

In Memory of Kelly Rae Atchison
shared by her husband, Jeremy Chancellor
April 2021

Kelly was born and raised in Manitoba, Canada. She moved to Lincoln in 2016 with the love of her life, Jeremy who is in the military and was offered a job here. He was her family man, and he knew it was a great move, to be here in the Lincoln community, and close to family to raise their own little family.

Mahoney Park became a special place for Kelly and still is to Jeremy and their two children, Kaelyn and Chasen. It is a park located close to their home, and the playground, open shelters, and running trails were especially used by Kelly and her family.

It made complete sense that Kelly loved this park, as it offers an array of opportunities for athletes, from soccer fields to tennis and volleyball courts, a baseball diamond, and a basketball court. It encourages two of Kelly's passions, family time and staying active.

"To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift."

Kelly loved this quote from Steve Prefontaine, an International Running Legend. Kelly too was known for keeping her focus on what mattered and giving her best in all circumstances. One of the last full sentences she said before she died was "focus on the good, every day is a gift."

She was also known to repeat the three words her father, Doug Atchinson drilled into her as a kid before it became a popular slogan, "Just Do It." As she got older, she would add, "Keep going, don't ever quit."

She lived these words out her entire life and loved athletics and fitness from a young age. She was a force to be reckoned with, even in her younger years, and was Athlete of the Year every year in high school and led her basketball team to a provincial title in Canada (equivalent to taking state in the U.S.) and was named tournament MVP. She played volleyball for team Manitoba in national level tournaments and was an Interlake female athlete of the year. Kelly still holds numerous track records and in running events, she was nearly unbeatable.

Kelly also loved swimming, playing hockey, and basketball. If she was not playing sports, she was active in other ways like horseback riding, ice skating, driving a snowmobile, and riding dirt bikes.

Her true self came out in sports, as did her:

- Determination
- Strong Will
- Competitive Spirit
- Mental Strength
- Integrity
- Visualization Abilities
- Strategy
- Hard Work Ethic

Kelly would say she "found her niche" in athletics and found great joy in being fit. Kelly was WBFF Pro Diva Fitness Model and professional personal trainer. She worked out all her life, through both of her pregnancies, and throughout most of her cancer fight, valuing her health

and the abilities God gave her. She loved Tabata circuits, Hitts workouts, and strength training, but her all-time favorite way to stay fit was running, and you could often find her on the path at Mahoney Park doing just that.

As Kelly's brother Scott said at her funeral "cancer put her toughness on full display." The type of cancer she had was rare and very aggressive. To say Kelly handled it well is beyond an understatement. She kept her gratitude and joy in the most ferocious fight of her life and was even more driven than ever to run her life race well.

She fought to win.

Her last racetrack was in the halls of a hospital. After a major invasive surgery, Kelly was sore and weak and needed to heal enough to endure numerous chemotherapy treatments. She set goals for herself to take small steps to the door of her room, then to get out the hallway. Every day, she had a new finish line. Down the hallway, around the ward. She found out the nurses had measured the distance around the floor and shuffled, walked, speed shuffled, speed-walked the equivalent of a half-marathon around that floor in the hospital. Her nurses fashioned a finish line for her out of red tissue so she could break the tape one more time and cheered her on to the finish line. The moment was caught on video and it shows Kelly's grit and determination and is a memory that the family cherishes.

A miracle experimental drug gave Kelly 9 more months to live after that race around hospital halls.

Her loved ones witnessed her winning once again, in the moment of her death. She faced her husband Jeremy and with a slight smile while looking him right in the eyes, she took her last breath. At that moment, she really, truly had won her final race, the race of life that we all will someday run. She crossed over the finish line, from the arms of her true love right into the arms of her Heavenly Father.

2 Timothy 4:7

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."