

GoFundMe launched following death of young Aurora pilot to further legacy

A GoFundMe campaign has been launched in memory of Aurora's Savanna May Royes, who was killed in a mid-air crash near Steinbach, MB, on July 8, while studying for her pilot's license.

Royes, 20, a student pilot, was mid-flight in a single-engine plane when it was involved in a mid-air collision with another student pilot, also flying a single-engine plane. The student pilot of the other plane, Sreehari Sukesh, was also killed.

"We have lost a daughter, sister, cousin, niece, girlfriend, student, and friend, who touched the lives of everyone she met," said loved ones in a statement through their GoFundMe campaign, which is designed to help support her family and further Savanna's legacy. "At just 20 years old, Savanna May Royes was determined to pursue her dream of becoming a commercial pilot, following in the footsteps of her father and the many other professional flyers from her family. We are heartbroken to share that she was taken from us far too soon in a mid-air collision during her flight training. We are saddened that one other student pilot lost their life as well.

"Savanna was the youngest of three children and was much loved by her older brother and sister, Sam and Breanna. Her parents, Loraine and Tim, adored her endlessly, and loved watching their youngest dance through life with a passion and tenacity that was felt by everyone who knew her. She was devoted in every facet of her short life, embracing her identity as a woman of colour and overcoming any and all obstacles to achieve her dreams. Savanna's compassion, empathy, kindness, and character were boundless, and her absence has devastated us beyond words.

"Savanna was also much loved by her boyfriend, Jaxon. The bond they shared was undeniable, and her love for Jaxon extended to his family. His sister, London, and his mother, Kelly, loved Savanna as one of their own, and both families knew that Savanna received as much love as she always gave."

Funds raised through the campaign will support funeral and transportation costs, as well as create a scholarship in Savanna's name to "honour her memory by helping others follow their dreams, just as she had been doing, and just as she always encouraged others to do so."

Her family notes additional GoFundMe donations will also support IRAL Creatives, a Manitoba organization showcasing African, Latin, and Caribbean arts, culture and music.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada continues its investigation into the incident.

A celebration of Savanna's life was set to take place Wednesday, July 30, at 1 p.m. at Cedarview Community Church. Attendees were encouraged to wear white or colourful clothes "in recognition of the light and joy Savanna brought to all."

For more on the fundraising campaign, visit www.gofundme.com/f/savanna-may-royes-a-young-pilots-life-cut-short.

By Brock Weir
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