

Andrew Keller

News Articles Compilation

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Portland, Oregon - August 25, 2012 - Andrew Keller's father, Jeff Keller, and brother, Derek Keller, embrace during the military service at Willamette National Cemetery on Saturday. Keller was killed on August 15, 2012, in Afghanistan



Beaverton, Oregon - September 21, 2012 - L-R Kim Keller, Marissa Jones (Andrew's fiance), Jeff Keller and Derek Keller with the framed jersey of their Andrew Keller's before the start of the game. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain.



Beaverton-area soldier Andrew Keller honored at funeral as a hero

Published: Saturday, August 25, 2012, 8:11 PM Updated: Saturday, August 25, 2012, 11:19 PM



~~Andrea Castillo, The Oregonian~~

By

Army Pfc. Andrew J. Keller, 22, was a son, a brother, a best friend, a fiancé.

To his friends and family he was a loyal and caring man, truly concerned about his impact on others' lives. He was his father's hero, his mother's heart and soul, his fiancé's greatest love.

Keller, from the Beaverton area and a 2008 ~~Southridge High School~~ graduate, was shot by insurgents Aug. 15 in Afghanistan during what was supposed to be a 48-hour mission to secure an observation spot. He died from a gunshot wound to the head, on the 32nd day after his deployment.

An estimated 800 friends, family, members of the military and members of the public filled the first-floor seats of the ~~Sunset Presbyterian Church~~ sanctuary Saturday morning in Beaverton for his funeral.

Inside the church, tri-fold posters displayed pictures of Keller through the years. Many illustrated his relationship with Marissa Jones, his fiancé and girlfriend since eighth grade. In one photo, they touched noses while looking into each other's eyes. In another, they posed at a 2008 Southridge High School formal dance.

Jones spoke during the memorial service, choking back tears as she struggled through her prepared speech.

"Andrew and I had a love that's enough to last for an entire life," she said. "...I know he is going to guide me through the rest of my life until we are able to be together again. I am beyond blessed to call him my better half, my soul and the love of my life."

On stage, Keller's casket was placed in front of the podium with an American flag draped over it. Behind it was a poster-sized photo of him in uniform.

Along with the memorial service program, Keller's family had brochures made that included a letter he had written to his mother after joining the army.

"I know you don't like that I am making the ultimate sacrifice and am a member of the United States army,"

Farewell to the Fallen

Read more about The Oregonian's ~~continuing coverage of -- and tribute to -- U.S. service members with Oregon and Southwest Washington ties who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.~~

the letter read, "but isn't that what life is about? Making the ultimate sacrifice for that small chance of making a difference in somebody's life."

Keller's friends described him as selfless and kind, outgoing and funny, with a huge, contagious smile. They said his death was not in vain.

Brendan Goodling, 22, was one of Keller's best childhood friends. He said dealing with Keller's death has been a roller-coaster of emotion.

"I've known him for so long, it's tough to see him go," he said. "He was fighting for us out in Afghanistan for our freedom. He sure is our hero."

After the memorial service, an estimated 200 people drove to ~~Willamette National Cemetery~~ for a committal service and military honors.

Along the way, police saluted as they held back cars at freeway entrances. Some people got out of their cars and waved or held their hands over their hearts. Several of them held American flags.

At the committal service Keller was awarded a Bronze Star Medal, a Purple Heart and an Army Commendation Medal for exceptional service and wounds received in action.

Army officials gave Keller's Mother, Kim Keller, the flag that previously covered his casket.

His father, Jeff Keller, said dealing with his son's death has been the most horrific experience of his life.

"The only consolation is that he died on that mountaintop doing what he wanted to do," he said.

Keller is the 34th soldier from Oregon to be killed in Afghanistan, and the 154th soldier with ties to Oregon and southwest Washington to be killed in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, based in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. He was deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom.

-- ~~Andrea Castillo~~

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Everything Oregon

Friends remember Andrew Keller, soldier killed in Afghanistan

Published: Friday, August 17, 2012, 4:01 PM Updated: Saturday, August 18, 2012, 10:22 AM



By ~~Dominique Fong, The Oregonian~~

Mourning relatives and friends of a fallen soldier from the Beaverton area were still in shock Friday at the news of his death.

