**Rebecca Svetlana Helwig Barnawartha 2006.**

At the time of the tragic accident that took her life, Rebecca’s grief-stricken husband Shayne described her as nothing less than “sensational – in everything”. And that is how she’ll be remembered – as a remarkable wife and mother, who embraced life and everything it offered her with open arms.

First and foremost was her home life, marrying Shayne and raising her three boys Gary, Blake and Bo. She was passionate about her family and meticulous in her care for them. Rebecca and Shayne supported the local football club for their kids – they were passionate about that too. And there was much else that Rebecca squeezed into her incredibly busy life, working full time as a manager at a local supermarket and helping with the family’s earth-moving business which had been running for just two years at the time she died.

Rebecca, like her husband, was also passionate about their local Barnawartha Fire Brigade and loved being part of the local volunteer firefighting operations there. Shayne was a lieutenant there, and Rebecca was always ready when needed, often putting her firefighting responsibilities before work or other commitments. The brigade was a big priority in her life.

Tragically, on the 17th February 2006 - a day when she should have been getting ready for work - Rebecca volunteered instead to help fight a local grass fire in Barnawartha. She never came home.

She was operating a hose around the tanker when she was caught by one of its wheels. She was fatally crushed in what was subsequently reported as, simply, a dreadful accident.

Rebecca was 41 years old when she died, leaving behind a devastated family and a local community in shock. Her entire brigade struggled to come to terms with what had happened. Heightening the sadness for her family were so many milestones surrounding her death. They had celebrated eldest son Gary’s 20th birthday just seventeen days earlier and five days later they would have celebrated middle son Blake’s 18th birthday. Rebecca and Shayne were about to celebrate their wedding anniversary on the 23rd February, while youngest son Bo’s 15th birthday was just over a week away, on the 26th February. Such celebrations were of course completely destroyed by the sudden loss of their much-loved wife and mother.

The years have passed since Rebecca died but the light she left behind still shines bright for those who knew her. Rebecca Helwig will always be remembered as that sensational person described by her husband - as someone who wholeheartedly dedicated herself to family, community and firefighting in her area. She is respected and honoured for her embrace of life and for paying the ultimate sacrifice doing something she loved, volunteering for her local fire brigade.