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Luke Roux Memorial Game



Photo by Paul Palmer

Steve And Carri Roux are presented with the retired number of their late son at the first Farmington Valley Generals' Luke Roux Memorial Game in late December. See story on page 6.

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Life of Luke Roux celebrated by Farmington hockey fans, community

Paul Palmer
By Staff Writer

The scoresheet will say that #3 Luke Watson and #9 Brendan McLaughlin scored the tying and winning goals respectively in the Farmington Valley Generals 2-1 win over East Catholic High School on Dec. 29. But everyone who was at that hockey game will tell you that someone else should get the credit for the win – #16 Luke Roux. Even though he never skated a shift in the game and he wasn't even in uniform, Luke Roux was still the one player on everyone's mind and in everyone's heart that afternoon. "I said please help us on this one," Roux's long-time friend and teammate Watson said.

Six months and four days earlier, and just 11 days after graduating from Farmington High School, Luke Roux was killed by a man police say was driving drunk. Luke was just two miles away from the Farmington home he had grown up in, returning from

playing the other sport he loved - baseball. He always stayed after the game to help put away the equipment and would then head home for a snack and chocolate milk. That night he never made it home. The car Luke was driving was struck by a vehicle police say was being driven 80 miles an hour. The other driver—a 21-year-old man—survived and has been arrested. Luke Roux died at the age of 17.

The news sent shockwaves of grief throughout the Farmington Valley and West Hartford. His friend since childhood, Watson recalled that he was on vacation with his family when he found out. "We were at the beach in Rhode Island and I saw a text from our (hockey) coach. I read the first line and it said we are saddened by the loss of our friend and teammate Luke Roux. I was in shock," he recalled.

Through the fog of their pain and grief, Luke Roux's parents Carri and Steve and his two brothers

decided that the life Luke led and the example he set had to continue. They established the Luke Roux Memorial Fund as a way to keep his memory alive and in their words, "extend indefinitely the love, hope, and kindness that Luke created in his short life." That mission includes educating people about the dangers and consequences of drunken driving. It also includes funding scholarships for groups like the Farmington Valley Generals Hockey, The West Hartford Youth Hockey League, Farmington Little League, and future graduates of Farmington High School. The Generals game against East Catholic was the first Luke Roux Memorial Game with funds from ticket sales, donations made at the door, and the sale of commemorative T-shirts all going to support the efforts.

"He did everything right," Watson said of his friend. "We look back and cherish the moments we had with him and remember the great times."



Photo by Paul Palmer

Luke Roux's #16 jersey hangs on the glass behind The Farmington Valley Generals bench.

Prior to the game, it was announced that Luke Roux's #16 would be retired by the school. Team captains and coaches presented the jersey's to Luke's parents and exchanged emotional hugs. When the teams lined up for the opening faceoff, the Generals had just four players on the ice, leaving empty one space for their fallen friend and teammate.

"That was a really special moment in the pregame and doing it was hard, but it was the right thing to do," said Mike Barone, Head Coach of the Generals.

Tyler Stoneman was a captain of the team last year and a friend of Luke's. He

spoke of how being with Luke always made him want to be the best person he could be. "It's impossible to put into words," Stoneman said. "It was an honor to have him not only as a teammate but as a good friend."

Both Barone and Watson admit that it was a difficult day for everyone involved. "It was a really special moment in the pregame," said Watson, who credits Luke and the Roux family with getting him involved in hockey when they both were young. "Doing it was hard, but it was right. This game was for Luke and his family."

And they both know

that in his own way Luke was there too. "Luke was looking down upon us today," Barone said. "During that pre-game ceremony and the game, he was with us." He coached Luke in his junior and senior years on the hockey team and still smiles when he remembers his player.

"Luke was tremendously important to us," Barone said. "When he came to practice you could recognize him because he was so big on the ice." Luke may not have been the fastest skater or the leading goal scorer, but according to his coach, #16 held a much

See **LUKE** on page 24

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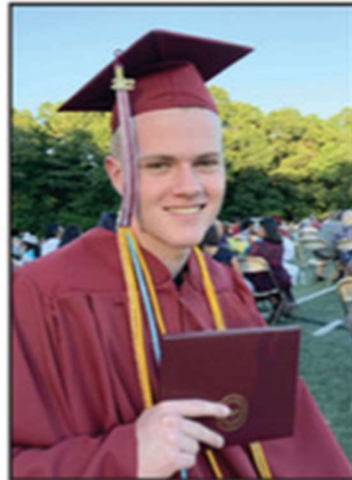
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LUKE from page 6 more important role. "Whatever it took for the team: comradery, friendship, that is what he was all about."

Luke's parents wanted everyone to know how much they appreciate the love and support they are receiving. A statement they issued at the game read in part. "Thank you to the Farmington Valley Generals Family for holding today's Memorial game in Luke's honor. Ice hockey was an important part of Luke's life. As a result, it shaped him into a humble and hard-working member of every team he played for. He knew that showing up is never good enough, you have to come prepared to earn you place on a team and in life every day. The Generals provided an opportunity for Luke to challenge himself, grow his hockey skills, and more importantly prepare him for the future — a future devastatingly cut short by an intoxicated driver."

Watson, who is a



Courtesy Luke Roux Memorial Fund
Luke Roux poses with his High School Diploma.

senior, had a message for anyone that might be getting behind the wheel impaired.

"In that moment you don't think about the impact you can have on a community by putting everyone at risk. All you have to do is ask a friend, call an Uber. There is no reason to drive drunk. A piece of our heart has been ripped out. Our community has suffered."

If you would like to know more about the Luke Roux Memorial Fund, or to donate, go to the: lukeroux-memorialfund.com.



Photo by Paul Palmer

Top, Left: Luke Roux Played Two Seasons For The Farmington Valley Generals.
Above: Farmington Valley leaves one position open at the opening faceoff to honor Luke Roux.



The Generals celebrate an overtime win.