Junior Dies Of Heart Failure
Friends, family recall Adamsson as intelligent, curious

KATHERINE RICHARDSON
Hoya Staff Writer

Mark Adamsson (SFS '15), an international student remembered as a friend, scholar and athlete, died from lung and heart failure because of medical reasons during spring break in the Dominican Republic. He was 22.

The university held a memorial service for Adamsson on March 18 in Dahlgren Chapel, which was filled to capacity. His parents, Helene Carendi and Trolle Adamsson, as well as his stepfather Jan Carendi, were in attendance.

Vice President for Student Affairs Todd Olson notified the Georgetown community of Adamsson’s death in an email March 9.

Adamsson was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on Jan. 30, 1992, and moved to the United States for high school, attending Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass. In high school, Adamsson excelled academically and in sports, according to his mother and stepfather.

“Even so in his short life he managed to accomplish so much, and all he embarked on, he fulfilled with honours,” they wrote in a statement. “As to sports, he loved tennis, golf and soccer and he enjoyed the sports in his adopted country like baseball, hockey and basketball.”

At Phillips Academy, Adamsson was the captain of the varsity tennis team, which remained undefeated and won the Class A New England Championship his senior year.

Peter Heidrich, a junior at Middlebury College, played on the varsity tennis team with Adamsson.

“The story of winning New England with him was our best moment,” Heidrich wrote in an email. “We both wanted to lead our team to an undefeated season and bring Andover its first tennis championship... He was a natural leader and instilled a great deal of confidence in the younger players with his dedication to practice and willingness to share advice with the freshmen.”

Throughout his time at Phillips Academy, Adamsson played a large role in student life. He played two varsity sports, tennis and soccer, served as a resident assistant for his dorm and as a member of the student council.

“He was a helping force for new students during orientation and a great member of the social community,” Heidrich wrote. “Our classmates took to our Facebook page immediately after his death, sharing experiences and notes of respect for his character.”

After graduating from Phillips Academy in 2011, Adamsson began his career at Georgetown.

According to his friends Daniel Martin (COL '15) and Bernhard Wilhelm von Oppersdorff (SFS '15), who wrote an obituary in the program for Tuesday's service, Adamsson passionately studied philosophy and foreign affairs.

“He is remembered as one of the most heroically courageous athletes to play for Andover,” the pair wrote. “Mark then brought this spirit to Georgetown, where he was an exemplary student driven by a boundless curiosity and a uniquely resilient work ethic.”

According to his friends and teachers, Adamsson was an extremely intelligent student.

“There was never a simple answer to a question for him,” Matias Beeck (COL '15) said at the memorial service. “He always thought out more. In our gatherings among friends that last couple nights, many stated that he was a very curious person, and I think that this is the best way to put it. Even though he was one of the most intelligent people I’ve ever met, he wanted to learn and understand more about the world around him.”

Luis Alfonzo (MSB ’15), Adams-
son's roommate of two years, said that he was struck by Adamsson's wit and intellect the moment they met freshman year.

"Mark was one of the most intelligent and talented people I've ever met in my life... He was really good at everything that he did," Alfonzo said at the service. "He could talk to you about almost anything, from Latin American politics to NFL players to anything, really. I can say that there are many people here today who have had at least one interesting conversation with Mark that often turned into very hard-to-win debates."

Peter Janssens, Adamsson's French professor of two years, said that Adamsson would always sit at the front of the class, actively involved in discussion.

"He was a very strong student in a class that had a lot of strong students. It was a particularly strong class, but even then, he stood out," Janssens said. "He was very gifted for languages in general, but also very motivated personally to learn. He struck me as very mature, always attentive and curious, but also patient and generous with other students."

Janssens recalled a composition that Adamsson wrote for French class about the film "Etre et Avoir," a 2002 documentary about a small, rural school. His composition took the perspective of a character in the movie who was struggling in his life.

"What struck me is that Mark looked for the redeeming qualities in his young person and imagined the way in which he would transform his life and become a successful and happy person," Janssens said. "It was so moving to me. He was very positive and optimistic person who would discover good and redeeming qualities in himself and also in others. He was very much at peace with himself and somebody who just had a lot of faith in life."

Adamsson also had many extracurricular interests, according to his mother and stepfather. He loved gourmet food, art and photography. In addition, he cared deeply for his family. According to Alfonzo, Adamsson spent hours on Skype with his family, particularly helping his sister Madeleine with calculus.

"Mark's sister, Madeleine, was very close to Mark," Helene Adamsson and Carendi wrote. "He was more than a big brother, he was a master and a friend."

According to Beeck, Adamsson was wise beyond his years and taught everyone he encountered important lessons.

"Mark touched all of our lives, but it was much more than who he touched. It was how he did it," Beeck said. "He had this special way of connecting with us that truly influenced how we thought about things. He showed us how meaningful our lives are and would often talk about how they are, to a certain degree, eternal. He once said that the things we do in life have meaning because the effects of our actions will last for eternity."

At the memorial service, Fr. Kevin O'Brien, S.J., spoke about his discussion with Adamsson's friends.

"I know that words will be inadequate to sum up such a life, a beautiful young life of your son, of our friend," O'Brien said. "I spent Sunday evening with many of Mark's remarkable friends. At one point, I asked them, 'What do you want me to tell his parents?' and someone said, 'We want them to know how much he was loved here.' He was loved here."
Mark Adamsson (SFS '15) died over spring break. He was 22.
Mark Adamsson (SFS ’15), second from left, was admired by his French professor for sitting in the front row of class and actively participating in discussion, displaying motivation and a flair for languages.