Alumnus David Alan Lewis (BLA ’10), age 29, died on April 30, 2011, when the river and mountain he so loved tragically cut his life short. His family has established a memorial scholarship for BLA students at the College in his name. DONATE. Click the “for more information” button below to read the obituary.

David Alan Lewis, age 29, of Athens, GA (recently of Greenville, SC) died on April 30, 2011. The river and mountain he so loved, tragically cut his life short. He is met in heaven by his beloved grandmother Helen Thaxton Williams, his grandfather James M. Williams, and Aunt Margaret Ann Gabriel. He is survived by his mother Nancy Lynn (Williams) Palermo and stepfather Dr. Gene Palermo of Friendsville, TN; his father David M. Lewis of Warner Robins, GA; his grandparents, Maxcy and Geraldine (Jerri) Lewis; step-brothers David Palermo of New York, NY and Mike Palermo of Myrtle Beach, SC; his step-grandparents Sylvana and Ozzie St. George of Rochester MN; his Great Aunt Poppy Patrone of Genova Italy; the love of his life Meara Spillum of Marietta, GA (Greenville, SC), his four-legged best friend “Charlie,” and a large loving circle of friends and family. Alan was born and raised in Athens GA. He attended schools in Clarke, Oglethorpe and Oconee counties, and graduated from Athens Christian School.

Alan, affectionately known as “Top Dog,” graduated in 2010 with a BLA from The University of Georgia’s challenging, nationally-ranked Landscape Architecture program in the College of Environment & Design. At the time of his death, he was working in the landscape architecture field at Earth Designs in Greenville, SC. He was passionate about plant materials and the evolution of environmental design. He was LEED Certified and a member of ASLA and SCSLA.

A handsome young man with a heart of gold, he was a great friend, son and brother who everyone agrees was “the coolest guy” they knew. He was a talented musician, a Class-V kayaker, a certified lifeguard instructor, an exceptional billiards player, an Eagle Scout, and former assistant waterfront director at Camp Rainy Mountain. If he was not on the river, he could be found hiking, front row “PHISHing” at concerts, dancing to live music, jamming with
friends on local Athens stages or in informal gatherings, boating on the Tennessee River, or sneaking kisses from the girl he loved. His soul will live on in nature as well as in the hearts of all the people whose lives he touched. Although he never fulfilled his dream of riding a bull, there is no doubt he is currently doing so in heaven.

A “Celebration of Life” ceremony for all friends and family will be held from 4 – 6 p.m. this Friday, May 6, 2011, at Bridges Funeral Home in Athens, GA (3035 Atlanta Highway), followed by a “jam session” in his honor at Blind Pig Tavern (485 Baldwin Street in Athens).

The Palermo family has established a David Alan Lewis Memorial Scholarship in Landscape Architecture. Checks should be made out to: The UGA Foundation; and in the for/memo line: David Alan Lewis, and mailed to the College of Environment & Design at:

Attn: CED Development
609 Caldwell Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA  30602-1845

For credit cards or wire transfers, the College of Environment & Design has set up a direct link. DONATE ONLINE.