

## Personal Stories, Personal Perspectives



*Alexandra Rowan*

With endless possibilities for a very bright future, 23-year-old Alexandra Rowan, a University of Pittsburgh graduate with a double major in writing and communications, had what many young women just starting a new life dream about: A blossoming new career in a bustling and hip city, a loving family, a devoted boyfriend, a growing circle of friends, and an independent spirit that compelled her to travel and explore the wonders of the world all around her.

Sadly, however, Alexandra's life ended suddenly, when she collapsed due to a massive pulmonary embolism, or blood clot, that had formed in her lung. Without warning, the life of this beautiful young woman had ended, without any clear signal or advance warning that something was wrong.

Alexandra's only known risk factor for blood clots was estrogen-based birth control.

Anna Frutiger embodied brains, beauty, compassion, and athleticism. She was a student at University of Pittsburg School of Dental Medicine and was pursuing her dream to become a dentist, just like her parents. She was the picture of health and no one expected her dream to end, just a month after her 23rd birthday, due to a blood clot.

Anna had complained of symptoms of pain and swelling behind her knee for several months, but believed that it was related to running and a potential sports injury. Her doctor suspected a blood clot, but tests had been negative and her symptoms were not consistent enough to warrant more tests. After a weekend of travel to visit friends and an eight-hour bus ride back to Pittsburgh, Anna complained of extreme fatigue and shortness of breath. The next morning, feeling unable to drive herself to school, she called her friend to drive her. Anna collapsed on her front lawn and an ambulance rushed her to the hospital emergency room. While there, she suffered a cardiopulmonary arrest due to a massive blood clot in her leg and lungs. Extended travel and estrogen based birth control pills were Anna's only known risk factors.

After every life saving measure available, Anna did not survive. However, her story continues to resonate and bring awareness to others.



*Anna Frutiger*



*Jordan Stonehouse*

At the age of 25, Jordan, who had completed her undergraduate studies at Western Michigan University, was taking post graduate classes at Wayne State University/Oakland Community College, in 2014, when her life took a fateful turn. A painful biopsy left her bedridden for days, and she then found herself sitting for hours as she studied for final exams. Shortly thereafter, she developed a sharp pain near her clavicle or neck bone. Several days later, the pain was still there and she also found herself unable to catch her breath. Jordan was diagnosed with two blood clots in her left lung and spent three days in the intensive care unit of the hospital where she worked. Her blood clot diagnosis came as a result of hormonal birth control pills.

In the weeks following her hospital discharge, Jordan had a difficult time understanding why she suffered a blood clot: Her confidence waned, and she feared her future prospects were dwindling as she struggled to process what had happened to her.

Jordan hopes her story will help educate other women about the risks associated with estrogen-based birth control and provide encouragement in the face of what can be a difficult recovery from blood clots.