

Family friend said Stocks were close knit

By Mark Buffalo

Close knit. That is how one family friend described the Stocks family.

Dixie Rye of Lonoke, the sponsor for the Lonoke High School cheerleading squad and a friend of Joe and Barbara Stocks, said they were devoted parents to their children Heath and Heather.

Joe, Barbara and Heather Stocks were shot to death late Friday night after they returned home from Lonoke's basketball game with Cak Grove. Heath Stocks was charged with three counts of capital murder Sunday.

Rye said she knew Barbara Stocks for a long time.

"Barbara and I graduated from high school together," she said Monday afternoon. "They were devoted parents," adding that they loved their children very much.

She said Heather, who was the captain of the cheerleading squad, was very dependable.

"She made my job very easy," Rye said. "I just had to show up. She was really big on making lists. She was very organized."

Rye said Heather was very professional when it came to cheering. "They [squad] all respected her."

Heather was remembered by more than 50 classmates and parents Sunday afternoon at Lonoke High School. The students put purple and black ribbons on trees, pillars, signs and the flag pole in honor of the Stocks. Barbara Stocks was an aide in the Lonoke High School computer lab.

Lots of the students were supporting each other by crying on shoulders, talking and laughing about the good times. A few of the students remembered Heather fondly.

"She was an angel," tenth-grader Stephanie Finch said Sunday. Finch was on the cheerleading squad with Heather.

Finch said she was "hanging in there," coping with the loss of her friend.

"You have to think about all the good times," she said.

Senior Susan Stewart said she was hurt and upset

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Daughter

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and angry over the incident, adding that she was having trouble sleeping.

Junior Ryan Elmore said he was taking the news well but would miss Heather not being around.

Several other students did not want to talk to a reporter about the murders, adding that one of the Little Rock television stations followed a student home to try to get a comment. They said they would be more willing to talk after everything had sunk in.

Before the students tied the ribbons on the school grounds, Lonoke County Sheriff Charlie Martin and Deputy Sheriff Steve Finch, a criminal investigator with the department, spoke to the students and parents in the auditorium at LHS.

Martin told the students that his door was always open if anyone had any questions he could answer or if they needed someone to talk with.

"You never understand why something like this happens," Martin said.

"We will help in any way we can," he added.

Bob Marble, pastor at Concord United Methodist Church at Furlow, the Stocks' church, said they have been offering counseling to anyone in need.

"All day yesterday [Saturday] we had counselors and ministers working with the youth," Marble said Sunday afternoon. "We just want to work with the youth, adults and teachers."

Marble said the church was open all day and night for those who needed somewhere to go or to talk.

He said they would miss the Stocks.

"We're missing a big part of us and that is hard to walk with," Marble said.

Lonoke High School Principal George Davis said the school would be providing counseling for those who need it. The school district did not have class Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

"I am like everyone else, totally shocked and devastated with it [the murders]," Davis said Monday afternoon.

CHEERLEADER SQUAD

Rye said the cheerleaders would more than likely wear a ribbon on their uniforms in memory of Heather. She also said the basketball teams may do the same thing.

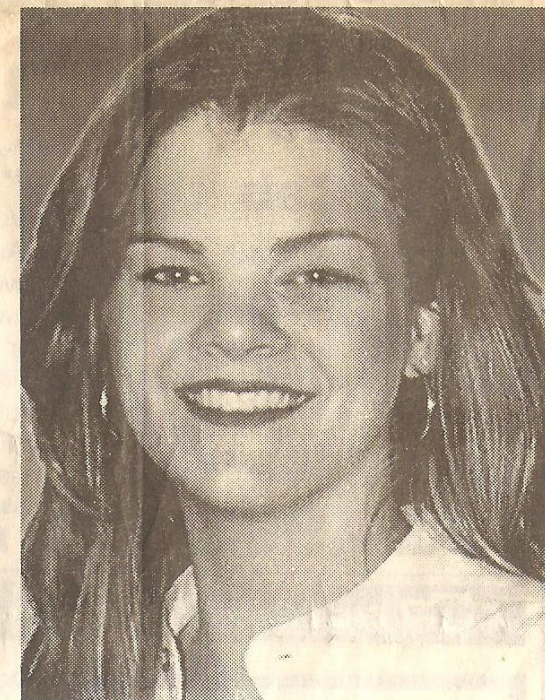
Rye mentioned they may erect a monument in honor of Heather, similar to the one at Nashville High School. At Nashville, the football helmet of a player who died was put on a pillar outside the dressing room in honor of the players.

Rye said they might do the same thing for Heather, using her pom-poms and megaphone.

Rye said Heather was a very pleasant person.

"She never met a stranger and always had a smile on her face," Rye said. "It is a great loss."

A memorial service is planned for Heather Stocks at the Lonoke High School gymnasium Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. The funeral is set for Wednesday afternoon.



HEATHER STOCKS