

IN MEMORIAM

JANPLAN IN CHINA



Derrik Flahive '13 spent last JanPlan traveling with a Colby class in China. Here, Derrik dons his infectious smile and shows off his love for meeting new people as he poses for the camera with local children.

From Kent Denver School

Excerpt of a letter from the head of Derrik's secondary school

Derrik loved music, sports, outdoor adventure and helping to create educational opportunity for young people around the world. A tremendous athlete (lacrosse and football), teammates and coaches alike shared a deep appreciation for his contributions on and off the field. Derrik's upbeat personality, love of adventure travel and

heart of service made him a big hit in his service work in Africa. His generous nature, big smile and ability to engage with others made him a beacon of eager enthusiasm. Derrik will be remembered fondly by everyone in the Kent Denver School community. His presence made us stronger, and his absence reminds us all to take full advantage of the opportunities before us, to better understand the world by getting to know the people of the world and to share life's experiences generously with others.

—Todd Horn
Kent Denver, Head of School

My son Sean graduated from Colby in 2008 and was a member of the lacrosse team for two years while there. I taught Derrik math in eighth grade, coached him on the middle school football team for two years and then had the pleasure of coaching him again as a JV lacrosse player during his early high school years. When I think of Derrik, my first images are of a wonderful, caring, high-energy young man who poured all of his efforts into being the best at everything that he attempted. He led by example, whether it was on the field, in the hallway or in the classroom. He set the bar high in all of his endeavors and made those around him better by being willing to make the extra pass, offering a word of encouragement or taking the time to just listen. I remember the pure joy on his face when he won the middle school excellence in athletics award in 2005 as an eighth grader—an awesome moment. As part of eighth grade continuation, Derrik was part of a group that went rafting on the San Juan River in Utah. I remember him clobbering me during the water fights and actually knocking me off my raft—a first in my years on the river. His smile of triumph is etched in my memory as I landed in the water.

—Bruce Collamore
Kent Denver School

A special thanks to Robyn Levin '12 for collecting these reflections from Kent Denver. Levin attended Kent Denver School in Colorado with Derrik before Colby.

Soft-spoken yet powerfully influential among his peers, Derrik led by quiet example. His love of music and adventure were palpable, and he would exude an infectious energy when discussing these subjects.

As a junior, Derrik selected "Backpacking through Europe" as his English seminar, and if any course title captured the essence of Derrik and his approach to life, this would be it. He was serious about his experiences, and relished those opportunities that provided genuine, authentic insight into the world. Actually, backpacking across Europe

is something Derrik would have profoundly valued (although, instead of a guitar slung across his shoulder, he would have had to devise a way to tote his drum set along for the adventure). Derrik had an insatiable thirst for discovering things that were "real": real experiences, real emotions and real knowledge that mattered—all things that he likely compelled him to travel abroad. He also had a very real maturity about him, and his authenticity made him a real friend to many—all things that make him profoundly missed.