It had been just Tuesday night when Army Pfc. Andrew Keller, 22, texted his family that he was safe, that he loved them, said Debbie Silva, a neighbor.

The next day, Keller was killed when insurgents attacked his unit in Charkh, in the southern part of Logar province in Afghanistan, the U.S. Department of Defense reported. He is the 34th soldier from Oregon to be killed in Afghanistan.

Keller was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, based in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. He was deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Family members took a plane Friday morning to the East Coast to retrieve Keller's body and couldn't be reached for comment.

Others in the Beaverton community, however, felt the deep loss for the former ~~Southridge High School~~ student and popular football star.

As a child, Andrew Keller grew up around the love of sports. He played in the ~~Southridge Youth Football~~ program, and his father, Jeff Keller, managed a ~~Murrayhill Little League~~ team that went to the Little League World Series in 2006.

Keller was a gifted athlete in football and enjoyed mentoring others at youth camps, said Jeff Martin, a former coach from the youth program.

On Friday, Martin stood alone at the edge of a roundabout near south Beaverton, wiping away tears that slid out from underneath his sunglasses. He stared at the American flags and a memorial of Keller's picture and a Southridge football helmet.

In the youth program up until eighth grade, Keller played as a linebacker and running back, sometimes even in pain with injuries so that he wouldn't let his team down, Martin said.

"You can't walk too far here without running into someone who knew him," Martin said. "It's really affected the community."

Keller carried his strong work ethic to the varsity football team at Southridge High, where he mostly played as an outside linebacker. During one game leading up to the championships against Jesuit High School, Keller continued to play with a torn-up shoulder so he could support his team, said Doug Dean, who at the time was a defense coordinator.

"I was just devastated with the loss of him," Dean said. "He was a tremendous young man. It was really hard to swallow."

Connie Jolley, a former Southridge High School health teacher, said she has taught thousands of students, but Keller was one of the few who affected her the most.

"His smile could make anyone's day brighter and he was liked by many," Jolley wrote in an email. "He was hilarious and the kind of kid that people just wanted to be around."

Jolley was impressed by Keller's diligence in his schoolwork, especially his research on dietary supplements, she wrote. She also lived down the street from him and often saw him when she went on a jog, she wrote. When she passed him, he would yell, "Go faster, Jolley." Those words always gave her a burst of energy, even if she was huffing to get up the hill.

After Keller graduated in 2008, he didn't feel college was the best route for his future, Dean said.

"He really wanted to do something positive and productive with his life," Dean said. "You can see why he went into the armed services."

Keller was proud of his decision to join the U.S. Army, Dean said.

Keller's younger brother, Derek, was hit hard by the death. It had always been the two of them, brothers so close they were best friends.

"Rest In Peace to my brother/best friend... I know you're gonna watch over me for the rest of my life. I love you PFC Keller," Derek wrote on his Facebook page.

Derek's profile picture reflected their deep friendship. Andrew has an arm around his younger brother, and both are sporting matching black vests and big smiles on their faces.

Farewell to the Fallen

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who died in Iraq
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About two hours ago, Derek posted his latest remembrance: a picture of his brother in uniform and the words, "a true hero."

-- ~~Dominique Fong~~

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Memorial grows for Tigard soldier

Contributor: Portland Tribune

Contributor: Jennifer Meacham

Published: 8/21/2012 3:16 pm



A memorial grows near the family home of a fallen Tigard soldier, 22-year-old Andrew Keller. (Jaime Valdez, Pamplin Media Group)

Related Links

- ✦ 22-year-old Tigard soldier killed
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BEAVERTON, Ore. -- A memorial is growing for U.S. Army Pfc. Andrew J. Keller, who at 22 years old was killed this past Wednesday in Afghanistan.

Hailing from Tigard, Keller graduated from Southridge High School in Beaverton in 2008.

The memorial, sprouting near his parents' Tigard home, includes a Southridge football helmet, a baseball, flowers and notes of sorrow from friends and neighbors. It's on Southwest Barrows Road near The Village on Scholls Ferry in Beaverton.

At the memorial, Hernando Macalalad and his daughter Andrea paid their respects for Keller, a man they knew as their neighbor. Hernando's son, 21-year-old Adrian, was also a friend of Keller.

