

Tustin native dealing with work-related death of father

Cadillac News -By Rick Charmoli [04/06/2013](#)



Danielle Dole struggles every day with the loss of her father.

On April Fool's Day, Dole typically would get a call from her dad, Sherman Holmes, and he would tell her jokes.

Last Monday, there was no such call.

Every Christmas, the Tustin native would spend the holiday with both her parents even though they were divorced and had been for a number of years. The past two holiday seasons, a spot at the table was left unfilled.

This is part of the grief Dole deals with every day. While death is inevitable, Dole's father didn't die after a long sickness or from natural causes. He died from a work-related accident. He was 55.

Dole didn't get to say goodbye. She didn't get the chance to introduce her father to his yet-to-be-born granddaughter. Her son Jackson, who was 2 when Holmes died on Feb. 1, 2011, will only have fleeting memories of his Papa Sherman.

"I should have done things," Dole said over the phone from her home in Virginia. "I took time with him for granted. His grandson will never get to fish with him."

DEALING WITH THE PAIN

Like all people, Holmes wasn't perfect. He had his vices, like playing cards with his friends. Being an avid outdoorsman, he spent a lot of time away from his family hunting and fishing. In spite of that, it was evident Holmes loved his children and grandchildren. He was a hard worker and would do anything for anyone if he could help them.

He worked 35 years at Pine River Area Public Schools as a custodian and bus driver. He also was a logger, which was fitting for a man who loved to be outside. He retired from the school district in the spring of 2010 and started working for a logging company in October. He was on the job less than 6 months before he was killed.

Since his death, Dole has had to get counseling to deal with some of the emotions. Even though it has been two years since the accident, tears flow easily when she speaks about her father.

"I can't stand to be around trees," she said. "I can't stand to be in the woods. It suffocates me. My grandparents died when I was 11. My sister lost a child, but to get a phone call that your father died in the woods, I was shocked. I want him to answer a call. I'm always waiting to have contact. There is no closure."

NOT ALONE ANYMORE

A few months after her father died, Dole and her sister received a flyer from the United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities. The non-profit organization is a support group made up of families who have been in the same situation and understand the emotions and questions people like Dole may have regarding the loss of their family member.

The group has helped make things easier, but the struggles still remain for Dole. It has made her stronger, however, knowing that she is not alone and others are dealing with the same emotions.

“It is like my extra family,” she said.

In addition to the the support, Dole said the group also advocates for the families who have lost loved ones by lobbying in states and in Washington, D.C., for the transformation of the work environment to safe and healthy conditions for all workers.

Through the group, Dole said she has figured out a way she can bring awareness to workplace safety as well as honor the memory of her father.

On June 1, there will be a 5K Run-Walk held at Pine River High School. The event will be known as the Sherman L. Holmes 5K Run-Walk, and the event will raise money for the Sherman L. Holmes and Betty Holmes Memorial Scholarship. It will be given annually to a Pine River senior.

The race also will feature an area to educate people about worker safety and a mini Faces Campaign, which highlights workers whom have died. The Faces Campaign is an initiative of the USMWF and is designed to give workplace fatalities a face by showing the photos of those people who have died on the job, like Holmes. The ultimate goal is to bring awareness and educate workers, employees, organizations and the government.

“It is a way to keep my father alive,” she said. “When I run it is my quiet time. It is a spiritual time when I talk to God, and I talk to my father. It is my outlet, and it has helped.”

- What: Sherman L. Holmes 5K Memorial Run/Walk
- When: June 1. Packet pick up and late registration is at 7:15 a.m. followed by the 5K run at 8 a.m. The 5K walk begins at 8:15 a.m.
- Where: Pine River High School, 17445 Pine River Road
- Registration: \$20 per person or \$20 for the first family member and \$15 for each additional. Children under 10 are free but must be accompanied by an adult. The first 75 to register will receive a race t-shirt and goodie bag.
- Registration forms are available at sherman-holmes.blogspot.com or by contacting Nicole Boone at nickel778@aol.com or (419) 722-4072 or Danielle Dole at elleyad98@aol.com.

Workers Memorial Day is April 28

- Each year, more than 2 million women and men die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases.
- Workers suffer approximately 270 million occupational accidents each year, and fall victim to some 160 million incidents of work-related illnesses.
- Hazardous substances kill 440,000 workers annually while asbestos claims 100,000 lives.

- Worldwide, one worker dies every 15 seconds and in the U.S., 14 workers die every day due to preventable incidents.

- Workers Memorial Day a day of mourning and remembrance of lost loved ones. People will reminisce and grieve for loved ones throughout the year but on April 28 there is some recognition and acknowledgement for the injured, ill and lost at work.

SOURCE: United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities

What a touching story. I am glad Danielle is creating the run to honor her father.
johnanewquist

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Many thanks to Danielle for sharing this painful story, and for working to prevent others from suffering the same fate. I know it must be hard to keep telling the same heartbreaking story, but it's so important to show the effects of unsafe workplaces. Thank you, Danielle and everyone else who's doing this brave work!
Liz_B

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We are all so very proud of Danielle and her sister Nicole for being able to share their pain so freely. I know the only reason she bares her soul the way she has is she does not want anyone to endure what she has and she wants others to learn from her fathers death. It really can happen to anyone and until it does most of us have no clue the impact it will have on our lives.
tammy m

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