



THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA GUARDIAN AD LITEM FOUNDATION, INC.

Providing for the needs of abused, abandoned and neglected children.

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CLARKE FAMILY PRESENTS CHECK TO NW FLORIDA GUARDIAN AD LITEM FOUNDATION IN MEMORY OF DAUGHTER PAXTON HAMMETT

[Pensacola] – Today Lawrence and Carol Clarke will present the Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Foundation with a generous check in the name of their late daughter, Elizabeth Paxton Clarke Hammett, who was killed in an automobile accident in September.

The Clarkes are long-time Guardian ad Litem volunteers and mentors, representing abused, abandoned and neglected children in dependency court. Larry is also a member of the board of the Northwest Florida GAL Foundation, the program's non-profit arm.

At the time of Paxton's death, Larry was leading a donation challenge to make up for fundraisers that were cancelled due to COVID-19. Despite their grief, the family asked that in lieu of flowers at Paxton's memorial service, donations be made to the Foundation in her memory.

"Paxton was a beautiful, positive, energetic, outgoing young lady who chased every challenge afforded her," they wrote in her obituary. "[She] was a champion of God's disabled, afflicted, uneducated and handicapped and spent much of her time volunteering....A major focus in recent years was that group of young people who left high school without graduating and now needed to pass the GED. She tutored many in their desire to return to productive society and make changes in their lives."

The Clarkes' donation challenge raised more than \$20,000, and they matched the full amount for a total donation of \$41,324.00. Foundation President Alicia Skolrood said the funds are dedicated to the Children in Need Fund "and make up, almost entirely," for the golf tournaments and other fundraisers that were cancelled. "We are all so appreciative of this very generous gift and of Larry's mentorship to so many of us," Skolrood said.

Today the Clarkes are gifting the Foundation another \$8,300.00 in their daughter's name. "We are making plans to use the donation to honor Paxton's life by helping to support vulnerable children," Skolrood said. Besides supporting the Foundation, Paxton's family has created a scholarship in her memory for first-generation students at the University of West Florida.

Guardian ad Litem Circuit Director Bryan Carter is overwhelmed by the Clarkes' generosity. "The matching fund that the Clarkes established, and then the memorial fund created after the tragic loss of their daughter, was a level of commitment I've not seen previously in my years with the Guardian ad Litem Program," he said. "That is love on a different level."

Foundation treasurer Eric Bostwick agreed. He is close friends with the Clarke family and was recruited for the Foundation board by Larry Clarke. "Paxton leaves behind a kind and loving family who will miss her terribly but whose faith is unshakable," he said. "They remain dedicated to helping others and will help us remember Paxton as the brilliant and loving person she was."

To learn more about the Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem Foundation, or to volunteer, please call (850) 390-5003 or visit <https://nwfgal.org>.

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