Keller was well known in Beaverton and Tigard. He played running back and defensive back for the Skyhawks' varsity football team, Pamplin Media reports. He also was a varsity baseball player.

He leaves behind so many friends and family and someone very special in his life.

"He wanted to make a difference, and that's what he was doing," said the father of Keller's *fiance*. "And he knew what the risks were."

His *fiance*'s family has known him since he was 14.

"They were really in love from the beginning of their young, young relationship," said his *fiance*'s mother, Blair Jones.

Keller headed for the University of Oregon after high school, and then into the army. He became part of the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team stationed in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy -- keeping in close touch with his family while stationed there.

Then he deployed recently to Afghanistan, where life changed dramatically for him.

"The living conditions, the things they had to see, the things that they were not supposed to talk about," his *fiance*'s family recounts. "The day-to-day living, being under fire, not knowing who to trust."

Keller's unit came under attack, by small-arms fire, this past week south of Kabul. In an instant, the 22-year-old was gone. But he leaves a legacy.

"Andrew's going to make a difference, more than any of us realize," his *fiance*'s father tells KOIN. "It will continue as the years go on. And he touched a lot of lives."

Andrew Keller is the 34th Oregon soldier who has been killed in Afghanistan. Arrangements have not been announced for a memorial service or a funeral service.

-- Pamplin Media contributed to this report.



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Beaverton School Board examines request to name Southridge High School stadium after Andrew Keller

<http://connect.oregonlive.com/user/dfong/index.html> By Dominque Fong, The Oregonian
<http://connect.oregonlive.com/user/dfong/posts.html>
on September 28, 2012 at 7:00 AM, updated September 28, 2012 at 9:55 AM Email () | Print

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Beaverton School Board

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Doug Beghlei/The Oregonian

BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - Balloons were released after the national anthem ended to honor Andrew Keller. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan.

(<http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/home/district/school-board/school-board-members/>) members are exploring a community request to name a high school stadium after a former student who was killed during combat in Afghanistan.

Since Army Pfc. **Andrew Keller** (<http://topics.oregonlive.com/tag/andrew%20keller/index.html>), a 2008 graduate and football star at **Southridge High School** (<http://schools.oregonlive.com/school/Beaverton/Southridge-High-School/>), died in August, thousands of people have banded together behind his grieving family.

To honor Keller's legacy, supporters are proposing to name the Southridge stadium and athletic fields "Andrew Keller Memorial Field."

However, according to **Beaverton School District** (<http://schools.oregonlive.com/district/Beaverton/>) policy, school facilities and buildings cannot have names different from that of the school.

The school board began talks Monday to consider revising that rule. Conversations were wrought with emotion, as board members struggled to separate their feelings from their duty to create lasting policies for the future.

"It's really hard to do ⁵¹ and not be emotional," said Sarah Smith, school board member. "No matter what the topic is, we're looking at the picture of the current and the future and keeping it all in perspective."

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About a week after Keller's funeral in August, his former classmate, CarrieAnn McCracken, **started a Facebook page calling on a name change for the stadium** (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Andrew-Keller-Memorial-Field/263979623720576?ref=ts%20-NT>).



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Courtesy of the Keller family

Andrew Keller and his fiancée Marissa Jones

Continuing news coverage, including the retiring of Keller's No. 13 jersey during a home game against Lake Oswego last week, have kept his memory in the public spotlight. The Facebook page quickly gained momentum, drawing more than 5,400 "likes" of support.

Keller's father, Jeff, said he appreciated all the effort from fans and friends of his son.

"This is about the community and what the community wants to do," Keller said. "I want to make sure that gets represented."

Board members said they needed to research how the naming policy originated and how other school districts have handled the issue before considering any changes.

"I'm mindful of the fact that we've said no in the past," said board member Mary VanderWeele. "We really need to understand the rationale for the prohibition in the first place."

Other school districts have allowed school facilities to be named in honor of a dead student. For example, **Sherwood High School has the Aaron J. Contreras Memorial Stadium** (http://www.oregonlive.com/sherwood/index.ssf/2011/09/sherwood_highs_booster_club_pa.html), in remembrance of the Marine captain who died in a 2003 helicopter crash in Iraq.

