

Canadian man killed in Mexico shooting 'loved dancing,' sister says

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The family of a Canadian man killed in a nightclub shooting in Mexico is planning a "big celebration" for the popular security guard when they bring his body home.

Kirk Wilson's sister says she hopes there will be some dancing when they say goodbye.

"We're going to have a big celebration for him because he deserves that – you could never really be down around him, his positive outlook just wouldn't allow for that," Sheryl Wilson told The Canadian Press on Tuesday.

"We loved dancing, we'd dance at his house – and before that we were the siblings that danced together at the club."

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The Hamilton father of two young children was among five people who died early Monday when a gunman opened fire at a beachfront nightclub in Playa Del Carmen. Wilson was working security for the BPM music festival at the time.

Sheryl Wilson said the family was still working on getting her brother's body back to Canada.

Chris McGill met Wilson 40 years ago when they were in Grade 6 at an east-end Toronto school. He remembers spending many nights together at clubs when they were 18.

"We went into dance competitions, from break dancing to popping to R&B grooving," McGill said.

"We had routines and it was serious. We would watch for the Janet Jackson video premiere at 6 p.m. so we would have it down for the club at 9 p.m."

The pair grew up together, McGill said.

Kirk Wilson lived "on the better side of the tracks" but would spend much of his time in community housing where McGill and his friends grew up, he said.

"There was a few of us that didn't have dads and were on welfare and you don't grow up with that male role model," McGill said.

"For us, he was our role model. He did everything well."

Wilson's friends said he excelled at every sport he played, from football to basketball to volleyball. He grew into a bulky man, standing 6-foot-5 with trademark waist-length dreadlocks.

McGill and Wilson began working as bouncers in their early 20s, his friend said. From there, it was a lifetime of working security for Wilson.

His work lately involved running security at INK Entertainment venues, spending much of his time at Dragonfly, a club in Niagara Falls, Ont., that was closer to his home in Hamilton, according to his friend, and boss, Jamil Kamal.

Wilson moved from Toronto a few years ago for a bigger place in Hamilton, Kamal said, in order to give his wife and children a better life.

Kamal said Wilson spent a lot of time with his children, ages 6 and 7, and did much of his work after they had gone to sleep.

"He chose to be at home, he's a great father," Kamal said, adding that Wilson was a mentor to him, recalling when they met working the door at the Government nightclub in downtown Toronto.

"I learned how to turn the other cheek and it helped me advance my career in this business."

Karl Hale, Rogers Cup tennis tournament director, remembers Wilson as the go-to security officer for the event for nearly 20 years.

Hale said Wilson called him right after Rafael Nadal won the

tournament one year.

He said he was downstairs with Nadal, but Wilson wanted to get a fan the tennis star's autograph.

"I said, 'what are you talking about, he's gotta do his interviews, his cooldown, this isn't a good time,'" Hale said.

"He said 'I think this is important, you should come up.'"

So Hale said he went up, came across two brothers, one in a wheelchair who gushed about his love of Nadal and wanted a photograph signed. So all four went down and met Nadal, who gave the man his racket and a signed photograph.

"That was all up to Kirk," Hale said. "He loved helping people and understood and connected with others."

If there was a big event in Toronto going back to the 1990s, Wilson worked it, according to his friend and co-worker Karl Campbell.

"He was a protector," Campbell said, adding that he would often hire Wilson to work on singer Nelly Furtado's security team.

"We're providing security, but we want to feel protected ourselves and he always protected me – so this is a tough loss."

Wilson has been going to Mexico to work security for the BPM music festival for years, said Jung-Yul Kim, who used to work the festival with Wilson and a close group of friends before he had to give it up when he became a police officer.

"It was a chance for most of the guys that go down there to work and then it would be a little vacation day for us. Hang out and play soccer on the beach. Get our sun tans in, do the Caribbean thing and come back and go back to our normal life," said Kim, who had known Wilson for more than 20 years.

There has been an outpouring of support for Wilson – a GoFundMe page (<https://www.gofundme.com/kirk-wilson-memorial-fund>) set up Monday by Hale for Wilson's wife and children raised more than \$64,000 in 24 hours.