



Martha Leigh Caulkins

October 4, 1985 - February 24, 2019

Dr. Martha Leigh Caulkins, 33, of Baltimore, Maryland, passed away peacefully at her home from complications of cancer on February 24, 2019, surrounded by her family. She is survived by her beloved husband, Brian Benzel, and their dog, Tucker; her parents, Drs. Michael and Pamela Caulkins; brother Landon Caulkins; maternal aunt Dr. Felicia Marston and her husband Dr. Alec Bateman, paternal uncle Dr. David Caulkins and his wife Pat; and cousins Whitney Caulkins and Dr. Sarah Caulkins Krzastek and her husband Scott. Martha was born on October 4, 1985 in Lynchburg, VA. She and her younger brother Landon enjoyed their childhood together in Lynchburg, attending the city schools and playing organized sports and other activities. They looked forward to vacations every year at the family cottage on the Rappahannock River, as well as frequent trips to the beach and elsewhere. Martha was an all around athlete and a determined competitor, resilient mentally and physically. She was a natural swimmer, but her passion was soccer with her travel league team, at E.C. Glass High School and subsequently at Washington & Lee University. At W&L, she found an academic challenge and a social atmosphere that was a perfect match for her, and she immersed herself in every aspect of college life. She graduated in the spring of 2008 summa cum laude with a double major in mathematics and economics. After graduation she was employed as a research analyst at the Brattle Group in Washington, DC. Three years later she left that to pursue her PhD in environmental economics at the University of Maryland. While living

nearby in Arlington, Martha explored new adventures. Of all the sports she had played, it would be a simple game of kickball which would be life changing, for it was here that she met the love of her life, Brian, in 2010. From that moment forward they were inseparable. They loved UVA basketball, golfing, visiting friends and family, traveling, adventures with Tucker, and doting on their nephews Ben and John. Martha loved all things related to food. She was especially a connoisseur of french fries and gelato. She herself became a gourmet cook and baker, wowing her guests with her creations. In 2014, Martha was diagnosed with uterine leiomyosarcoma. Despite the initial shock, she was not deterred from her life plans . She met this challenge with the same intensity and determination as she had in her academics and sports, researching the disease, and enduring and recovering from multiple surgeries and courses of chemotherapy. She was dedicated to maintaining her active lifestyle and a high level of physical fitness, and she became an avid long distance runner. Brian never wavered in his commitment and devotion to Martha, and in the summer of 2015 he proposed to her on a mountaintop in Germany overlooking the Neuschwanstein Castle. They were joyously married in September 2016. Martha completed her PhD while continuing cancer treatments, and returned to employment with the Brattle Group, now as an associate. Every year between treatments and surgeries, they explored the world with frequent trips to many countries in Europe, as well as Iceland, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Mexico, Alaska and elsewhere. Martha and Brian moved to Baltimore in 2015, and in 2018 they proudly purchased their first home in the Riverside neighborhood. Martha continued her incredibly active and full life until this past November when complications developed and rapidly progressed. After an extended hospitalization, she made the decision in early December to return home with supportive care. During this time, she enjoyed frequent visits from a steady stream of friends and family from near and far. She pushed herself to her limits daily. When she was no longer able to care for herself, she accepted help with gratitude. She died bravely and quietly surrounded by her family. Martha was a generous, loving and kind

person who lived life in full color. She brought joy and laughter to those around her. She approached each day with passion and was a true example of living life to its fullest. A memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, March 9 at the Church of the Nativity, at 20 E. Ridgley Road, in Timonium, Maryland. Visitation will begin at 10:30 followed by a prayer service at 11:30. Following the service, a reception will be held in Martha's honor. All are welcome to attend and celebrate her life. In lieu of flowers , please consider donations to the Lynchburg Humane Society at 1211 Old Graves Mill Rd., Lynchburg, VA 24502, the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter at 301 Stockholm St., Baltimore, MD 21230, or the leiomyosarcoma foundation of your choice . The family would like to thank all of the doctors, nurses and staff involved in her care, and most especially her oncologist, Dr. Christian Meyer, for his compassionate care over the years. Lastly, the family is grateful for the empathetic care provided by Donna and Ericka of Gilchrist hospice in her final weeks.

Tribute Wall



“ *Martha Leigh Caulkins*

Funeral Home Owner - December 12, 2019 at 11:22 AM