

LAURA LAMB SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TOWSON ID NUMBER (if applicable):

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (if no TU ID#):

TELEPHONE: HOME:

WORK:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF YOUR DISABILITY:

CUMULATIVE GPA:

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

LAURA LAMB SCHOLARSHIP

THE LAURA LAMB SCHOLARSHIP WILL BE AWARDED EACH YEAR TO A TOWSON UNIVERSITY STUDENT WITH A DOCUMENTED DISABILITY. SEE THE DSS WEBSITE FOR THE AMOUNT OF MONETARY AWARD FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP.

CRITERIA

- 1. A GPA OF AT LEAST 2.5**
- 2. DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY**
- 3. COMPLETION OF ALL SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS BY DEADLINE**

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. COMPLETE ENCLOSED APPLICATION**
- 2. READ THE ATTACHED ARTICLE, “MY LAURA” BY CINDI LAMB**
- 3. SUBMIT AN ESSAY ADDRESSING THE QUESTIONS BELOW:**
 - A. ARE THERE ANY PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, OR MENTAL COMPARISONS YOU CAN MAKE WITH LAURA?**
 - B. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER AS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY IN EVERYDAY LIVING, AND IN THE WORK FORCE?**
 - C. IF YOU WERE CHOSEN TO RECEIVE THE LAURA LAMB SCHOLARSHIP, WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU?**
- 4. RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:**

**KAREN OPPENHEIMER
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
TOWSON UNIVERSITY
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES
8000 YORK ROAD
TOWSON, MD 21252-0001**
- 5. APPLICATION DEADLINE – See Disability Support Services Website information for updated deadline information.**

My Laura

By Cindi Lamb

She was as bright as the brightest sunshine and as pretty as God's sweetest cherub. She was so smart, intuitive, and loving. She gave her love freely and constantly to anyone who wanted it. Her brave and stoic attitude lacks comparison. That was my Laura.

It was a drizzly, chilly Saturday morning in November 1979. Laura was five months old.

"You might just be a ballerina, or an equestrian, or maybe a rock star!" I said to Laura, as I tickled her toes on the way to the grocery market. Laura turned her plump face towards me and cooed in agreement.

The car seat Laura was strapped in would not confine my wriggly 15-month old son Alan, so he stayed home with the babysitter that day. Laura and I traveled westbound on Route 26 towards Frederick, Maryland in our new Ford pickup. We left our house in Unionville about 11:00 am.

By noon, nothing would ever be the same again.

We approached a large hill near a gorgeous horse farm outside of Mt. Pleasant. As I came to the top of the hill, I glanced at my speedometer; I was going about 50 m.p.h. When I crested the top of the hill, I saw several cars traveling up the hill in the opposite direction. The car at the bottom of the hill was swerving.

I thought, "Maybe the driver was trying to pick up something in the car; maybe they were just reaching for something or changing the radio."

The car was going fast, I thought. The big car moved into my lane, then back to the opposite shoulder, back to my lane again. Surely, I thought, the car would get back in the opposite lane, as I started going down the hill. It didn't.

I looked for some place to pull off, but the two-lane highway was flanked by high, jagged rocks on either side of the road. There was no place to go.

The car stopped swerving. Now, it was speeding directly in front of me, in my lane. I could see the driver slumped over the steering wheel.

It's true; your life does flash before your eyes. And if you really think you will die, your bladder releases as well.

Out went the lights. I went on a lovely, phantasmagorical trip. But that's another story.

The back of my head moved away from the seat, as I sucked in a huge breath of air. Spectators at the now windowless truck gasped and turned Casper white as I turned my head to look at them. I felt like I had been swirled in a blender with steel and glass.

I turned my head to the right to look for Laura. She was not in her car seat. She was on the floor, her bright yellow snowsuit was quivering; she was trying to catch her breath. I could hear her gasp. I went to reach for her, but my lower body anchored me to my seat like a block of cement. I thought I was paralyzed.

