

Memorial service held this morning for skier killed in mountain fall

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WINTER PARK - A memorial service will be held Friday morning for Spencer Nelson, the University of Colorado skier who was killed in an accident on one of the Colorado's famous 14ers last weekend.

Friday's service will be held at 11 a.m. at the town park in Winter Park. More than a thousand people are expected to attend.

Thursday, friends and family gathered in Winter Park to hold a vigil to remember Nelson.

They say Nelson, 20, loved the mountains. In the winter, he was part of the University of Colorado Ski Team. In the summer, he hiked the trails. Since he was a little kid, family members say Nelson always loved to climb outdoors.

"His enthusiasm was beyond belief," Peggy Smith, Nelson's mother, said. "Everything he did was happy. He worked hard."

He died on the Maroon Peaks near Aspen on Saturday. A rock hit him on the head and knocked him off the mountainside as he climbed with his father. Rescuers estimate he fell about 600 feet.

Under a cloudy sky, hundreds gathered from as far away as California to remember Nelson.

"He was the greatest person you could ever meet," Khyla Burrows, a friend, said. "He had so much energy."

There are plenty of things Spencer's friends and family will miss. But more than anything else, everyone talked about his smile.

"His smile, his love for life, his motivation and passions carried him," Nelson's cousin, Rae Lynn Miller, said.

Nelson accomplished plenty of things in his short

life. His family says he was a perfectionist.

"Everyday he would wake up, go to the hill and say, 'If I do this, where am I going to be in two years? Five years? Where am I going to be in 20 years?'" Max Lamb, a friend, said.

His mother says the way he died brought her some relief.

"He could have been killed by a drunk driver, a drug overdose or died doing something careless," she said. "Instead, he died doing something he truly loved".

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