Beaverton's policy lists 14 other ways (http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/pdf/staff/staff_FFAR.pdf) to honor a dead student, teacher or staff member. They include a memorial scholarship, a plaque on the bleachers and a score board with the deceased's name in the gym.

"I'd like to understand, what is it about these options that feel inadequate? In this case or other cases?" VanderWeele said.

Other board members wondered if there was an appropriate waiting period after a death, and what they should say to people who have proposed similar ideas in the past but were rejected.

The board recommended that all questions be forwarded to VanderWeele, who heads a policy development subcommittee. District staff could then review questions for answers.

"I have just kept saying to myself, this is not about the situation, this is about this policy," said Karen Cunningham, board member. "I just really want to make that clear."

-- **Dominique Fong** (<mailto:dfong@oregonian.com>)

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Southridge High honors fallen soldier Andrew Keller by retiring his football jersey (photo essay)

By Doug Beghtel, The Oregonian
(<http://connect.oregonlive.com/user/dbeghtel/photos.html>) | September 21, 2012 9:48 PM

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([http://https://http://http://http://http://www.fark.com/cgi/farkit.pl?y](http://https://http://http://http://http://http://www.fark.com/cgi/farkit.pl?y)) and the national anthem, the crowd released balloons into the air. Proceeds from the balloon

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Southridge High School retired the #13 football jersey of Army Pfc. Andrew Keller before their home game against Lake Oswego Friday night. Keller, 22, was killed Aug. 15 while serving in Afghanistan. His mother Kim Keller (from left to right), fiance Marissa Jones, father Jeff Keller and brother Derek Keller received the framed jersey before the start of the game. Keller was the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain as well as MVP of the 2007 team that went to a Metro League championship. Following a

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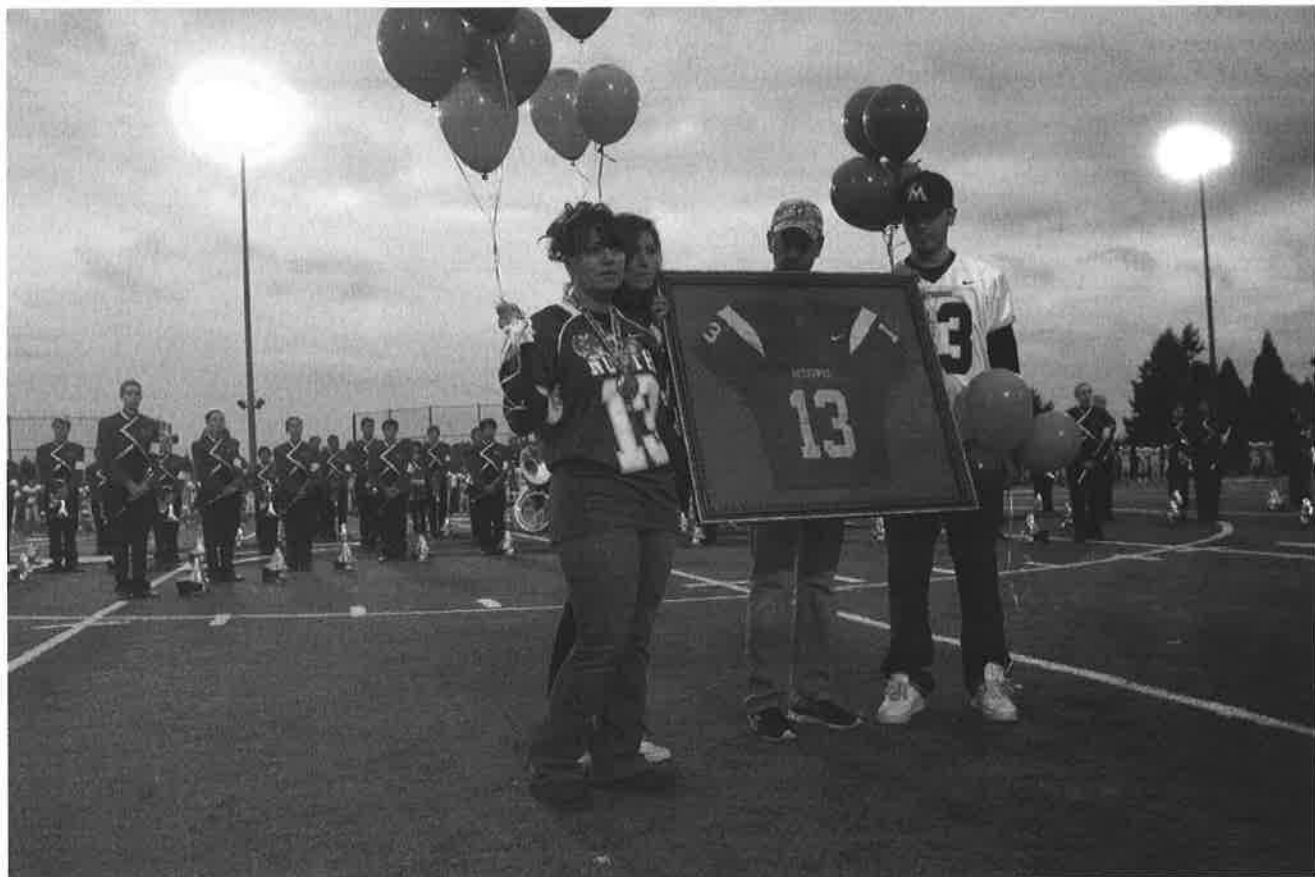
BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - Kim Keller hugs a friend prior to the ceremony honoring her son, Andrew. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Doug Beghtel/ The Oregonian



