

Remembering Austin Brown

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REMEMBERING AUSTIN BROWN

Austin Brown, a senior digital media major from Fort Collins, Colorado, passed away from medical complications this spring.

Shocked by Austin's passing, students, faculty, and staff gathered in late April to collectively mourn, share memories of Austin, and pray for his friends and family.

Digital Media Production Instructor Mark Volkers says that Austin was always ready with a quip and an easy laugh.

"Austin was a bright presence in class," he says. "Austin's honesty was so refreshing."

Austin worked for the Dordt Media Network where, this past year, he learned all aspects of broadcast production including instant replay. Dordt Media Network Director Rich Lodewyk says that Austin's favorite job was operating the game camera, especially at Defender basketball games.

"He really enjoyed being part of the student broadcast team," says Lodewyk. "During a broadcast, he would often be heard laughing while talking to his fellow student co-workers. He preferred to keep things lighthearted as often as possible."

Natural Science Lab Coordinator Steve Bogaard says that Austin would stop by his office multiple times a week to chat.

"We talked about movies we'd seen, Austin's family, and more," says Bogaard. "He loved being at Dordt and studying digital media, and I enjoyed getting to know him through our discussions."

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Austin brought peace to every space he occupied, and he had a beautiful heart that put everyone at ease.

— Robert Taylor

An active member of the Gaming Guild, Austin loved playing Super Smash Brothers with other guild members and was always willing to lend a hand at Gaming Guild events. Austin was thoughtful and introspective; Student Support Specialist and Gaming Guild Director Dr. Brad Hickey recalls how Austin wrote insightfully about virtual reality and the ways that it might



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"Austin was always the first to volunteer to help with any work that the Gaming Guild needed done," says Robert Taylor.

be used in culture to affect change.

"My most recent memory of Austin occurred while we drove a Gator back to Facilities together, arguing over which Marvel movies were the best," says Hickey. "I remember his big smile as we parted, and he headed back to his dorm for the evening. I look forward to that future day when we will be able to pick up our arguments once again. Austin will be missed."

Vice President for Student Success and Dean of Students Robert Taylor ('99) met with Austin every week for a couple years.

"It was an opportunity to get to know him and to talk about whatever was on

his mind," reflects Taylor. "Austin was kind; he was a gentle giant. It's hard to imagine something unkind coming out of him."

Austin's family asked Taylor to officiate the memorial service in Fort Collins, Colorado, where Taylor spoke about Austin's love of the Marvel universe and how Austin believed that "the God of Heaven was the one true hero—and of course the hero of Austin's heart and life."

"Austin brought peace to every space he occupied, and he had a beautiful heart that put everyone at ease," says Taylor. "He was such a servant, and he will be greatly missed at Dordt."

"As a campus community, we mourn the loss of Austin, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will minister to his family and friends during these difficult times," says President Erik Hoekstra.

SARAH MOSS ('10)



POSTHUMOUS DEGREE

Austin would have graduated on May 13, alongside his classmates. He was awarded his degree posthumously; his parents, Dale and Valerie Brown, as well as his siblings Alex, Adam, Aaron, and Staci accepted Austin's diploma during the 2022 commencement ceremony.