



# The Pilot

Gardner-Webb University



Friday, January 23, 2003

www.gwupilot.com

Volume 7 No. 9

## Gardner-Webb remembers Justin Alston

1977 - 2004

**Sarah Olimb**  
*Pilot editor*

To many, he was the avid sports fan; to others, an intramural coach, cheering from the sidelines. To other Gardner-Webb students, he was the 2001 Homecoming King, manager of the men's basketball team, member of the Student Alumni Council, the 2003 Future Alumnus of the Year and that guy sitting next to them in class.

After battling arteriovenous malformation (AVM), a rare entanglement of the blood vessels of the brain, Justin Alston, a GWU alumnus, died Saturday, Jan. 17, after being in critical condition since Dec. 24, 2003 at

Moses Cone Hospital.

Carol Blassingame, chair of the department of physical education, wellness and sports studies, remembers when Alston was diagnosed in 1999 and his determination to finish school.

"It's really hard to describe since that time how much Justin went through as he bravely persevered through excruciating headaches, numerous surgeries, hospital stays and adjustments with new medications - and at the same time trying to complete his degree here at Gardner-Webb," said Blassingame. "And amazingly, that sweet Justin always wore the brightest smile through it all!"

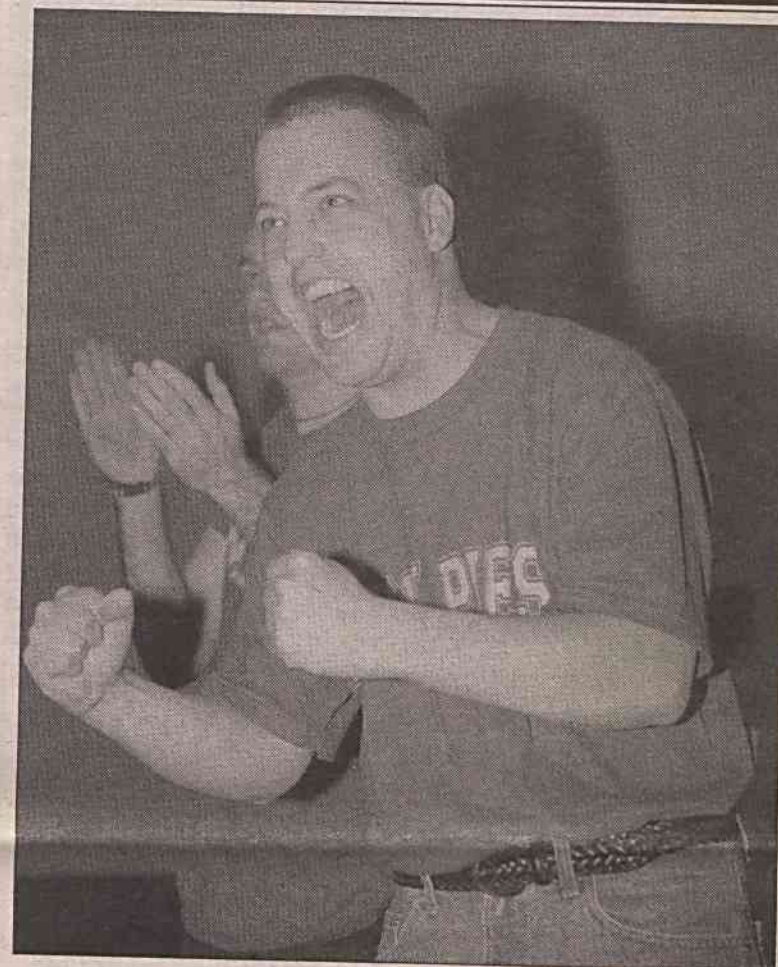
He was born on Nov. 2, 1977 in Greensboro. He attended Southeast Guilford High School and attended University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

Graduating from GWU in May 2003 with a B.S. in Sports Management and Physical Education, Alston was enrolled in the graduate program at High Point University.

The funeral took place on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 2 p.m. at Southeast Baptist Church in Greensboro, followed by entombment in Guilford Memorial Park.

Memorials can be made to the Justin Scot Alston Memorial Fund, Gardner-Webb University-Restricted Fund, Box 997, Boiling Springs, N.C. 28017.

Like Blassingame, many



Pilot file photo

Justin Alston gets excited while coaching his intramural basketball team. Alston died of arteriovenous malformation on Jan. 17, 2004.

of his professors felt that Alston stood out—he was more than a student, but a friend and an inspiration.

Ozzie McFarland, professor of health and physical education, remembers Alston

"He poured his heart into everything he did," said McFarland. "And he had a great sense of humor."

Kirk Peterson, professor of physical education, wellness and sports studies,

dwells not on his death, but on his life.

"As sad as I am concerning Justin's death, I am a bit jealous of him as well," said Peterson. "You see, my jealousy is based on the simple facts of Justin's incomparable life: his amazing gift to be a wonderful friend, his unceasing effort to accomplish what was unfinished, his unnerving approach to life and his endearing faith that all will be well."

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