

Placerville winery accident brings sad end to couple's future

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

It would have been a spectacular setting for their wedding, amid the rolling hills of a vineyard where he was learning the art of winemaking.

Joshua David Ruff and Rachel Manasse had it all planned, from the sparkly toasting glasses to the purple flower petals that would decorate the aisle.

But as they were putting the final touches on the ceremony, their world came crashing down around them.

On Wednesday, less than three weeks before they were to be married, Ruff was killed in an equipment accident while working at David Girard vineyards in Placerville.

Now Manasse is left to contemplate a future without the man she called her best friend and the love of her young life.

"I am hearing words like reception and guest books, which I've been associating with my wedding plans," said Manasse, who graduated this spring from Long Beach State, where she met Ruff. "But things have turned around 180 degrees."

Family and friends will gather this afternoon in El Dorado Hills, where Ruff grew up and was a star athlete who earned a college track scholarship, for his memorial service.

He would have been 23 years old next month. The wedding would have been Sept. 8.

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