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BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - Former Southridge High School football coach Brad Mastrud (at right) and current football coach Doug Dean presented a framed jersey to the family of Andrew Keller, retiring the jersey. Southridge retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Doug Beghtel/ The Oregonian

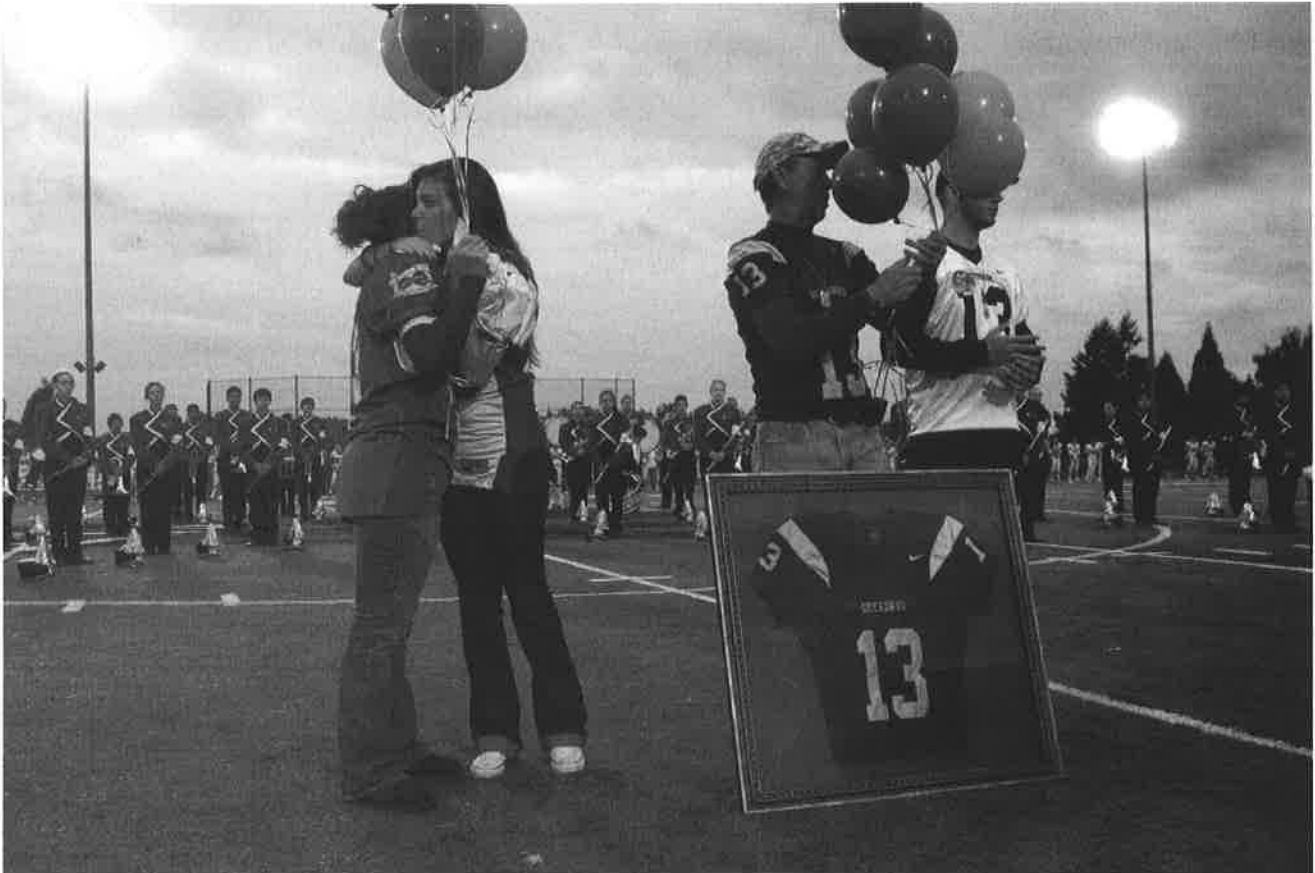
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BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - L-R Kim Keller, Marissa Jones (Andrew's fiance), Jeff Keller and Derek Keller hold the framed jersey before the start of the game. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Doug Beghtel/ The Oregonian



