## Friday, September 15, 1995 Accident kills a survivor

OMAHA (AP) - Laura Kucera was pulling her life together nearly one year after being shot twice in the back of the head and surviving three nights in a ditch.

She was paralyzed on the left side and unable to use her right arm. She spent months in physical therapy and was finally walking, although still with some difficulty.

She was going to college and seeing a therapist for the emotional turmoil. Neurological damage had dropped her. IQ to a below-average 82.

"She had to study hard but she was doing well," said her father, David, by telephone Thursday from Clarkson.

A traffic accident Wednesday killed the 20-year-old woman. She was driving near Clarkson, on her way to visit her grandmother.

way to visit her grandmother. "She struggled and she fought to come back and then this happened," her father said. "We believe that God had a purpose for keeping her alive after the shooting and he has a reason for taking her now."

His daughter was driving on a treacherous hill on the way to her grandmother's, Kucera said. She got off onto the thick gravel, he said, tried to get out of it and lost control of the car.

She was not wearing a seat belt. Friends and family were in shock Thursday.

"Last night I was not handling it very well," said Stephanie Bourek, who shared an apartment with Laura Kucera in Wakefield, Neb. and who spent Wednesday night with the Kucera family. "Some are mad, some are teary, some are in shock."

Funeral services will likely be held Saturday in Clarkson, her father said. The family, including seven brothers and sisters and her mother, Mary, are taking Laura's death hard, he said.

Laura Kucera amazed doctors last October after surviving in a ditch for three nights in a remote wooded area of northeast Nebraska. Clad only in shorts and a T-shirt, she slipped in and out of consciousness as temperatures dipped into the 40s.

She spent 51 days in the hospital recovering from the shooting and months of therapy followed. Her exboyfriend, Brian Anderson, was sentenced to up to 125 years in prison for attempted second-degree murder and other charges.

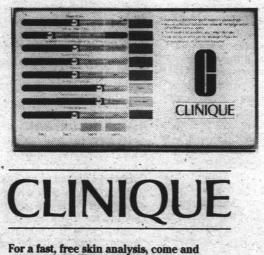
"She was strong in a lot of areas and she was independent and a very giving and loving person," Kucera said. "I think that's what she wanted most in life, to be loved."

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