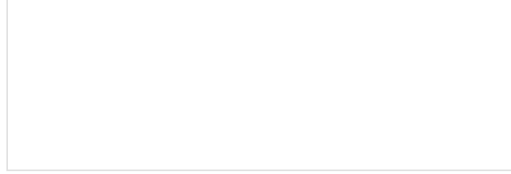


The Harvard Crimson

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Dunster Student Dies at 24

Friends, family remember Fienning '06-'08, a community service leader

By MALCOM A. GLENN and KRISTINA M. MOORE, CRIMSON STAFF WRITERS August 6, 2007



Henry C. Fienning '06-'08 of Dunster House, a spirited and beloved leader in Harvard's service community, died at his home in Sumter, S.C., on July 30. He was 24.

Friends and family gathered at the First Presbyterian Church in Sumter on Sunday afternoon to remember Fienning, a music concentrator who had one semester to complete before meeting the requirements for his bachelor's degree.

Fienning died in an apparent suicide, according to the coroner's office in Sumter.

Fienning was an active member of the Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA), a community service organization on campus. He was also a member of the Krokodiloes, a Harvard male a cappella group, and he performed in Harvard Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players' production of "Ruddigore" in 2005.

Fienning was living at home for the summer and planned to return to school in the fall, according to one of his brothers, who asked not to be named.

Fienning's friends recalled his charisma, personability, and warmth.

Leone E. Price '06, his best friend, said that after graduating from Harvard, Fienning hoped to get a graduate degree in international business.

"Henry is down to earth, extremely intelligent, artistic, musical, warm, friendly, adventurous, and selfless," Price wrote in an e-mail.

Julia "JC" E. Cassis '06, who met Fienning through Price, said Fienning forged special bonds with friends.

"He loved to have a good time, and he really loved and cared about his friends," Cassis said.

Cassis said Fienning's warmth extended beyond simple conversation.

"He was like a teddy bear, everybody talked about his great bear hugs, and he definitely had a very youthful spirit," she said. "He talked like a dreamer."

Gene A. Corbin, the executive director of PBHA, described Fienning as "very passionate about serving others," noting that he was "sure service would have continued to be a big part of his life."

In 2006, Fienning was the co-director of Refugee Youth Summer Enrichment, a PBHA-sponsored summer English as a second language program aimed at immigrants in Boston high schools. He was also a tutor for more than two years with the Refugee Youth Enrichment's term-time program, Corbin said.

Fienning raised over \$900 from November 2006 to January of this year for the Harvard College Marathon Challenge, a group of Harvard community members that raises money for Boston-area youth in conjunction with PBHA and Project HEALTH.

He worked for a semester in the Dunster superintendent's office. House Superintendent H. Joseph O'Connor recalled Fienning's "very engaging personality."

Fienning's death was announced to the Dunster community last Wednesday.

"Henry was an energetic and engaging member of the Dunster House community," read an e-mail sent last week by Dunster's House Masters, Roger B. and Ann Porter, and Paulette G. Curtis '92, Dunster's Allston Burr resident dean. "His large and diverse group of friends reflected the genuine concern he exhibited for others. We will all miss him greatly."

Students assembled in the Lowell Junior Common Room on Friday evening to remember Fienning and to receive counseling from clinicians from University Health Services and the Bureau of Study Counsel.

Fienning attended Sumter High School and was a 2002 graduate of the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. He is survived by his parents, Susan and Charles E. Fienning '66, and three older brothers, Sam, Ben, and Edward B. Fienning '01.

A memorial fund has been established by the Fienning family at the First Presbyterian Church, located at 9 West Calhoun St. in Sumter, S.C. Donors may choose whether their funds will support the church's Boy Scout Troop 86 or the church's music fund. Fienning was an Eagle Scout and contributed greatly to the church's musical programs, his brother said.

Condolences may be sent to Fienning's family at 5 Pathfinder Dr., Sumter, S.C., 29150.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Over 90 percent of those who die by suicide suffer from depression or a substance-abuse disorder, according to statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health. Depressed individuals often experience feelings of pessimism, guilt, anxiety, and fatigue.

Other risk factors for suicide include a family history of mental health problems, feelings of hopelessness, impulsive or aggressive tendencies, and social isolation, according to the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention.

Effective treatments for mental health problems are available, but often underused. Individuals concerned about their own mental health or a friend's health can call the 24-hour, confidential National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Harvard affiliates can reach University Health Services during normal business hours at (617) 495-2042 or at (617) 495-5711 during nights and weekends.

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