

Judul	Taekwondo queen's death big loss to State
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Taekwondo queen's death big loss to State

By Desmond Qwek

KOTA KINABALU: The death of taekwondo queen Veronieta Antau Stephen is a big loss to the State.

Veronieta, 25, was involved in a fatal road accident along Km 32 of the Ranau-Kota Kinabalu Road near Nabalau around 4.30pm on Monday.

The Perodua Kancil car she was driving collided head-on with a 25-seater express bus from Tawau.

The late Veronieta, who held a Bachelor Degree in Education and Science (Maths-Physic) from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in 2006, was believed to be heading for Ranau where she was a teacher at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama from her home in Berungis, Tamparuli.

A prayer will be held at her parents' home in Berungis at noon today before burial at the Christian cemetery in Kampung Tambalugu, Tuaran at 1pm.

"Veronieta was a very disciplined, determined and hardworking trainee," said United Sabah Taekwondo Association (USTA) President Datuk David Chong Ket Sui yesterday.

"It is a big loss to the State, especially for taekwondo in Sabah. Our thoughts go to

her family," he added.

The late Veronieta picked up taekwondo at the age of 10 and four years later she was already a State exponent where she won gold at the National Junior Championship in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

In 2000, she made her senior debut and returned with a bronze from her very first outing at the National Championship.

Two years later, she was one of the State top performers when she bagged a gold in the Malaysia Games (Sukma) hosted by Sabah in 2002.

This was followed by a bronze medal in the National Championship 2003 and a silver in the Negeri Sembilan Sukma the following year.

She returned to winning ways in 2005 with a gold in the National Championship and represented UMS at the Arafura Games in Darwin, Australia where she delivered a silver.

Veronieta also won gold in the Malaysia University Council (MASUM) Games in 2006 and was the three-time UMS Open champion from 2004.

She had to limit her involvement in



Veronieta

taekwondo last year since becoming a teacher.

However, her love for taekwondo never diminished as only a few weeks ago she had stated her intention to return actively to the sport where she hoped to compete in the Borneo Games in Kuching, Sarawak in August and the National Inter-Club Championship in Kuala Lumpur at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Veronieta also had the feminine value in her when she was outside of the taekwondo arena as she was also actively involved in beauty contests.

She was the Tuaran District-level Unduk Ngadau in 2003 and came in fourth in the 2003 State-level Unduk Ngadau contest. In 2005, she emerged winner in the State-level Pertandingan Ratu Cantik Duta Perpaduan.

Meanwhile, Veronieta's father Stephen thanked all who had given their assistance, directly or indirectly, including the Kota Belud Hospital, Police, Fire and Rescue Services Department and Assistant Youth and Sports Minister Jahid Jahim.

Stephen also thanked those who paid their last respects to her late daughter.