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Scholarship honoring late BGHS grad, horn player will help 'countless' students

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William Haynes directs a band students. Photo courtesy of Kay White.
Submitted/

Left: William
memory to Bc
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When Kay White remembers her late son William Haynes, a lifelong musician who led high school bands in Kentucky and Georgia, she recalls how he'd scan classified ads in newspapers, visit pawn shops and scope out garage sales looking for discarded instruments he could repair and pass on to needy students.

An award-winning horn player, Haynes got pretty good at repairing brass instruments, White said.

Woodwinds, not so much.

"A lot of the kids that he taught used the instruments that he purchased," White said of her son. "He just felt like, you know, any kid that wanted to be in band should be able to be there."

Haynes taught music and drama at Atlanta's E. Rivers Elementary School, but he was killed in 2016 by a man who took his car.

White remembers one of her son's former students approaching her at a memorial service in Atlanta.

The student recalled how Haynes had gifted him a horn in high school after he admitted his mother couldn't afford to pay for an instrument. One Christmas, Haynes even surprised the student with a new one, wrapped in a bow.

"He said 'Do you have any idea what I do for a living?' " White said, recalling the conversation. "He said 'I'm a band director.' "

To honor her son's legacy, White has set up the new Bill Haynes Scholarship Fund to support high school band students in their studies at Western Kentucky University.

The scholarship currently offers \$1,000 a semester to students at Bowling Green High School, which is Haynes' alma mater.

BGHS graduate Dylan Jackson was recently named as the scholarship's inaugural recipient.

On behalf of his school, BGHS Principal Kyle McGraw said he appreciated White's generosity and that "hopefully this generosity can help students for years to come."

White said she plans to eventually expand the scholarship to any student in the city or county school system who's participated in their school's band for at least three years. She's arranged to create an endowed scholarship with WKU's College Heights Foundation as part of her estate plans, she said.

"We're excited that this scholarship will provide opportunities for education for students that may not have otherwise been possible," College Heights Foundation President Donald Smith said. "It will keep his legacy alive."

Smith said that if donors want to support the endowed scholarship in the long term, they can do so through the College Heights Foundation by specifying their donation for the Bill Haynes Scholarship Fund.

"It's not just a few students," Smith said of the endowed scholarship's support. "It's countless numbers of students that will be helped with the generosity. We're very grateful."

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Aaron Mudd

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