

Alfred University student dies

6/10/05

Alfred University student Heather Rivera, 21, of 36 Emmett Street, Hornell, died Wednesday, June 8, 2005, at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, where she was taken after becoming ill at home. Born in Hornell on April 18, 1984, Heather was a graduate of Hornell High School, class of 2002, where she was a cheerleader, a member of the show choir, a member of the track team and participated in a number of theatrical productions. She had attended Alfred State College before transferring to Alfred University. She would have been a senior education major this fall. She continued her interest in the performing arts as a student at AU. Kellie French, president of the Alfred chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, the service fraternity, remembers Heather as "someone who loved performance, especially music. Anyone who knew her would tell you how lively, creative, passionate, and witty she always was. "Besides being involved with AU Chamber Singers and, more recently, AU Orientation Guides, she was brothered into APO in the fall of 2004 and became Chair of Public Relations in January of 2005. She was extremely devoted to the fraternity, and was rarely without an idea for its betterment. Her charisma helped attract several new members, besides so many other aspects upon which she has left a lasting mark." "Though a diabetic and a cancer survivor, Heather was never defined by her health level," French wrote about her friend. "For some time now, I have been thoroughly impressed by the intensity of her love for family and friends and her desire to help all people in need. I only wish that Alfred could have continued to see her love and enthusiasm in action." As a member of the AU Chamber Singers, she traveled with them to Peru last summer and Boston this spring. An avid fan of Marilyn Monroe, she enjoyed collecting memorabilia about her. She is survived by her mother, Cindy Stiles, and foster father, Jim Dennis of Hornell; her sister, Crystal Rivera and her niece, Jaidlin Rivera of Hornell; her grandmother, Betty Stiles of Hornell; two uncles, Ken and Ed Stiles of Hornell; her aunt, Sandra Rinaldi of Canisteo; and several great-aunts and uncles, cousins and friends. She was predeceased by her grandfather, David Stiles; her great-grandparents, Minzie and Fred Groves and Alice and Edwin Stiles. Friends may call from 6-9 p.m. Saturday, June 11, and noon- 1 p.m. Sunday, June 12, at the Bishop and Johnson Funeral Home, 285 Main Street, Hornell, where a funeral and committal service will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday. Interment will be in Woodlawn Cemetery, Canisteo. The family has asked that memorial contributions in Heather's name be made to the American Diabetes Association, 595 Blossom Road, Suite 208, Rochester, NY 14610.