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BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - L-R Kim Keller, Marissa Jones (Andrew's fiance), Jeff Keller and Derek Keller with the framed jersey of their Andrew Keller's before the start of the game. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Doug Beghtel/ The Oregonian

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BEAVERTON, OREGON - September 21, 2012 - Marissa Jones, Jeff Keller, Kim Keller and Derek Keller embrace as the Star Spangled Banner is played before the start of Friday's game. Southridge High School retired Army Pfc. Andrew Keller's football uniform No. 13 before Friday's game against Lake Oswego as a tribute to the Skyhawks' former outside linebacker and team captain. Keller was killed August 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Doug Beghtel/ The Oregonian



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Beaverton board discusses naming football stadium for slain soldier

Created on Tuesday, 02 October 2012 03:00 | Written by [Shannon O. Wells](#) | 

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by: JAIME VALDEZ - Jeff Keller thanks community members Friday night for their support after his eldest son, U.S. Army Pfc. Andrew Keller, was killed in action Aug. 15 while serving in Afghanistan. Southridge High School retired Andrew's football jersey No. 13 as a tribute to the former captain and 2007 Most Valuable Player of the Skyhawks football team.

In the wake of Pfc. Andrew Keller's death in the line of duty in Afghanistan last month, the marquee outside his Southridge High School alma mater read, "We Remember Army PFC Andrew Keller — Class of 2008."

While the message, one of many memorial tributes to the Southridge graduate in recent weeks, was only temporary, there is growing sentiment in the community that the fallen soldier should be recognized at his former school in a more permanent fashion.

Based on an outpouring of public interest — including a popular Facebook page that serves as an online memorial to Keller — the Beaverton School District's board of directors opened a discussion

at its Monday night meeting about naming the Southridge athletic stadium in Keller's honor. But to rename the facility "Andrew Keller Memorial Field," the board would have to amend district policy that forbids giving school facilities "separate" names.

Alan Lohner, a friend of the Keller family, took a moment to crystallize the feeling of many community members who would like to see Andrew's name become part of the local landscape.

"Andrew was shaped and molded by you, our schools, and molded into one of the finest young men our community's ever known," he told board members. "Now our community is reaching out and asking for your help. We're asking that you amend the policy to honor Andrew."


Noting that district policy includes 14 ways to memorialize a student, teacher or staff member, including a memorial page in the school yearbook, planting a tree, a plaque on athletic bleachers and a living memorial scholarship, board members struggled to balance the emotion of the recent tragedy with the need to maintain thoughtful, big-picture policy.

"The loss of Andrew's life is truly tragic," said board chairwoman LeeAnn Larsen. "I can't begin to understand the grief his friends and family are experiencing. We are all mommies and daddies at heart, and we grieve with you as a community for your terrible loss.

"I think we need to take a step back from emotion," she added, "and take a look at the policy that needs to govern the present as well as future policies. In light of those things, we should take the time to examine the pros and cons of the policy."

