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A Spirit Runs On Road Race Honors Anderson's Memory

By [Tom Mitchell](#)

Posted 2009-04-27

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HARRISONBURG - After her death in January, Sherry Anderson was remembered by friends and family alike as someone who made a positive impact on the lives of countless people. From the Girl Scouts she led and the students she taught, to her husband and four children and the many close friends she jogged with on a regular basis.

So it was no surprise to see such a huge crowd turn out Saturday to pay tribute to Anderson at the 5K road race that now bears her name.

"The outpouring of this community has been amazing," said Craig Mackail, executive director of the Harrisonburg Education Foundation, which organized the Sherry B. Anderson 5K Run-Walk. "Sherry touched a lot of lives."

The event drew well over 300 entrants to the Daily News-Record parking lot, which served as the run-walk's staging area. And it raised more than \$15,000 for the nonprofit foundation's educational programs and scholarships, according to Mackail.

Family Overwhelmed

The event already had been scheduled as a HEF fundraiser before Anderson's death on Jan. 6. But the event took on a whole new significance after it was renamed in her honor. Anderson, 55, died in a hit-and-run accident while jogging along South Main Street.

Anderson's family admitted that the turnout overwhelmed them. Mark Burcham, 53, one of Anderson's four brothers, was present. Burcham, along with brothers Jimmy Burcham, 52, and Tommy Burcham, 50, live in Anderson's hometown of Colonial Heights while brother Randy Burcham, 56, resides in Hanover County.

"Sherry always kept our family together," Burcham said, "and she did again today."

Anderson's husband, Edward H. "Eddie" Anderson, 61, arrived in a t-shirt that sported a picture of his wife and her tag numbers from previous running events.

Said Anderson: "This is just a great tribute to my wife and what she did."

A 'Meaningful Event'

Many participants were friends and associates of Anderson, a former elementary school teacher who was working as a consultant at JMU's child development clinic at the time of her death.

A Harrisonburg couple, Nick and Nicky Swayne, had known Anderson for years.

"My daughter and Sherry's daughter belonged to the same Girl Scout troop," said Nick Swayne, 47, who called the 5K a "meaningful event" for the community. "This race lets us show support for Sherry and her family."

Honoring Her Memory

Nicky Swayne, 43, from Harrisonburg, said she knew the race, held under blue skies and with temperatures in the summer-like 80s, would be well attended with people wanting to honor Anderson's memory.

"This is a beautiful spring day, and you're doing it for a good cause," she said.

Others echoed the Swaynes' remarks.

Said Kathy Barrett, 50, of Harrisonburg: "We're just out here in memory of Sherry and to support her efforts."

Contact Tom Mitchell at 574-6275 or mitchell@dnronline.com

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Runners and walkers head south on Liberty Street during the Sherry B. Anderson 5K Run-Walk on Saturday. The race was renamed for Anderson, an avid jogger, after died in January in a hit-and-run accident.

Photos by Michael Reilly

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