

IN MEMORIAM: DERRIK FLAHIVE '13



Derrik spent last JanPlan with students from the Hill in China, one of many places he has visited as he pursued his love of traveling. In the past, Derrik has also visited Tanzania and Zambia, where he worked with both village school children and camp staff.

Mourning Derrik

By **ALLISON EHRENREICH**
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The College community is still mourning the death of Derrik Flahive '13, who passed away on Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2011, in Chile, where he was studying abroad for the fall semester. He died in a tragic drowning accident after jumping about 30 feet into the Petrohué waterfall in the beautiful Vicente Pérez Rosales National Park. He was with his fellow exchange student, Samuel Edward, who was injured but survived.

A global studies major, Colby Cares About Kids mentor, varsity lacrosse player and avid drummer, Flahive is remembered fondly for his exuberant smile and love of life by people from all walks in the Colby community.

He has left behind a loving family—his father Roger, mother Katherine and older sisters, Megan and Shannon.

His parents run the Flahive Family Foundation with the goal “to enhance the quality of life of people all over the world through

activities that promote education, self-sufficiency, health and wellness. The emphasis is on international projects and third world countries, especially Africa,” as noted on the Foundation’s website.

Flahive traveled to Tanzania in 2005 and 2010 and to Zambia in 2007. According to the website, “His travels...provide[d] him the opportunity to establish relationships with village school children and safari camp staff. He assisted with the Zambian water well preserve restoration and school desk projects.”

A memorial service will be held on campus in his honor on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. in Lorimer Chapel.

Flahive’s family has selected the charity ¡Sin Represas! (No Dams!) for those wishing to donate in his honor. ¡Sin Represas! seeks to stop an international energy company from plans to build five hydroelectric dams in the rivers of the Chilean Patagonia. The website is <http://www.sinrepresas.com/>.

Flahive, who hails from Littleton, Colo., graduated in 2009 from the Kent Denver School in Englewood, Colo.

I met Derrik before classes even started freshman year in our Spanish placement exam. He was sitting at a desk adjacent to mine. No one was really talking in the room before the test was passed out, but as I sat down, Derrik introduced himself to me, and we had a quick conversation before the test. You could really feel his energy—it was positive, curious and ambitious. I knew right away that he would be one of my new friends during my first year at Colby.

I had the chance to share many spectacularly wild experiences with Derrik.

A fond memory I have of Derrik was driving to the Portland airport together for winter break. He baked a batch of brownies for the ride, and we had a blast. Specifically, I remember us jamming out to a live version of the song “Zebra” by John Butler. Derrik really knew how to jam. We were screaming the lyrics at the top of our lungs, dancing in our seats and banging on the dashboard. He just knew how to have a jolly time. Nothing ever stopped him from enjoying himself. He had a great attitude and an ability to

find joy in what ever he was doing, and the best part was that it was really infectious.

It’s such a shame that he died so young, but one thing that

Derrik really knew how to jam. We were screaming the lyrics at the top of our lungs, dancing in our seats and banging on the dashboard.

Johnny Schroeder
Class of 2013

brings me to peace on the matter is that I know that he found joy in every experience had. Nothing could stop him from having

a good time. His life may have been “short” when measured in years, but he was old and wise when measured in experience, energy and attitude. He wanted to experience everything he possibly could, and he would approach everything with an open mind so that he could truly understand things and gain perspective on life.

He lived large. He made the most out of everything.

Derrik was an awesome friend to me. He really was just the man. I will forever feel his absence. And I will always miss him. He was truly a self-defined, individual man. His life should be celebrated. It’s what he would want. He would never be able to stand all the sadness that his death has brought about.

Be happy in honor of Derrik.
Live large in honor of Derrik.
Experience everything you can in honor of Derrik.
Smile in honor of Derrik.

Remember the good times and smile. That’s all he would want—just for everyone to find true joy in life, as he did.

—Johnny Schroeder
Class of 2013

From Roger Flahive

There are so many memories that I cannot begin to outline them for you. He and I were not father and son—we were first the best of mates. We have spent months together, 24 hours a day, sharing tents, lodges, trails, slopes and other experiences. Every meal. Every moment. We hiked, climbed, skied, hunted, biked—all the things a father would wish to do with his son. Many boys and young men are not of the fabric to absorb and enjoy a life filled with adventure, yet Derrik was the type. The last thing Derrik wanted to do was sit around and watch TV.

