

THE PENDULUM

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Above: Michelle Pflieger, a freshman who died Sept. 24, poses in New York City. Top right: Pflieger stands in a field. This photo is being used for her prayer card, sent out by family and friends from her home in Great Meadows, N.J. Bottom right: Pflieger and friends from an Elon Adventures in Leadership trip this summer pose with the letters "AIL" written on their hands. PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Pflieger leaves behind legacy of friendship, strength

Jack Dodson
News Editor

Michelle Pflieger's room at home in small-town Great Meadows, N.J., is filled with equestrian award ribbons, and her mom says she intends to keep it that way, even though Pflieger won't be coming home.

Pflieger died Sept. 24 after she collapsed while walking to class at Elon University, three days short of being on campus a full month as a freshman.

"Her room (at home) is filled with hundreds of ribbons," her mother, Joan Cummins says. "It was her ribbon wall. Just before she left, she won probably about another 20 ribbons at the county fair. She said, 'You're not going to take them down, are you?' And I said, 'Why would I take them down? They're going to be up here forever.' And they will be."

Pflieger, the youngest of three in her family and

the only girl, started riding horses when she was 8 years old, Cummins says. She continued through her days at Elon, bringing her horse Velvet down with her to school, which is a horse for which friends are now raising money to send home.

When she started riding, she joined the 4-H Club many of her friends were involved with — the one Cummins was the leader of. Throughout her life, she rode in 25-mile competitive trail rides, took her horses to the county fair, competed in horse shows and rode many different styles of horseback riding.

And though friends at Elon say she was intending to major in history and anthropology, perhaps one day pursuing a career in archaeology, her friends and family in New Jersey say Pflieger had a different plan. She wanted to move back home so she could take care of the farm, a 3-and-a-half-acre horse farm her family started more than 250 years ago, where she had three horses.

"She wanted to keep the farm in our family, maybe live in the farmhouse her grandmother lives in now," Cummins says. "So that was a very big part of her. She loved her home."

The town, originally called Vienna, was founded by Pflieger's family. It's just outside Hackettstown, the nearby city where she went to high school. But Great Meadows is smaller and mostly farmland, and Cummins says Pflieger loved that about her home.

"She's a farm girl," Cummins says.

In high school, she focused mostly on being a varsity cheerleader and riding, but she also ran track for a couple of years. Cummins says it was this athleticism from a life on a farm that led her to go on the Adventures in Leadership program Elon offers for incoming freshmen, which takes students

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Elon poll finds low approval ratings for Congress

Liv Dubendorf
Senior Reporter

A recent Elon poll found that 47 percent of those polled approve of the job President Barack Obama is doing for the nation, while 23 percent approve of the job Congress is doing.

Hunter Bacot, the director of the poll, said the one trend he saw in the findings from the poll was people remaining disenchanted with politics and their political leaders.

The low approval rating can be accounted for because of recent trends in the economy.

"Of those polled, 60 percent said the economy is the main issue facing

the nation," he said. "They're holding political offices accountable."

Forty-four percent of respondents approved of Obama's handling of the economy and 27 percent said his policies have made economic conditions better. The poll also found that 43 percent of North Carolinians favor ending tax cuts for those households making more than \$250,000 a year.

Using the most recent technological developments, the Elon Poll strives to make results more accurate than ever before, according to Bacot.

Organizers of the poll have had to adapt to various changes in people's lives. "One of the big challenges that we've overcome is the issue of cell

phones," Bacot said.

The Elon Poll has operated within the university for the last 10 years, beginning in 2000. Bacot explained that it surveys citizens across the state of North Carolina, delving into specifics about hot-button issues of the present and attempting to decipher the opinion of the masses.

Bacot explained that the Elon Poll is an integral part of the university.

"Dr. Lambert had the vision to see (the Elon Poll) as a compliment to Elon's mission, where we create engaged citizens," he said.

He explained that polling can demonstrate the high levels of student engagement, attesting to the quality

of students and the university.

According to Bacot, the Elon Poll "is the only poll in the state that interviews all adults," as opposed to just interviewing voters. "Everyone deserved a voice," said Bacot.

Because of the nature of the poll, Bacot said, "We are capable of asking several questions about a policy and share that information with the public."

Mainly concentrating on policy issues, the poll delves into each topic, asking multiple questions to truly

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