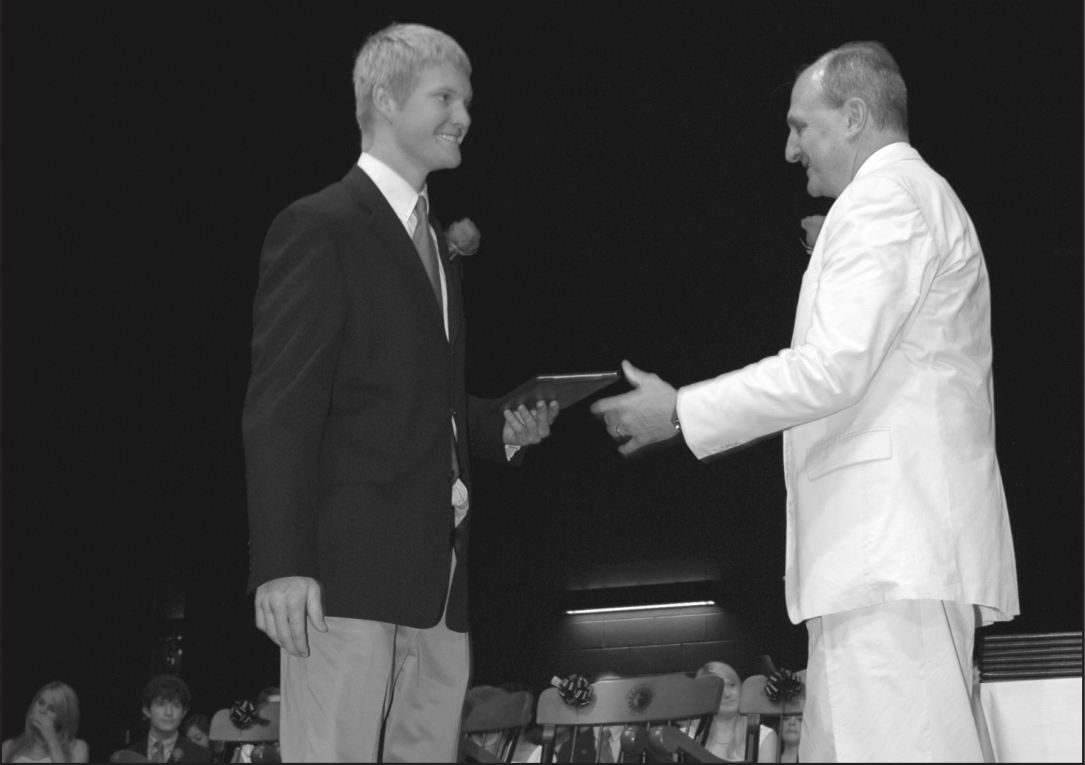
—Kurt D. MacDonald
Kent Denver School

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Derrik was easily one of the most gifted student-musicians I've had the pleasure of teaching during my career. I came to know Derrik as a confident, adventurous, extremely personable young man, who insisted on being pressed in order to develop his craft to a higher level. His ability to drive a band during a

rehearsal or performance helped to propel the musicians around him to better themselves. He left an indelible mark not only on the music program, but on the Kent Denver community as a whole.

—Steve Holley
Band Teacher, Kent Denver



Derrik, Class of 2009, received his high school diploma from the Kent Denver School in Englewood, Colo.

Derrik did a great deal of research on his study abroad program. It was important to him to find the right experience, both academically and culturally. In his essay, he stated that he looked forward to his experience in Chile and that he planned to apply the sense of independence and culture that he would absorb, and share it with the Colby community. "I will share the stories of the people, the sense of life there. This trip will enhance my education and the education of my peers." I did not know Derrik well. I met him only twice, once at the study abroad fair, and subsequently, when he came to my office for advising. But he made a very favorable impression on me. He was immediately likeable. After talking to him, I felt somehow elevated. He had a luminosity about him and a childlike quality, in the best sense of that word. He struck me as curious and thoughtful.

Nancy E. Downey
Off-Campus Study

He had a luminosity about him and a childlike quality, in the best sense of that word. He struck me as curious and thoughtful. He seemed to be a person who lived in the moment, and someone who gave a damn. He had an infectious smile and a wonderful spirit. I believe that spirit lives on.

—Nancy E. Downey
Director of Off Campus Study

Derrik was my drum student at Colby. The band director, Eric Thomas, asked me if I would like to bring some of my students to a dinner at The Last Unicorn restaurant that was being hosted by the great timpanist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and owner of a famous stick and mallet company, Vic Firth. I invited Derrik and a few other students, and after lis-

tening to some of the greatest drummers in the world (Steve Jordan, Stanton Moore, JoJo Mayer) play the drum set that was provided by Colby, Derrik got up and played a flawless solo that impressed all who were present.

