

The CLARION

www.brevard.edu/clarion

Volume 81, Issue 3

SERVING BREVARD COLLEGE SINCE 1935

September 2, 2015

**See page 4 for Art
Gallery Opening
Information**

Remembering Richard Liell

Tribute to a fallen friend

By Megyn Terrell
Contributing Writer

We begin to grasp the concept of death at a young age, for some it is easier than others, but nonetheless, we learn. As you grow, death becomes more and more apparent as an unavoidable aspect of life. We attend a very tight-knit college, in the sense that we pass the same familiar faces everyday. You begin to make connections, recognizing what car a person drives, their laugh in the hall, or their uncanny ability to stumble into class late. Even the absence of a person's presence is recognizable.

This year many returners came back to BC knowing that there would be a void. This is the year that would have been the senior year of Richard William Liell, or known to many of us as Richie. We received a dreary email this summer confirming what some had hoped to be rumors, our classmate, friend, and teammate had passed away. There are many personal memories in the hearts of students here, and then there are some things we can all remember; like his white mustang whipping around campus; his gaming stories after he showed up to class in the same clothes from the night before; the times he would stumble into class late because he was still half asleep from his nap; or his natural ability to have sarcasm at what sometimes was the worst time, yet still being able to come across comedic. Everybody forms different bonds with each individual, but I can speak for the majority when I say once you were somewhat acquainted with Richie you were most definitely his friend.

There are also some things that people may have not known. Richie was starting to teach himself piano. He had also achieved a third degree brown belt in karate in his younger years. He was pursuing his degree in Integrated Studies, with concentrations in Communications and Political Science and minoring in Psychology. On behalf of BC, Richie will receive his Honorary Degree and it will be awarded to his family in May 2016. Richie was on the men's tennis team here for two seasons. His BC tennis career here included, two single victories as well as four double victories alongside his doubles partner, fellow student Christoph Plasa. As we mourn the death of a fellow friend we can reminisce on all the good laughs and memories we were able to gain from his time here with us.

When I decided to take this piece on I reached out to Richie's father. I knew that this would prove to be a hard task. I didn't ask for much, only memories. The following are responses from his father and family.

"I can remember dropping Richie off at Brevard back in the fall of 2012. It was his freshman year and the first time that he would spend many months away from home. That Saturday moved slowly and I was thankful that the time seemed to stand still because I think neither of us wanted our time together to end. We completed all the required unpacking and moving in procedures, along with the last minute essential shopping at Wal-Mart -- a new rug, lamps, power cords, a fan, shower gear, cleaning supplies (I don't think he ever used!), a mini fridge and all sorts of other college necessities.

"We stopped at Ingles for some healthy snacks for the new fridge and a fair amount of not-so-healthy snacks as well. I was happy that he had found a good roommate and new friend in Johannes, but I was saddened because I knew the next morning I would be leaving him for the first time in his life. Sunday arrived with a quiet breakfast together then a quiet moment to pray in the car. One final check to make sure he had everything he needed, then a bear hug and the inevitable goodbye.

"What do you say to your son after 19 years together? Richie and I had never learned how to say goodbye. Fortunately, in my 58 years I haven't shed many tears, but on that Sunday I cried. I cried from Brevard, North Carolina, to Roanoke, Virginia two hundred and seventy-five miles away.

"It's been three years since that first goodbye at Brevard and as each year passed we learned how to say goodbye a little better. But time passes swiftly and life takes turns. Things happen, some good and some bad. For the last 21 years we were blessed with many good things, but this summer was different, and life took a turn for the worse.

"This year would have been Richie's senior year at Brevard and we were all so excited and looking forward to his upcoming graduation. But this year we never got to pack for school, or make that trip together, or do the last minute shopping. We never shared the bear hug and we never got



Photo Courtesy of the Liell Family

Richard posing at Spring Formal

to say our goodbye. This time, Richie, my son, would be gone a very long time.

"And yet through the unbearable loss of my son, two good things remain in my heart: thankfulness and hope.

"Thankfulness, in part because of the great outpouring of love and sympathy from so many students and staff at BC. I want each one of you to know how much your kindness and friendship has meant to Richie, and that your letters and cards have helped to support his family back home. Hope, because I have faith in God's word and assurance through prayer - prayers that Richie and I have said since he was little. I know that someday I will be with my son. I also know that when that day comes, I'll never have to say goodbye again.

"May God richly bless and keep each one of you. And if I can speak for Richie and say a final word, I think he would say: "Love to you all, my friends," and "Let's go Tornados!"