



CONTACT:
Office of College Relations
1401 S. College Ave.
Levelland, Texas 79336
(806) 894-9611, ext. 2211
Fax: (806) 894-4701

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Myrna Whitehead
806-716-2212
mwhitehead@southplainscollege.edu

Collins Memorial Scholarship to be awarded in fall 2009

LUBBOCK – It only took two years for the friends of murder victim Rodney Collins to create and endow a memorial scholarship in his honor. Collins made a lasting impression on the people he encountered while working at the Lubbock County Court Residential Treatment Center (LCCRTC) in 2006.

A twist of fate cost Collins his life. But for those who remain and remember him will tell you that Rodney will never be forgotten.

Thanks to the diligence of Winnifer Yandell, Gwen Hastings, Karen Harris, Kerry Rainwater, Donnie Neal, Julia Finch, Lupe Ruiz and countless others including more than 100 local businesses, South Plains College will award the first scholarship in fall 2009 in honor of the late Rodney Collins.

“Rodney helped so many people while he was here, and this scholarship is a tribute to the kind of person that he was,” said Yandell, Workforce Development instructor at SPC/LCCRTC. “It has been a privilege to work on this project.”

Yandell served as the unofficial “leader” that kept the fundraisers going during the two-year period to raise money for the scholarship. With assistance from co-workers and friends, the group hosted two annual garage sales, bake sales, silent auctions, raffles, bowling, car washes complete with a classic auto show and burrito sales, all in an effort to raise money to endow the \$10,000 scholarship.

“Rodney was one of those people who never had a bad day,” Yandell said. “He always had a smile on his face, and he was always joking around and made everyone feel comfortable.

“We planted a tree in his memory in the front of the building, and we’ve got a memorial tribute for him in the hall,” she said. “He touched a lot of people.”

The memorial tribute features a program from Collins’ funeral, his name badge and a letter he wrote to apply for another position in the office – his last correspondence.

Collins attended Estacado High School and Texas Tech University. He worked for the LCCRTC in 2006 with residents in recovery. He was killed Feb. 20, 2007 in his home.

“He was my favorite nephew, and anytime I told him I needed him, he always came running,” said Lena Clay, Collins’ aunt. “Our family is honored that everyone here has done this for him. We’re really grateful.”

The recipient of the Rodney Collins Memorial Scholarship will be selected in the fall. If the recipient has successfully completed his treatment program and has shown progress toward recovery, he will be considered for the scholarship, Yandell said. The purpose of the scholarship is to help someone in recovery attend college.

The LCCRTC is a residential treatment facility that provides services to promote drug-free lifestyles for short-term and long-term residents through counseling and education.

“We’re happy that everybody came together to help out with the scholarship drive,” Yandell said. “We are so appreciative of all of the efforts and contributions this project has received.

“Now that this part is done, we hope to have an annual fundraiser to go along with it,” Yandell said. “We will use the funds to help the student buy books and supplies to supplement the scholarship.”

For more information or to contribute to the Rodney Collins Scholarship, contact Russell Hall, director of Development at SPC, at (806) 716-2020.

###