

Teeling Tough

Author Harper Lee once said, "She did not stand alone, but what stood behind her, the most potent moral force in her life, was the love of her father."

Roger Teeling's love of his daughter, Brynn Teeling, was just this. Their child-parent relationship was unlike any other. Roger supported Brynn in any decision she made, including the latest one.

Brynn is one of the two senior managers for the Xavier volleyball team this season. Brynn transferred to Xavier as a sophomore and has been a player on the team until this year when she decided to transition into the role of a manager.

"I have played volleyball for so long that I have gotten to the point where I am burnt out on playing," Brynn said. "Instead of completely quitting, I decided to be a manager to stay involved because I love the game."

Brynn's mom, Shannon Keller, commented on how seeing Brynn be part of something that is bigger than herself has been her favorite thing about Brynn's volleyball experience.

The greatest role model Brynn has looked up to while fulfilling this position has been her dad, Roger Teeling. Tragically, in March of this year, he passed away unexpectedly from complications with a brain tumor.

"Losing someone during a pandemic is even harder [than normal] because it is complicated to process," Brynn said. "During a time when nothing feels normal, it was really easy for me to be in denial for a long time. It is finally starting

to set in now that we are in school."

Although Roger is no longer here, Brynn knows he is always cheering her on.

"My dad was my ultimate cheerleader, so I use him as my inspiration. He was always there for me, so I try to do that for my teammates," Brynn said.

The inspiration Brynn has from her dad shows through her actions on the court.

"One time I was having an extremely rough tournament and after every game Roger was there to give me a fist bump and tell me to keep working," junior volleyball player Bella Musick said. "I see that in Brynn. She is always there, good game or bad game, to help us pick our heads up and to keep working."

Soraya Teeling, Brynn's step-mom who had been married to Roger for 12 years, explains how blessed the bond Brynn and Roger shared was.

"Roger and Brynn shared a passion for sports. They were buddies," Soraya said. "He never missed a game and it was effortless for him to be in her presence. I saw the most joyful version of him when she was near."

When Roger attended one of Brynn's games, everyone knew.

"My dad always yelled, 'Let's go!' He had such a booming voice it filled up the whole gym," Brynn said.

Even when he was not vocalizing it, his pride for Brynn was glowing on his face.

"He was so proud of her. He was always on the edge of his seat and quietly smirked with every kill or serving streak she had," Soraya

said. "I think his favorite was when the tournament had no place to sit so he could nervously pace or lean against a wall. Her joys and successes were air to his lungs."

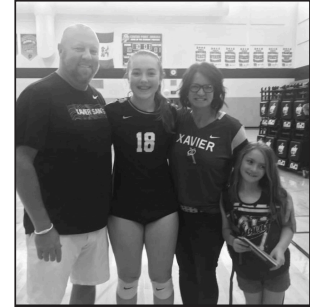
Through this very difficult time, Brynn, her younger sister Elena, Soraya and the rest of Roger's family have been very grateful for the outpouring love and support they have received. Soraya explained that shortly after Roger passed, 30 to 40 cars drove by to drop a smile, card or flower for Brynn. They also received countless cards with Hy-Vee gift cards letting them know they were in their prayers. Baskets were dropped off and there were many texts checking in on them.

"The Xavier community loves without expecting accolades for their kind gestures. They just love," Soraya said.

In the face of this adversity, Brynn has not covered away by any means. She has been the definition of strength and faith and has been an inspiration to many, not only in volleyball, but in how she lives her life.

"Brynn has had a year that very few adults could handle, let alone young adults that are learning how to navigate challenges in life. There will always be hills and valleys when you lose a loved one," Volleyball Head Coach Austin Filer said. "Brynn made the decision to be selfless and commit her time to our players and program. She comes in every day with a smile on her face and an attitude of being a servant."

The Xavier volleyball team has taken inspiration from Roger and Brynn's strong



From left to right, Roger, Brynn, Soraya and Elena Teeling pose for a picture at a Xavier volleyball tournament at Center Point-Urbana in 2018. Photo Submitted.

bond and are honoring him by having #TeelingTough on their warm up shirts this season.

"I was very fortunate to have gotten the opportunity to meet and spend time with Brynn's dad," senior manager Grace Zaugg said. "I did not know him for very long, but he taught me so many life lessons. He was overall an outstanding guy."

The memory of Roger Teeling will forever live on through his daughter and best friend Brynn and the amazing impact she has had on the lives of those around her, especially the Xavier volleyball team.

Rylee Beardsworth
Sports Editor

"Why not us?"

As a runner, it can be hard to have motivation to finish a race. It requires stamina, grit and determination. These are the tools the Xavier boys' cross country team has lived by this season.

The team is led by junior Randall Kinner who is coming off of an eighth place finish at the Clear Creek Amana meet held at the Iowa City Kickers complex on September 28.

For Kinner, a key component for him during a race is knowing the course.

"During races I stay focused by controlling my breathing," Kinner said. "I also use quick decision making to decide how I need to adjust my pace to the course to run the fastest I can."

As the team approaches the state qualifying meet, Kinner is determined to decrease his time and hopefully qualify as an individual and as a team.

"Preparing for the state qualifying meet, I am focusing a lot on my mental stamina to be able to hold my place during the race," Kinner said. "My goal is to run under 17:30 and hopefully qualify for state. My goal for the team this

year is to make the most of the season and not take any practice or meet for granted. We can achieve this by running consistent times and getting faster every meet."

A big motivator for the team is their theme: "Why not us?" Coach Nathan Hopp has kept this phrase as a tradition for many years.

"The first time I used this mantra was back in 2011 after a meet we had in Cascade that didn't go so well," Hopp said. "I brought it back in 2016 under a similar pretense. We had a team meeting and I told them that they are capable of the successes that other teams were having that season. It has stuck around as a reminder to the guys that when they come to practice and put in the effort and work necessary to be successful, they too can compete to their fullest and compete with anyone or any team on any given meet day."

Hopp said this is something this year's team has lived by and it has helped them bond.

"What makes this team special is that despite the small number of boys on the team, we have a group of individuals that get along well with one another and push each other to

be their best day in and day out," Hopp said. "All grades mesh well together, and at the end of the day, each member on the team knows they matter to the success of our team. As a coach, I try to emphasize our team being like a family, in that we may not always see eye-to-eye on everything but we're there for one another when it matters most."

This mantra is something that will hopefully stick with Kinner

and the rest of the team for years to come to help them with anything life throws their way.

The team will compete in their next meet at Oak Ridge Middle School on Saturday, October 10, starting at 10:00 a.m.

Jack Delaney
Sports Writer

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