—Mark Macksoud
Set Drumming Instructor for the Music Department

From sharing a tiny twin bed during lacrosse away games freshman year, to fly-fishing till dark under a bridge in Winslow, Maine on Cinco de Mayo and spending that evening sharing beers on the roof of the Heights dorm, there isn't enough space to recount all the wonderful memories I have with Derrik.

There are two words that I hold onto when I think of Derrik: genuine and compassionate.

Greg McKillop
Class of 2013

There are two words that I hold onto when I think of Derrik: genuine and compassionate. He was the most genuine person I have ever known and he cared about people in such a deep way. I believe he lived more in 20 years than most people live in 80.

—Greg McKillop
Class of 2013

FLAHIVE PLAYING LACROSSE



COURTESY OF JUSTIN DOMINGOS
Derrik Flahive ’13, #5, plays hard for the Mules. Flahive was a member of Colby’s varsity lacrosse team

Lessons from Derrik

We felt it necessary to publish this piece collaboratively because Derrik played a similar role in each of our lives.

Whenever I spent time with Derrik, I had high expectations of learning something new from him; these expectations were not just met but were also invariably exceeded. Whether Derrik had just given me a brief lesson on his hand-crafted drum, discussed his wild philosophies with me or simply told me a personal anecdote, I always left Derrik feeling enlightened in some particular manner.

On Dec. 4 last year, a bunch of friends and I went to a Railroad Earth concert in Skowhegan. Four of us, one of them being Derrik, wanted to spend some time exploring Skowhegan before the show, so we left campus with a few hours to spare. We picked up a couple of growlers from the Oak Pond Brewery and found a gazebo in the beautiful Coburn Park, lying adjacent to the mighty Kennebec River. We spent hours in that gazebo rejoicing, listening to music, dancing around a Christmas tree centered in the gazebo and playing in the fresh

Derrik pushed me to focus my attention on every possible detail I could grasp at the time, I was living fully in the present.

Harry Geldermann
Class of 2013

snow that had just begun to fall that night. As the concert grew closer, we began to wrap up one memorable festivity and prepare for another. When leaving the park, we realized that the area in which we had spent the last few hours was much more expansive and wondrous than we had originally taken it to be. We could not let the night progress without fur-

ther exploring the rolling hills of Coburn Park. After sliding down snowy slopes and prolonging our park jamboree, we encountered a small band shelter. The four of us gathered in that shelter, and Derrik began to beatbox; without verbally communicating to one another, our quartet sparked up a vocal jam that rivaled that of Phish in their song “You Enjoy Myself.” Five minutes later, our vocal jam that I wish had been recorded organically wound down.

We proceeded to make one final stop in the park where we all stood in awe alongside the Kennebec River. As the four of us stalled in reverence at the top of a bluff at the waist of the River, Derrik began an oration pivoting on one of his favorite and most applied philosophical topics: mindfulness. Derrik spoke with vigor about how we should aim to strongly impress upon ourselves that particular memory, along with other important ones. Derrik pushed me to focus my attention on every possible detail I could grasp at the time. At this very moment, I was fully living in the present; I can still remember the sound of the Kennebec River, the sensation, scent and taste of the new winter air, and the feeling of truly experiencing the present. Evidently, Derrik’s exercise was effective, as this memory has so evocatively stuck with me and will continue to do so for the rest of my life.

In light of Derrik’s passing, I have begun to find myself striving to be more mindful in the last few weeks. As the day grows farther from us when Derrik Flahive left this world for another, his lessons of mindfulness will remain as powerful as they did the night of Dec. 4—that special night we reveled and learned from one another in Coburn Park.