He not only enjoyed adventure, but he made it his own—not his father’s, not his father’s friends’. Most of Derrik’s formative years were spent in the presence of my friends. To give you a

He and I were not father and son—we were first the best of mates.

Roger Flahive
Derrik’s Father

clue of their ilk, the group’s nickname is the “Mutants.” Derrik loved being with them and asked

where on earth would he find like-minded soulmates his age. In Chile, he did, and his name is Sam. Sam was with Derrik when he died, and the accident has left a deep scar.

Scars make men, and unfortunately death is an all-too-familiar component to this life of adventure that made Derrik breathe deeply and enjoy each day.

His spiritual dimension was very deep and his compassion for others palpable. He knew so many people because they were all worthy of respect and time in his eyes. You can well imagine the hole left by a son so special. I look forward to meeting his many friends and crying with them as I do now.

—Roger Flahive
Derrik’s father



Derrik, Kat McElroy '13 (middle) and Johnny Schroeder '13 enjoy their first Hill 'n the 'Ville.

The Colby lacrosse family is devastated by the untimely passing of Derrik Flahive. Derrik was a great young man and a terrific lacrosse player.

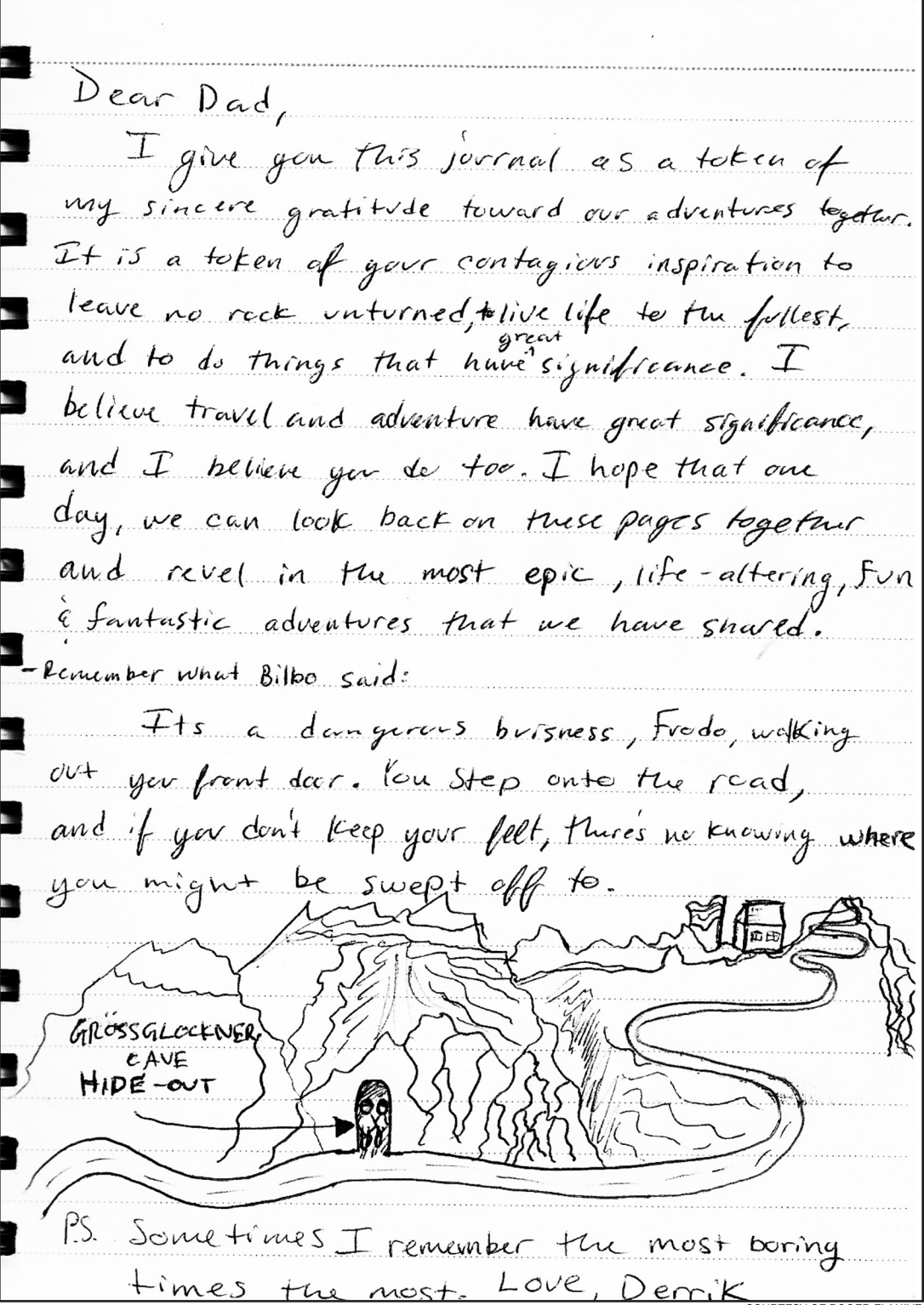
While he was really passionate about the game of lacrosse, he also had a passion for a great many things outside of athletics. He loved music, the outdoors and traveling, to name a few. He was a big part of our lacrosse family

