstorming we decided to build a memorial. Not just any memorial, but a bench that represented her tough, yet classy and enduring spirit.

The project was nearly a year in the making and was put together as a collaboration of the class of 1995, and in association with people in the community, teachers and coaches.

The tailgate is a 1977 Chevy Truck tailgate to honor the year Deanna was born. It was purchased and shipped from Georgia to Portland, then was delivered by a classmate to Lexington (Deanna's hometown). It ended up at Coil Fabrication, where the frame was fabricated and coated.

The concept and design were originally created and agreed upon by members of the class of '95. The finishing touches were installed by classmates in Lexington. "The Bench" was eventually transported to Heppner High School where it resides today.

For Deanna's friends



Deanna Nadine Peck

and family, we sincerely hope this bench will be something for them to remember Deanna by for many years to come. For HHS classes going forward, the class of 1995 sends an ongoing message "to cherish your time here and never take your classmates for granted." Deanna's legacy is an inspiration. We hope her story will be a forever reminder of how to walk through this life with kindness, spirit, determination and joy.

In Loving Memory of Deanna Nadine Peck 1977-2020. Our thanks to Heppner High School for giving "Deanna's Bench" a home.



(L-R): Deanna Peck, April Rollis and Tina (Chinen) Holtz.

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 There are two homes on this property. The bigger one is a 3 bedroom 1 bath 958 sq ft now renting for \$800 per month. Smaller home is a 1 bedroom 1 bath 576 sq ft renting for \$400 a month. There are water rights from the creek to water the yard and a shed in the back. Located on a dead end street. Call for an appointment and have a look.
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Information deemed correct not guaranteed