—Harry Geldermann
Class of 2013

What I most loved about Derrik was the way he made me feel. No matter what concert we were going to, what meandering, glorious jam we were grooving to or what spacey ideas we were discussing, I always felt his radiating, beautiful warmth. It has been difficult to recall specific memories of him; I have a multitude of them, but they all roll into one and become a perfect idea that contains all that I ever knew of Derrik. I could write for

pages about everything we did together but could never verbalize that feeling. Indeed, I feel it when I picture him dancing with Harry and me, all of us anticipating the transitioning of The Grateful Dead’s “Scarlet Begonias” into “Fire on the Mountain,” and when it finally comes, Derrik exclaiming, “Holy shit,

No matter what concert we were going to, what meandering, glorious jam we were grooving to or what spacey ideas we were discussing, I also felt his radiating, beautiful warmth.

Nate Sugarbaker
Class of 2013

man! Epic!” I feel it when I recall conversations with him about his love for drums and music and nature and meditation. I feel it when I think of the happy glow in his eyes as he approaches you, ready to embrace you with one, grateful hug. And I feel it when I remember what he taught me: a loving compassion for the natural world, for your fellow sister and brother and for the moment that lies right before us.

—Nate Sugarbaker
Class of 2013

Derrik, we’ll miss you dearly. We leave you with the words from a good friend of yours, Jerry G:

“Fare you well, fare you well,
I love you more than words can tell,
Listen to the river sing sweet songs,
To rock my soul.”

Derrik Flahive was one of the chilliest, weirdest, most awesome, down-for-anything kind of bros at Colby. So open to everything—he wasn’t afraid to be himself, and being himself meant engaging with everyone. We had a couple of lunch dates because he liked that I bid him with a “Ciao!” It was so random, but looking back, I admire that so much. It freaks me out knowing that I won’t see his face around here anymore. I’m still trying to get a grip on it. Rest well, dear friend.

—Dhokela Yzeiraj
Class of 2013



COURTESY OF JUSTIN DOMINGOS
A celebratory hug for the Mules. Derrik, #5, played on the varsity lacrosse team.

AT PEACE IN TRAVEL



COURTESY OF MARTIN CONNELLY
A solo shot of Derrik during the JanPlan 2011 trip he took to China last winter.

Derrik created his own beat in life. Sometimes, it was a bit out of synch with college rhythms. He missed his first advising meeting with me as a freshman, as well as his last Skype appointment from Chile. Rather than rules, Derrik followed his passions—for social justice, international music and lacrosse. He defied stereotypes; he floated from one Colby subgroup to another. His wide smile made him welcome with all.

Derrik’s enthusiasm for people and places was contagious; he wanted you to be part of his exciting new thing. At a level that so few are able to reach, he cared deeply about the world around him, both the big issues and the individual lives. We would all do well to embrace a bit of Derrik’s spirit of community and caring as part of his legacy on Mayflower Hill.

—Patrice Franko
Grossman Professor of Economics

Derrik was a remarkable individual. Through his passion for learning, his curiosity about the world, his way of relating to other students and people and his contagious energy in general, he had a huge impact in the dynamic of my Spanish class, and he made us laugh, sometimes, and to see

The guides Derrik worked with over the past two summers at Echo Canyon remember him as one of the nicest guides on the Arkansas River. He was one of the only guides who always took extra time to chat with customers after raft trips, and he always found ways to make life easier for the guides themselves by building and designing new gear racks or by having a ready supply of tea and some good conversation.

Lindsey Pruett
Class of 2013

things from a different perspective. The only consolation I can find, not being a religious person, is that he lost his life doing what he really enjoyed: being abroad and outdoors.

—Lola Bollo-Panadero
Assistant Professor of Spanish

To the world champion “rock-hopper.” All our misadventures in the caves, cliffs and canyons near home are some of the best times I’ve ever had. I’ll miss donning the secret identities of Merriweather Lewis and William Clark to search for new discoveries and shouting, “Please, sir, can I have some more!” after hitting each rapid just right for the best waves.

—Lindsey Pruett
Class of 2013



COURTESY OF MARTIN CONNELLY
Derrik learns how to prepare a traditional Chinese meal during his travels to China during JanPlan 2011.