here at Colby, and his ability to socialize and connect with teammates was one of his biggest strengths. We recruited him when I was an assistant coach at Gettysburg College and were upset when he chose to come to Colby.

Derrik’s impact on our lacrosse family in the two-and-a-half years he spent with us was great. We will miss his passion for the game and his

ability to play lacrosse at a high level, but we will miss his friendship more. Derrik was a deep thinker, and to have a conversation with him about anything—lacrosse, politics, time, anything—was a treasure and one that this program will not soon forget.

—Justin Domingos
Colby Men’s Lacrosse Coach



This image is the first page of a journal that Derrik gave to his father—who inspired his love of adventure—for Christmas in 2010, the winter before he left to study abroad in Chile. His father told the Echo that the page “is very touching and has never been shared with others. I would like to share it with his Colby Community.”

“His enthusiasm, joy and love of adventure”



Molly Hodson '13, who is currently studying abroad in Scotland, met Derrik during their freshman year at the College. Here, the two posed before their first Fall Ball—one of Hodson’s many cherished memories of Derrik.

I’ll never forget what would turn out to be my last conversation with Derrik. It was toward the end of finals week last spring, and I was sitting in Dana early one morning, sleep-deprived, burnt out and eating a quick breakfast alone before heading back to the library to finish up my last paper. I looked up from my plate to see Derrik heading toward my table. I wasn’t exactly in a socializing mood, but it had been awhile since I had seen him, and I was more than happy to have him join me for a bit and catch up. We chatted about schoolwork, summer plans and our excitement about our respective plans for studying abroad in the fall: the topics typical of dining hall exchanges that occur at the end of sophomore year. As with most things involving Derrik, however, the conversation soon became more interesting.

Remembering my love of art, he began to tell me about different artist and hippie communes that dot the less populated regions of Colorado, his beloved home state. “You just have to see these places,” he said to me with his signature animation and enthusiasm, “I think you’d really love them. You know what? We’ll do a road trip. You’ll come to Colorado, and I’ll take you around and show them to you. It’ll be great.” It takes a very special type of person to get me excited about things before 10 a.m., but Derrik was one of those people. I’ve never seen someone express as much genuine excitement and initiative for something that they thought would interest me as Derrik did on that day. Naturally, I wholeheartedly agreed that we would make the trip during some future JanPlan or summer break, or perhaps after we graduated.

Derrik Flahive was one of the most fantastically complex and intriguing people I have ever been lucky enough to encounter in my life. He was “D-Rock” or “Flava-Flav” to many of us here at Colby, a dear friend whom we knew and loved, while at the same time, he was an incredible enigma that none of us could ever hope to really figure out. He was the type of person you could not see around campus for weeks, but then he would be

everywhere: performing with the African drum ensemble onstage at Foss while you’re getting dinner one night and scoring for the men’s lacrosse team at a home game the next. For me, however, our final conversation on that morning really epitomizes his many wonderful characteristics that consistently shined through during the time he spent on Mayflower Hill.

Derrik was one of the first people whom I befriended upon our arrival at Colby freshman year, and one of the first things that struck me about him was that he so completely and honestly cared for the well-being of others. For him, however, compassion wasn’t just something he saved up for his volunteering abroad or mentoring in Waterville. It was something that was truly part of his life that he expressed every single day, even in his most seemingly insignificant actions. From the very beginning of freshman orientation

all the way up to that impromptu finals week breakfast, I saw him consistently demonstrate this in a very quiet, selfless way. In the dining halls, for example, he would always sit down with someone who was sitting alone, introduce himself to the person if he didn’t already know him or her, and strike up a conversation. Derrik was the type of person who cared much more about whether or not someone, friend or stranger, had the chance to enjoy a meal with some company than he did about subscribing to the typical dining hall social protocol.

