

# Gone, but never forgotten <sup>2005</sup>

**T**he Bradwell and Reid families have both lived through every parent's worst nightmare - having to hold a funeral for a child.

But Sian Bradwell and Mike Reid will never be forgotten - and one of the reasons is the sport of softball.

With all the sickening stories in professional sports these days - including drug cheaters and liars like Baltimore Orioles "slugger" Rafael Palmeiro, spoiled jerks like Philadelphia Eagles receiver Terrell Owens whining about how he is underpaid at \$48.97 million U.S. over seven years, and idiots like Texas Rangers pitcher Kenny Rogers assaulting an innocent cameraman - it's refreshing to know that a lot of good things can still come from a simple sport like softball.

The 17th Annual Sian Bradwell Memorial Softball Tournament was held July 28-31 on the West Island. Over the years, the event has raised almost \$700,000 to buy medical equipment for the Montreal Children's Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

The 21st annual Mike Reid Memorial Softball Tournament wraps up today at Pierre Laporte Park in Greenfield Park. Over the years, it has raised about \$350,000 to help the Mackay Centre School for deaf and disabled children.

The short life stories of Sian Bradwell and Mike Reid should make every parent with a healthy child count their blessings and also serve as a reality check for today's pro athletes.

Sian (a Welsh Gaelic name pronounced "Shahn") was 4 months old when her mother, Sharon Bradwell, discovered a lump on her foot that seemed to appear overnight. Sharon assumed it was something harmless like a bone spur, but it was the begin-



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ning of her nightmare. On May 1, 1985, Sian was given a diagnosis of cancer of the pancreas, which spread through her bloodstream.

She underwent chemotherapy, radical abdominal surgery and an intensive course of radiation treatment. After surviving through all that, Sian was just learning how to pull herself upright when cancerous tumours came back in her legs, causing the femur of her left leg to break. As a result, she never learned to walk before her death on March 15, 1986, at age 17 months.

Mike Reid was 20 when he died in 1984 after a courageous battle with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. His father, Frank, knew there was something wrong with his son at about age 3.

"He had difficulty walking," Reid recalled. "He was slow and he would fall down a lot. He just didn't seem to be normal physically."

For the next 17 years, Reid watched helplessly as this terrible disease ate away at his son's muscles. First came the leg braces and eventually a wheel-

chair.

But Mike was determined to live life to the fullest and never lost his passion for sports, cheering for Bobby Orr and the Boston Bruins, playing wheelchair hockey and keeping statistics for the Greenfield Park Legion softball team his father coached. He went to school at the Mackay Centre and in 1982 won the school's Prudence Baxter Award for scholastic achievement. He also became the Quebec poster child for Jerry Lewis's annual Labour Day Muscular Dystrophy telethon.

Mike dreamed of becoming a sportscaster, but the disease continued to deteriorate his muscles until he couldn't even lift his hands to his mouth. On June 12, 1984, the day he was supposed to graduate from the Mackay Centre, Mike died.

Today, the Michael Reid Memorial Resource Centre at the Mackay Centre provides information on different children's diseases to help parents and staff better understand them. The Michael Reid Foundation also sponsors a multitude of field trips and the Michael Reid Memorial Award is presented annually to a student who displays honesty, compassion, friendliness and exceptional determination.

"I'm proud of what's happened since Mike died and what's been done in his memory," Frank Reid said.

Sharon Bradwell, who moved from Dorval to Toronto with her husband, Ken, in 1997, is also proud of the money raised in her daughter's memory and has set a goal of reaching the \$1-million mark one day.

"I'm happy that Sian's name is being kept alive and that positive things are being done. I've played sports all my life and there's nothing better to me than seeing people having some fun



COURTESY OF THE REID FAMILY  
Mike Reid, who dreamed of being a sportscaster, died at age 20.

playing sports and at the same time trying to help people who can't enjoy sports in the same way," said Sharon, who used to be a member of the Kirkland softball league.

Sharon returns to Montreal every year for the memorial softball tournament and after it wraps up on the Sunday night she makes a visit to Sian's grave in Pointe Claire.

"It gives me a very peaceful feeling," she said.

To learn more about the Sian Bradwell Fund for children with cancer, visit the Web site at [www.sianbradwell.com](http://www.sianbradwell.com). To learn more about the Mackay Centre School, visit the Web site at [www.emsb.qc.ca/mackay/](http://www.emsb.qc.ca/mackay/)