

Producer, playwright loses life in car accident

The founder of art4artillery was just 23 years old

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Among the obituaries found on Desmond Funeral Home's website, one bright young face looks out place: Kyle Holton, a 23-year-old who was beloved in the theater and LGBT communities, died Jan. 28, 2011 after a car accident.



Kyle Holton

BTL profiled Holton in 2009, when he founded art4artillery Theatre Company with two friends from Wayne State University, where he earned his B.F.A.

"I wanted to start something that was a real artists' community – a place that was open for experiments and for exploring different types of theater," Holton told BTL theater editor Don Calamia. "Especially in a community like Detroit, (theater) is not thriving like it should. So something like art and the arts community could really bring people to the city – and bring people together. And as a gay male, I'm very interested in re-examining pieces of theater with a new perspective – something that hasn't been explored in that way before."

One new way to look at theater was to view it as a response to all of the wars society fights – against terror, drugs, family values, Holton said. "It's guerilla theater."

Holton started writing plays in early childhood. He also enjoyed singing, dancing, snow and water skiing, and playing many different musical instruments.

David Butera, a friend of Holton, wrote to BTL that Kyle was "unique in every way from his insatiable laugh to his random model poses" and was "the most charismatic individual that I have ever known."

"He was a young man afraid of very little who enjoyed taking risks and reaping the rewards of success. A best friend to many and a true warrior for what he believed in, Kyle helped many find comfort in themselves and accept their sexuality as a part of who they are, free from judgment.

"Often the socialite, he was a true believer in Detroit and what the city could become. His productions were mature – beyond his years – and true to form art that had a way of touching all who attended his performances. Too soon taken but never forgotten, we love you, Kyle."

Holton was born Oct. 1, 1987 in Southfield, and resided in Beverly Hills, Mich. at the time of his death. He is survived by parents Christopher and Madlyn, brother Timothy, grandparents Rex and Carol Holton and Dominic Soave, and many cousins, aunts, uncles and friends.

Holton's family suggests memorials to Wayne State University Theater Department, 4841 Cass Ave., Suite 3225, Detroit, MI 48202.

BTL