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News / GTA

## College student dies after Hwy. 7 crash near Trenton

Aaron Murray was coming home from an unpaid overnight shift after working at his job on little sleep. He died Monday following a head-on crash.

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Hope Paterson and her fiancé, Aaron Murray, before their son Jude was born. Murray died this week.

By: [Zoe McKnight](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Thu Apr 10 2014

Aaron Murray's life was just starting when it stopped short on a dark stretch of Highway 7 at 5:30 a.m. last Thursday.

A new father to a 3-week-old son, engaged to his girlfriend Hope Paterson and almost done college, the 21-year-old was on his way home to Trenton after an unpaid night shift working as a campus security guard at Trent University in Peterborough. He was starting university in the fall with an ultimate goal of becoming a politician.

The Loyalist College student was doing a 140-hour unpaid work practicum for his protection, security and investigations diploma and was a few weeks from completion.

Halfway home, he crossed the centre line and struck an oncoming vehicle. He was airlifted to St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto with severe head trauma. The other driver was hospitalized but will recover.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation. Though Murray was often tired, he was comfortable working nights and never texted while he drove, Paterson said.

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The day before the crash, Murray had slept for a few hours after his overnight shift before heading to an afternoon shift at a Trenton McDonald's, where he is a manager. After a short break in the evening, he made the hour's drive back to Peterborough to check in for 9 p.m.

"I never thought he wouldn't come home to me. It wasn't something that ever crossed my mind," said Paterson as her bright blue eyes welled up with tears. They met last year in a class at Loyalist, where she is also a student. His pickup line to her involved his 98.5-per-cent average.

Paterson, her son Jude and Murray's family kept vigil for him until he was removed from life support on Monday. Paterson spent his last night curled up on his hospital bed. His kidneys, pancreas, lungs and liver were donated.

Paterson's mom, Donna, said some members of her future son-in-law's family had expressed concerns about his working hours, though her daughter disagreed.

"He really wanted me to stay home with Jude and give him the best start at life. That's why he worked so hard. He wanted to be home for me but he knew he had to work



hard,” Paterson said. A trust fund has been set up for the baby’s education.

Murray loved his program and the college, Paterson said.

“He was a wonderful young man who made many contributions to the college community,” said Loyalist College president Maureen Piercy. The college approves all work experience for credits and requires weekly progress reports, she said.

“There’s a lot of oversight. It’s well designed and well managed and well monitored and carefully evaluated.”

Doing work in exchange for academic credit means Employment Standards Act provisions including minimum wage and hours of work do not apply. Estimates vary and no government agency is keeping track, but there could be as many as 300,000 unpaid interns in Ontario alone. About 200,000 are enrolled in school.

In 2011, Edmonton college student and intern Andy Ferguson, 22, was killed when he was driving home from an unpaid overnight shift at a radio station. He had worked a paid shift before that, and his family believes he fell asleep at the wheel halfway through his commute home, according to local media.

Ferguson’s death prompted a provincial review of practicums in public post-secondary schools.

Ontario currently has no plans to review practicum programs offered by colleges and universities, said Tanya Blazina, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Providing safe working environments is the responsibility of the college or university, she said in a written statement.

Murray chose Trent for his practicum because he would be attending the school’s forensic science program in the fall, said acting president Steve Pillar, adding the student normally worked 10-hour shifts no more than four days in a row.

Besides being a dedicated student, peer tutor and father, Murray was also a justice studies representative on student government since September.

“The odd time he did miss a meeting he made sure we knew exactly why, and it was because his fiancée was pregnant,” said Chantel Johnston, Loyalist student council president, who recalled his good manners and patience. “He still missed very few.”


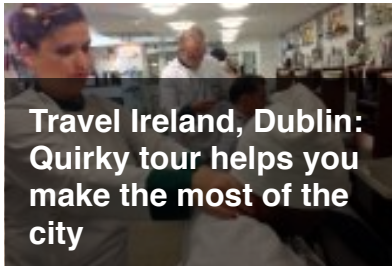


Loyalist College held a memorial this week for Murray. The flag at Trent University has been lowered to half-mast in his honour.

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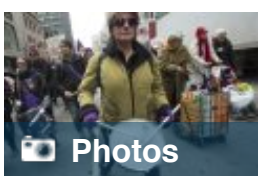
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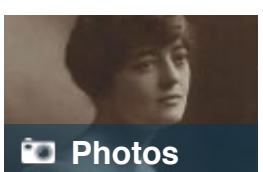
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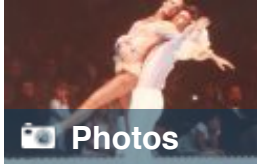
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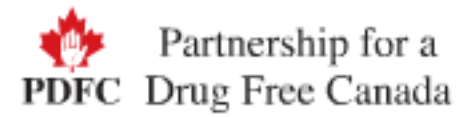


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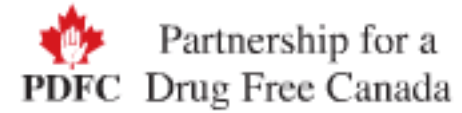
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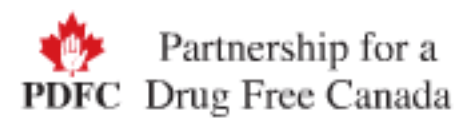
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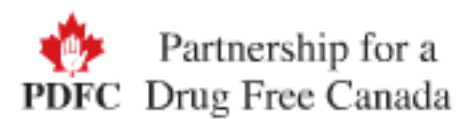
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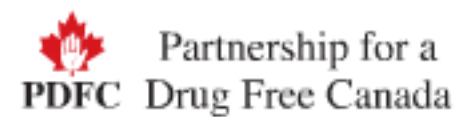
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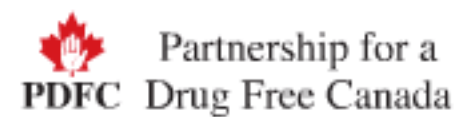
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