

## ASU Mourns Loss of Leigh Cooper Wallace

Written by Mike Flynn

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Appalachian State University athletics is mourning the loss of former all-conference cross country and track and field student-athlete Leigh Cooper Wallace, who died Monday at the age of 43. Cooper Wallace was a standout distance runner at Appalachian State from 1989-92, earning all-conference honors in cross country, indoor track and field and outdoor track and field. As a senior, she won four Southern Conference titles (5,000 meters indoors and 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 meters outdoors) while also placing third at the conference's cross country championship.

In her four years with the Mountaineers, she helped Appalachian capture all 12 SoCon cross country, indoor track and field and outdoor track and field team championships.

She also served as an inspiration for the entire campus community as the survivor of a kidnapping and sexual assault while a student at Appalachian in 1989. She regularly shared her story at Appalachian State's annual Walk for Awareness, which promotes campus safety, commemorates lives lost to violence and supports victims and survivors of violent crimes.

Cooper Wallace graduated from Appalachian State in 1992 and went on to be a longtime teacher and coach at nearby Watauga High School, helping lead the Pioneers' cross country and track and field teams to numerous conference, regional and state championships in her 10-plus years as a coach. She was inducted into the Watauga County Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.

She is survived by her husband, Chris, and children, Jake and Haleigh.

Visitation will be held from 5-8 p.m. on Wednesday and a memorial service will be held on Thursday at 3 p.m., with both ceremonies taking place at Watauga High School. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Leigh Cooper Wallace Memorial Fund, c/o the North Carolina State Employees Credit Union at 410 New Market Blvd, Boone, NC 28607 or any North Carolina State Employees Credit Union office.

**Photo Courtesy: Leigh Cooper Wallace, PHOTO SUBMITTED**