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'A time to celebrate her, a time for closure'

Elizabeth Sovis honoured at memorial service five years after her death

By Steve Bruce



Edmund Aunger lays a wreath next to the bike he was riding the day his wife Elizabeth Sovis was struck and killed in 2012.

Five years after she was struck and killed while cycling on P.E.I., the family and friends of Elizabeth Sovis returned to the Island Friday to honour her memory.

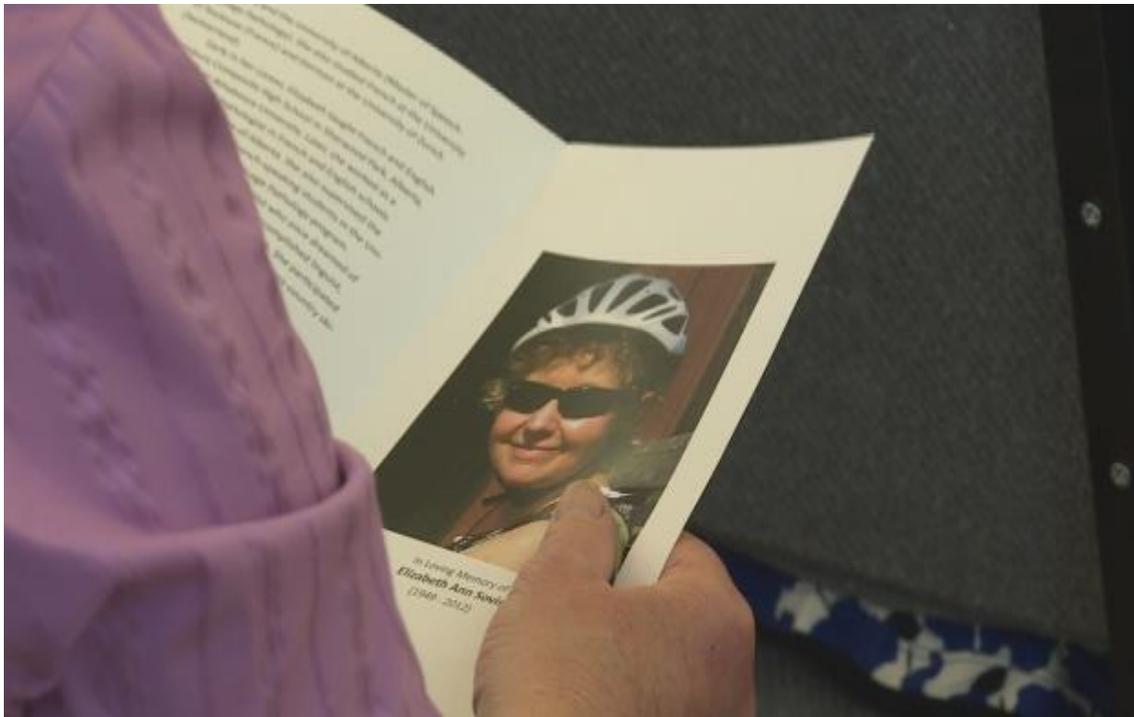
Memorial service



Dozens of people packed into Central Queen's United Church for the memorial service. Throughout the service, the bike Edmund Auger was riding when his wife was killed sat at the front of the church. (Steve Bruce/CBC)

Dozens of people packed into a memorial service at Central Queen's United Church, just a few kilometres from where a drunk driver hit Sovis along the unpaved shoulder of Route 13 in the summer of 2012.

"She died on a Saturday, and we held her funeral the following Saturday. We were all in shock," said Edmund Auger, Sovis' husband, who had been cycling with her at the time. "But we've had time to heal. This is a time to celebrate, a time for closure."



Edmund Aunger says his wife loved cycling, and was often seen looking just like this - her helmet on, ready to hit the trails. (Steve Bruce/CBC)



Edmund Aunger delivered a heartfelt eulogy honouring his wife- sharing memories from the day they met when they were just kids, until the moment she died tragically in 2012.

"She was such a wonderful woman. Very loving, and very loved by so many people," he said. (Steve Bruce/CBC)

Make cycling safer

In the five years since his wife's death, Aunger has been biking the Trans-Canada Trail from British Columbia to P.E.I., highlighting what he calls serious safety issues along the trail, and pushing for changes to make cycling in Canada safer.

Aunger's journey ended Friday when he, along with his friends and family, biked from the church and up Route 13 to the spot where his wife was hit.

Aunger strapped the same bike he was riding five years ago to a post, both to remember his wife, and to remind others how dangerous cycling can be without safer roads.

"This is a painful thing to be reminded of. But this is a statement that safe cycling infrastructure is necessary," he said.



After the church service, RCMP escorted Aunger and dozens of cyclists to the spot where his wife was killed. (Steve Bruce/CBC)

Roadside memorial



Elizabeth Sovis' young granddaughter was one of many who placed flowers along this bike to honour Sovis along the roadside where she died. (Steve Bruce/CBC)



Family and friends of Elizabeth Sovis gathered at the site of her death, and listened as Edmund Aunger read a poem honouring her. (Steve Bruce/CBC)