Noting the 24-year-old policy was readopted in July, board member Tom Quillin said the issue raises the

Anti-hero policy prolongs pain

Created on Thursday, 17 January 2013 03:00 | Written by [Alan Lohner](#) | 

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Unlike many communities across the United States, the Beaverton School District prohibits the naming of athletic fields for fallen heroes. Servicemen and women who are killed in action may not be memorialized in this manner.

The district's policy, which was adopted nearly 24 years ago, states: "Facilities within a school, e.g., auditorium, athletic fields, etc., shall not be given separate names." The policy has been dubbed an "anti-hero policy" for obvious reasons, but the policy can be changed by a majority vote of the seven-member Beaverton School Board.

U.S. Army Pfc. Andrew Keller, former football captain and a 2008 graduate of Southridge High School, was killed in Afghanistan on Aug. 15, 2012. Thousands of community members want the athletic field at Southridge to be named Andrew Keller Memorial Field. That won't happen if the board won't amend its policy, as the community has respectfully requested numerous times since last September.

At the School Board meeting on Monday evening, board members Mary VanderWeele, Tom Quillin and Linda Degman cogently expressed their support for changing the policy. But unfortunately, board members LeeAnn Larsen, Karen Cunningham and Sarah Smith reaffirmed their support for the policy, which ignobly devalues heroes. The seventh board member, Jeff Hicks, once a critic of the policy, has flip-flopped. For now, he is aligning with the anti-hero faction.

In a prior meeting, Larsen expressed concern that if the policy was changed, "what do we do about people who have come in the past and have been denied? How do you deal with that?"

Note that Larsen's concern has nothing to do with the heart of the matter: whether to change policy so that the community may properly honor Pfc. Keller and other heroes. Rather, she seems afraid to be forced to admit that the policy has wronged people in the past.

How do you deal with that, Ms. Larsen? Saying, "I'm sorry," to those wronged individuals would be a good place to start.

It is absurd to cling to this policy because the board has said "no" in the past. During America's first 144 years, millions of women were denied the right to vote. Was that a valid reason to keep saying "no?"

In an email to a former Southridge football teammate of Pfc. Keller, Larsen wrote, "...it is difficult to change policy unless there is a new law or something of that magnitude that warrants the policy change." Larsen gave the young man false information — no new law is required for the board to change policy. From the tone of the email, it seemed Larsen wanted to discourage an attempt to challenge the policy.

Board member Karen Cunningham has stated, "I keep telling myself, this isn't about a situation, it's about the policy."

Applying Cunningham's logic, civil rights hero Rosa Parks would have been told, "It's not about the situation, it's about the policy. You have to keep riding in the back of the bus." Cunningham fails to realize that situations always impact policy, not the other way around. Policies are not static — they are malleable and must fit new realities.

In an email sent to supporters of Andrew Keller Memorial Field, board member Sarah Smith wrote, "How long will Andrew's name be on the stadium before another request is brought forward to replace it?" This insensitive comment suggests that Pfc. Keller's shining legacy will gradually fade away, and that is contemptible.

Smith also wrote, "...though many believe we should name the stadium after Andrew, many do not." Are we to believe that the majority of people in the community do not support the naming of Andrew Keller Memorial Field? I challenge Smith to produce evidence that supports her claim. Christina Lent, managing editor of the Beaverton Valley Times and The Times serving Tigard, Tualatin and Sherwood, reports that both newspapers

have not received even one letter opposing the memorial.

Hicks, citing sickness, failed to attend Monday's board meeting, but he did send an email stating that he does not favor policy change. Just recently, Hicks supported amending the policy, and he'd said, "There is a unique specialness about this situation...it is a community feeling...and very powerful." Hicks' reversal seems particularly odious, because he is supposed to represent the Southridge community.

No final resolution on the anti-hero policy has been made, and that's good news. It is not too late for board members Larsen, Cunningham and Smith to renounce their anti-veteran, anti-hero ways, and depending on which way the wind blows tomorrow, Hicks may once again find himself on the honorable side of this issue.

But should this unjust policy be allowed to stand, these obtuse board members will rightly face a storm of protest. For now, this gang of four deserves not our admiration, but our scorn.

Alan Lohner is an author from Tigard, and his two sons attended Southridge High School.



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