To anyone who even vaguely knew him, it was easy to see that his enthusiasm, joy and love of adventure pervaded everything he did. One of my fondest memories from freshman year is of the ride to Hill ’n the ’Ville in Derrik’s car with a group of our friends, which

quickly became less of a simple journey from Hill to ’Ville and more of an exciting first-time navigation of the strange, mean (often one-way) streets of Waterville. When we made our fledgling plans for the Colorado road trip, I knew this was just one of many, many exciting journeys Derrik had planned for his future, both distant and not so far-off. But at the same time, he was someone who embraced living in the moment. To him, the future would come, and it would be great, but right now was just as much of an adventure. When I asked him what the food was like in China upon his return from his JanPlan abroad last year, a huge grin spread across his face. “Oh my god—it was amazing,” he said simply and earnestly, as he dove in with just as much gusto to the Dana dinner in front of him.

I’m still in shock that Derrik won’t be returning to campus with myself and the rest of the members of the class of 2013 who are abroad this fall. I can’t believe that I won’t get to hear him play music again, or sit across from him at a dining hall table and try to get him to give me more than a knowing smile and one adjective to describe his semester in Chile, or spot his distinctive lope from miles away as he walks across campus. Derrik was a person who touched many people’s lives at Colby and beyond, and I wish that I could be

back in the States right now to properly mourn this devastating loss with some of them. But instead, by writing this, I think I get to attempt to do something closer to what Derrik would’ve wanted—share memories of the good times and appreciate the time I did get to spend with him.

Even if you didn’t know Derrik particularly well, know that he was someone truly special who I can’t even begin to fully describe on paper, and Colby simply will not be the same without him. Send some loving vibes to the family and friends he left behind, hope that wherever he is, he’s surrounded by mountains and jam bands, and hey, maybe hop in a car with a friend and tour around some obscure artist communes someday... I know I’m going to.

Molly Hodson
Class of 2013

—Molly Hodson
Class of 2013



In Derrik’s two-and-a-half years spent playing lacrosse at the College, he became an invaluable teammate—but beyond that, a friend to other players both on and off the field.

Since I was on sabbatical last year, I never met Derrik or had him in class. But he was a philosophy minor, and I am the advisor for our department’s minors this year. In the fall, I sent out a general e-mail to all minors, introducing myself, making sure they knew what courses they needed to take to fulfill the minor and telling them about our “Reflections of Terrorism” theme for this year. Derrik was the only minor who wrote back. He was full of enthusiasm, especially for the terrorism theme, and wanted more information. He asked me to summarize a talk someone had recently given in the department about terrorism; I sent him a copy

of the speaker’s paper. He wrote back with thanks, explaining

His intellectual curiosity and passion came across so vividly.

Lydia L. Moland
Professor

that his interest had been piqued because, as he wrote, “many

Chileans believe that American government organizations are terrorists and responsible for the end of Chilean democracy in 1973 and for the support of the military dictatorship that was here from 1973-1990.” He was clearly fascinated and disturbed by this accusation and wanted to know more. His intellectual curiosity and passion came across so vividly just in these few e-mail exchanges. We ended the correspondence by reiterating that we were looking forward to meeting each other in person. How sad I am that that will never happen.

—Lydia L. Moland
Assistant Professor of Philosophy



Derrik, a member of the African Drumming Ensemble, had a passion for music.

I remember Derrik as someone who loves life. He joined my African Drumming Ensemble two years ago, and he was very excited. He just wanted to know everything he could about drumming. I said to him, just wait, relax—you’ll learn it all in time. He was a very passionate person and very innocent, too.

When he came back from China last January, I asked him to be a guest performer in our African Drumming Class performance, and he told me he was going to wear this garment someone had brought him back from Africa for the occasion. He was very excited about it. I told him, “Derrik, you look great”—I never told him, but it kind of looked like a woman’s garment. What an innocent person he was.

—Jordan Benissan
African Drumming Instructor



Derrik enjoyed a meal with friends on his trip to China last January.

“He was my first friend at Colby.” That thought has been a collective sentiment expressed among those of us who were close to Derrik Flahive. Being abroad all over the world leaves me and many other juniors wishing we could be at Colby right now.

Derrik was someone who found importance and opportunity within every situation. Each and every conversation Derrik and I had had true authenticity. His ability to reflect upon the world and find endless optimism in life truly impacted me and our community as a whole.

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—Jennifer Sibert
Class of 2013



As a high schooler, Derrik played both lacrosse and football at his high school in his home state of Colorado.