

The Crimson White

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Memorial service honors life of University student



By CHEYENNE KEARL
Senior Staff Reporter

Described as spontaneous and selfless, Nicholas Pierce found his niche during the brief time he spent at the University. Pierce's life made such an impact on others that at a memorial service held Wednesday at the Wesley Foundation, there was standing room only.

Pierce died suddenly on Christmas Eve after his spleen ruptured after a long bout of mononucleosis, which neither he nor his family knew he had. He was a sophomore in the College of Engineering and just 19 years old.

Reverend Ken Smith, who conducted the service, reminded those in atten-

dance that life is a gift and to "give thanks for the life of Nicholas Pierce."

SGA president Jonathan Macklem spoke on behalf of the student body.

"In this time of grief, it's important to the student body to remember Nick," he said. "It is our responsibility to share with one another the experiences we have had with Nick and communicate with others."

Sybil Todd, vice president of student affairs, shared a similar message and some comments others had made about Pierce.

"He was filled with spontaneity," she said. "He never promoted himself and

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was in fact an individual who promoted others."

She also described him as someone who "knew what was important in his life."

"We must learn to emulate those things which made him special," she said. "And from this we must learn that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers."

Susan Dowdey, whose daughter was one of Pierce's friends, said what struck her most about Pierce was his smile.

"He was really fun, fun-loving and loved everyone," she said. "He had a great attitude about life and was a pleasure to be around. He was one of the smartest boys I ever knew."

Pierce was an active teenager with hobbies including hunting, snow skiing and deep-sea fishing. He was also a serious student, exemplified by his distinction as a National Merit Scholar and University Presidential Scholar.

Not one to complain, the 2000 Mountain Brook High School graduate once tried to play football with a sprained ankle.

"He wasn't scared of anything, and he almost never complained," his sister Leigh Ann Pierce said in a piece she wrote about her brother.

When Pierce first became sick, he complained of few symptoms and never mentioned to doctors or parents that he was fatigued. One doctor diagnosed him with the flu and another diagnosed him with sinusitis. None of the doctors he visited took blood to test for mono.

"If he would have told me he had been feeling fatigued, I would have immediately thought of mono," his mother Ann Pierce said.

"I think that there's enough stress in school to give students the reason to think 'I'll get better,'" his father Chip Pierce said. "I think that's what he thought."

The Pierces hope students will learn from their son's death and learn to take care of themselves and listen to their bodies.

"When you don't feel well, describe all of what your symptoms are," his father said. "It's very important to tell people what is bothering you."

"This could have easily been prevented just by getting him to the hospital even a day before we did," his mother said.

Though his death was a shock, Pierce's family is able to take comfort in their fond memories of him.

"We had a great time as a family," his father said, "and it's been a joy to think we were able to do so much. He always

had time to do something with mom and dad, and that's important.

"He always exceeded our expectations."

Friends of Pierce are encouraged to share their memories and experiences on a Web site dedicated to him. Those wishing to contribute should e-mail their stories to nickpiercememories@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, February 20, 2002

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In remembrance of the life of a beloved student of this University
Nicholas Franklin Pierce,
a memorial service will be held at the

Wesley Foundation
509 9th Street

on Wednesday, February 20, 2002,
at 4:00 p.m.

Denny Chimes will ring in honor
of Nicholas at 3:30 p.m.