The ambulance arrived and took Laura to the hospital in Frederick. Another ambulance carried me away after the rescue team used "the jaws of life" to pry me out of the truck.

When we arrived at the hospital, I was placed next to a man curtained off in a cubicle. He was vomiting profusely and it stunk. A policeman entered my cubicle as the doctor was stitching up the gouge in my head.

"Who hit me? Are they OK? Did I hurt anyone? What happened?" I asked.

"No, you didn't hurt anyone. The man that hit you was the only person in the car," the officer told me.

"Did he have a heart attack or something? I saw him slumped over the steering wheel."

"No, he didn't have a heart attack. He...he was drunk."

At that moment, I recognized the stench of regurgitated whiskey in the next cubicle.

"Where's Laura? Is she OK?" I asked the attending physician.

"She's not moving very well; we are going to transport her to Johns Hopkins Pediatric Intensive Care Unit."

"What do you mean, she's not moving ver well?" I asked.

"Laura seems a bit sluggish, and we just [have to check her] thoroughly." The doctor left the room quickly.

I sustained over a dozen broken bones from the waist down and had surgery to repair my left foot. My head was badly cut.

On the third day I was in the hospital, three doctors from Johns Hopkins and my husband entered the room.

"How is Laura? Is she OK? When can I see her?" I asked urgently.

"Mrs. Lamb, I am afraid we do not have good news. Laura sustained a very bad injury to the back of her neck. We have completed surgery, a laminectomy, to relieve the swelling in her spinal cord. Laura is not moving. We do not think she

will move anything but her eyes. Laura is paralyzed from the neck down. We do not know if she will live much longer.” I screamed.

Almost two weeks had passed before I [went to Johns] Hopkins to see my baby. I was in a wheelchair and had a cast on each leg. I wheeled my way through the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU). A cacophony of buzzers and alarms echoed through the hall. Several nurses and doctors accompanied me to Laura’s bed. They helped me out of my wheelchair so that I could finally see my daughter.

I could barely see her tiny body in a web of wires and tubes. Her eyes were closed. The nurses that stood at my side caught me as I nearly passed out from this sight.

Laura began to regain consciousness a week later. She had a tracheostomy performed shortly after her surgery. Her first sign of returning life was a smile.

Laura stayed in PICU for six long months before she returned home to Unionville. She did regain limited movement in her right arm. She could move her head and neck. But nothing else. She had no feeling from her lower neck down.

For the next six years, Laura was almost in PICU as much as she was home. We engaged in a constant tug-of-war with God to keep her happy, at home, and alive.

She tenaciously clung to life, though the doctors had told me she would never make it. She survived dozens of surgeries, multiple lung collapse and pneumonia, broken bones, seizures, respirators and suction machines. Her life was constant turmoil. Yet through it all, she would smile. She would hug me tight and close to her face. And she would tell me over and over and over again, “I Love You, Mommy.”

Although Laura could not move, she moved thousands of people to take a closer look at driving drunk. Laura, it seemed, was the sacrificial lamb and the fuel that drove Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) into the minds and hearts of all Americans. She was a “visual.”

Complaining and whining just didn’t cut it with Laura. When the doctors told me she was too young to operate an electric wheelchair at the age of two, we still managed to get one. Laura was hellbound and determined to move, and move she did. Within a few days, this two-year-old wonder could maneuver her electric wheelchair like Dale Earnhardt at the Indy 500. There was just no stopping her.

Worldwide, there has never been a child under five years old that had sustained such a severe spinal cord injury and lived for more than a few days. This still holds true today.

Laura lived fully, happily, and courageously for six years. She attended Battle Monument School in Dundalk, Maryland, and was loved and admired by all for her sense of humor, her fortitude under the worse conditions, and her bubbly

loving disposition. Laura was vivacious, smart, pretty, and most of all, courageous. Laura Lamb was the most brave person I have ever known.

On March 9, 1986, Laura had a seizure that wouldn't stop. She died on March 12, 1986, from status epilepticus. She was six years old.