



Style

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Campus, family remember Bartok

by Mosheh Oinounou
Editor in Chief

He had a warm smile and a signature wave, religiously wore pink flip-flops and cooked gourmet meals for his friends. In his first and only semester at the GW Law School, Chris Bartok made a distinct imprint on the community, according to many of the more than 200 friends, acquaintances, professors and family members who gathered Friday to remember the student.

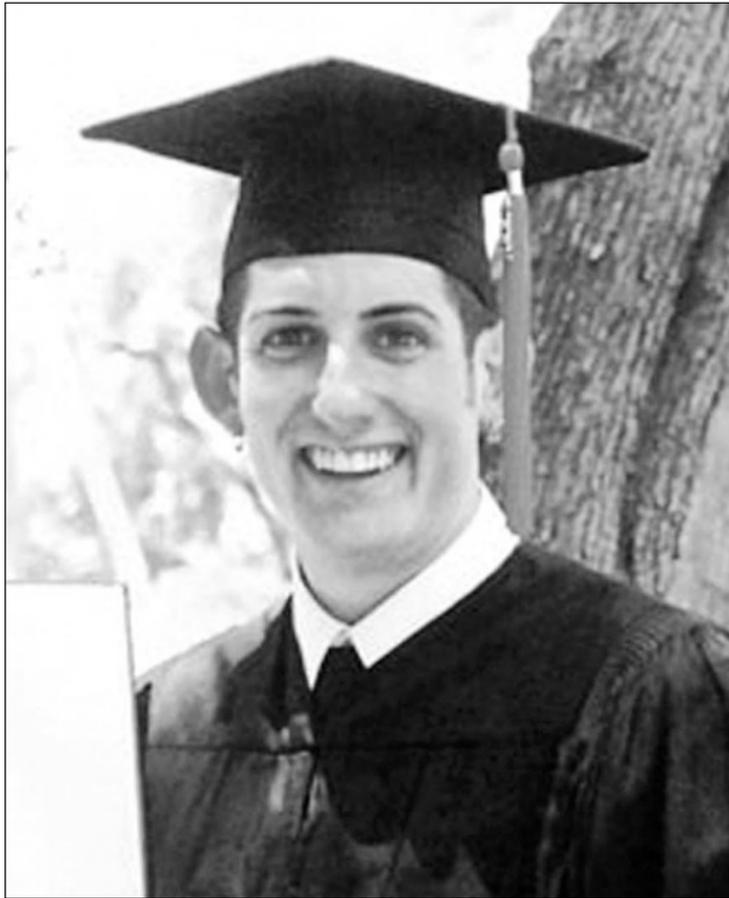
Bartok's body was found in the Potomac River near the Lincoln Memorial Dec. 19. Metropolitan Police officials have yet to determine the cause of death, and friends said they do not know what happened to Bartok after he left a bar Dec. 18 where he was celebrating the end of final exams.

With officials still investigating his mysterious disappearance and death, members of the GW community recounted their memories of the 26-year-old California native.

"He made everyone he talked to feel special," said Joseph Mastro Simone, a member of Bartok's Legal Research and Writing class. "Few people have that combination of a fabulous personality, great sense of humor and a brilliant mind."

Bartok's parents said Chris had numerous interests growing up ranging from cars to music to cooking. A classically trained pianist, Chris also loved cars, memorizing every aspect of every model.

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Courtesy Carol DiNolfo

Chris Bartok enrolled in GW Law School this fall after graduating from the California Institute of Technology in 2002.

MPD: Murder not suspected

by Michael Barnett
Metro Editor

Metropolitan Police are still investigating the death of GW Law School student Chris Bartok, who was found in the Potomac River about three weeks ago.

MPD officials said they are not treating Bartok's death as a homicide but would not comment further on their work. They said they are awaiting the results of a cause of death inquiry conducted by the D.C. Medical Examiner's Office.

Bartok, 26, from Morro Bay, Calif., finished his first semester at the Law School last month. He graduated from the California Institute of Technology in 2002.

A woman jogging across the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge the morning of Dec. 19 spotted Bartok's body lying face down in the river, said Officer Kenneth Bryson, of MPD's Public Information Office. When MPD officers pulled Bartok from the water, he was wearing only a T-shirt, boxer shorts and socks.

Doctors who performed an autopsy on Bartok's body concluded that there were no signs of a struggle, according to a document compiled by Bartok's mother, Carol DiNolfo. MPD detectives told DiNolfo that the water found in her son's sinus cavities and lungs suggested that he had drowned.

Bartok was last seen Dec. 18 at McFadden's bar on Pennsylvania Avenue, where he and his friends were celebrating the end of finals, DiNolfo said. She said her son left the bar before midnight and that it was unclear where he was planning to go afterward.

After being notified Dec. 21 by her son's roommates that Bartok had been missing for almost three days, DiNolfo filed a missing persons report with MPD.

"I burst into tears," said DiNolfo, recalling the moment when she learned of her son's disappearance. "For him to be missing that long, I knew immediately that it was not good and that he was probably dead."

