"Math Meghan: A Celebration of Life"
Remarks by Dr. Staci Shultz at Meghan's Service

- Over the past week or so, I've found myself thinking about so many of you, wondering how you are navigating the enormous loss of our sweet colleague, professor, and friend. I've wondered how *you* knew Meghan.

- Maybe, I wondered, you engaged with her in a spirited debate…about numerical analysis…or stars…or religion…or *Lord of the Rings*…or *Harry Potter*.

- Maybe you witnessed her radiate excitement about something—the history of math, or a particularly delightful dessert she couldn't wait for you to try, or…how to mathematically model the movement of flocking creatures.

- Maybe you were afraid of math and dreading taking one of her classes, only to realize that she was going to spend the semester trying to help you feel less afraid.

- Or maybe you signed up for the Science of Superheroes or the History of Math because that was *exactly* the kind of nerdiness you needed in your life.

- Perhaps in your Honors Program interview, which lasted an hour and a half, you listened as she regaled you with stories about the trip to Oxford and how it would change your life.

- Maybe four years later, she tracked you down at graduation so she could get a pic with you for her annual graduation grid post. (P.S. She was right about Oxford.)

- Maybe you stood next to her in a Halloween costume contest, feeling wildly inadequate about your own costume.

- Maybe you shared a deep and profound love…of Legos.

- Maybe you spent the night in Romano with her and the rest of her precious Nerd Club, playing games and watching movies.

- Maybe you got to listen to her play the organ at Oxford. Or see a Shakespeare play in Stratford-upon-Avon. Or spend time with her in her beloved Bodleian library.

- Maybe you hopped on a bus and made your way upstate to view the solar eclipse with Dr. D and Dr. Rave?

- Did you find yourself in her office, playing with her various gadgets and toys, and maybe pouring your heart out to her?

- Maybe she let you pie faculty members in the face for a good cause. Or maybe she got you to throw chalk at them—also for a good cause, *or so she claimed*.

- Maybe you went to a Broadway show with her. Or to the New York Botanical Gardens. Or into the city at Christmas to wander the markets.

- Maybe after listening to her explain some obscure phenomenon in great detail or share her most recent travel adventure it occurred to you that you didn't know anyone more knowledgeable, more *curious*, than her.

- Maybe after listening to her passionately discuss Jane Austen, you wondered if perhaps she was really an English professor disguised as a math professor.

- Maybe you collaborated with her on an outreach program or on a First Year Seminar lecture called "Patterns," which explored the ways that structures shape our lives and can forge connections through mathematical concepts or literary traditions.

- Maybe you taught incarcerated individuals with her up at the former Sullivan Correctional Facility.

- Or you went on walks with her: during the pandemic, around Rockland Lake, wearing masks and keeping six feet apart. Or around ETS at the faculty retreat. Or around campus during our annual American Foundation for Suicide Prevention walk.

- Or you sat next to her at one of the many Midsemester Margs at Zapata, where she would greet the table with a cheery, "Hi, friends!" and proceed to nurse whatever special mocktail the bartender whipped up for her.

- Maybe yours is but one of the many student projects she proudly displayed in her office.

- Maybe she sent you a cozy blanket ahead of your surgery, knowing all too well that hospital blankets are terrible.

- And maybe…

- You were with her in those early days and weeks, when she was first diagnosed.

- Maybe that first summer you and the other Honors students in Oxford bought her a stuffed dragon she would name Speranza, Italian for *hope*, that would bring her so much comfort in the days, months, and years to follow.

- Maybe you worked, more than once, to rearrange her schedule to accommodate her various treatments because you understood that she was not going to stop teaching.

- Maybe you cared for her cats when she continued to travel—cancer be damned.

- Maybe you helped her down the hallways at STAC on the days when walking was hard.

- Or you poked your head into her office on a regular basis, just to check in on her, or sent her texts, asking if she needed anything—really, anything at all.

- Or you put her at the top of your church's prayer list.

- Or you went to Costco, tracking down protein shakes you thought she could tolerate.

- Maybe you helped carry her suitcases through the airports and around England.

- Maybe in the ER you held her hand as a nervous nurse jabbed needles into her and as they both tried hard not to cry.

- Maybe you hopped a flight to England in a moment of crisis to offer her love and support.

- Maybe, in what would turn out to be the last week or so, you gently entered into talks about taking over the Honors Program she loved so much.

- Maybe you volunteered to adopt her cats so she would know that they would be loved and cared for.

- Or maybe you assured her, over and over, that everything and everyone she loved would be taken care of…so that when it was time, she could let go.

- And maybe you're standing here today, trying to capture the essence of a remarkable woman who lived more in her short 41 years than most people do given twice that lifetime.

- I'll end with a quote from the obituary: Meghan's sister Jenny wrote: "Everything brought Meghan joy, and Meghan brought extraordinary joy to everyone lucky enough to love her."

- And indeed, we were just so lucky to have known and loved her.