The following day, one of Bartok's roommates went to the coroner's office and identified the body, DiNolfo said. Since Bartok was found without his cell phone or wallet, he could not be identified immediately after his body was found.

Last week, DiNolfo traveled to D.C. to talk with MPD officials to persuade them that her son's death was a result of "foul play" and not an accident or suicide. She has also interviewed dozens of her son's friends in an effort to piece together the last hours of his life.

But the circumstances surrounding Bartok's death are murky, as friends and family struggle to figure out where the student planned to go when he left McFadden's and why his body was

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Rizzo killer sentenced

by Gabriel Okolski
Hatchet Staff Writer

A federal jury sentenced the confessed murderer of GW student Jonathan Michael Rizzo to death last month.

On Dec. 23, the jury of nine men and three women read the ruling to a silent and motionless Gary Sampson, who is the first person in more than 50 years to receive a death sentence in a Massachusetts court, the Associated Press reported.

Sampson confessed this fall to killing Rizzo and two other men in separate incidents in July 2001.

The trial revolved around whether Sampson should get death or life in prison.

Michael Rizzo, Jonathan's father, said the Rizzo family was satisfied with the ruling.

"This ruling doesn't close a hole in our lives but it brings a sense of justice," said Rizzo in an interview several hours after the jury's decision.

Rizzo said his family, including Jonathan's mother Mary and brothers Nicholas and Elliot, were present at the courthouse to hear the jury's sentence.

Many members of Jonathan's Kingston, Mass., community rallied behind the Rizzo family and supported giving Sampson the death penalty, Rizzo said.

"This was a ruthless act by an evil man, and a growing sentiment of fear is evolving in communities," he said.

Jonathan Rizzo was slated to enter his sophomore year at GW when his body was found in the woods several miles from his home in July 2001.

Rizzo, who was on his way home from work, picked up the hitchhiking Sampson, according to court testimony. Sampson then forced Rizzo to drive him into the woods, where he tied the student to a tree and stabbed him to death.

GW senior Paul Kennedy, a close friend of Rizzo's who also attended high school with him, said his mother woke him up to tell him about Sampson's death sentence.

"I didn't expect this to happen," Kennedy said.

He informed several members of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, to which Rizzo belonged, of the jury's decision.

While the decision was somewhat of a surprise, Kennedy said he and other mem-

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Jonathan Rizzo

District to hold primary

by Gabriel Okolski
Hatchet Staff Writer

In an effort to raise awareness of D.C.'s lack of representation in Congress, the city will hold a non-binding Democratic primary Tuesday.

The Democratic National Committee has frowned on the city's decision to hold a primary before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, two events that traditionally mark the start of primary season.

Citing the DNC's disapproval of the event, five candidates - including several front runners - removed their names from the ballot.

Nevertheless, voting rights activists said the primary will call attention to District residents' lack of representation in Congress. In the Senate, D.C. has no representation, while in the House of Representatives a delegate can introduce and debate legislation but cannot vote on it.

Ilij Zherka, executive director of D.C. Vote, an organization campaigning for voting rights, said that hosting the first primary would be significant for D.C.

Zherka said the primary has received a large amount of coverage, especially in major newspapers.

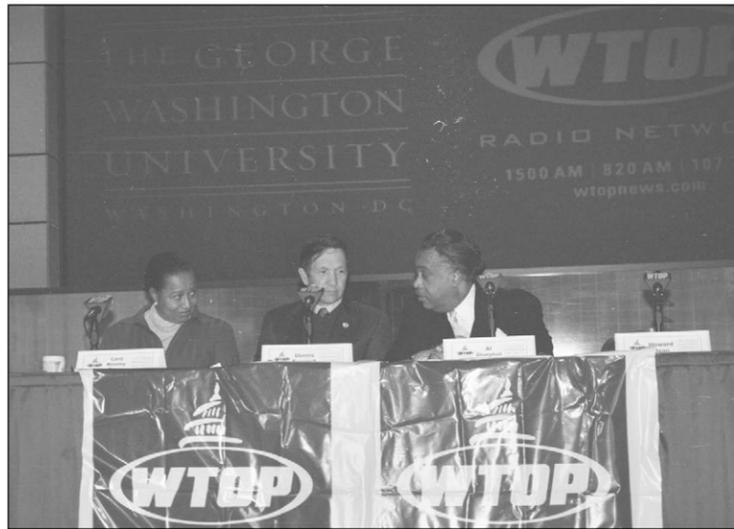
"Each of these articles mentions the issue of D.C. representa-

tion, and there are over a hundred of them," he said.

Even though several candidates have refused to run in the primary, the participation of former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, who is the favorite to win the nomination, has put D.C. in the spotlight, Zherka said. Among those running against Dean will be former Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and the Rev. Al Sharpton.

In a debate Friday at GW, Braun, Kucinich and Sharpton expressed their support for full statehood rights for D.C. Dean did not attend the debate, although a

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Tij Rai / Hatchet photographer

Carol Moseley Braun, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D - Ohio) and the Rev. Al Sharpton (l to r) debate in Jack Morton Auditorium Friday. Howard Dean was invited but did not attend.