



Remembering Danny Harris, A Beacon of Light in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Last Saturday morning, 30-year-old Danny Harris was killed on the Berm Highway in what appears to be a hit-and-run incident.

In the wake of that tragedy, an entire city is mourning one of its beacons. As his brother, Drew Goble, said, Harris was a small man with a large presence. Harris started his life as a “miracle baby,” with a hole in his heart and other medical issues. Doctors warned his family he may not live past his teenage years, but he continued through them and kept marching forward. Before dying tragically at 30, Harris was able to touch the lives of nearly everyone who met him.

Following his death, Goble told reporters several tales of his brother. In life, Harris was a wise man who enjoyed playing pranks on folks and giving great advice at the most-needed times. Goble told several stories of intense emotions and heartfelt sincerity – most of which ended in perfect punchlines not exactly fit for print. From his stories, Harris was a man who would walk anyone through a crisis and was able to take away the edge when it was finished.

He also helped around Bossanova – a place he referred to as “my bar.” He was told his money was no good there when he tried to purchase drinks and meals off the clock, and would often tip as much as the cost of the item.

“Danny was the spiritual backbone of Bossa,” owner Russ Smith said earlier this week. “No boss could ever ask for more from an employee. He went far beyond what was asked of him, always. When it was a job no one else wanted, he undertook it without complaint or delay. When it was a job that needed a couple of people, he took responsibility and led the way by example. When washing plates in the cramped quarters, known as the 'dish pit,' you'd walk in on him singing while working.

“Danny was born with physical challenges, and he turned his adversity into advantages. Never did he complain about the cards he was dealt – he playfully engaged his own stature and made it his own. People were immediately drawn to his infectious personality, his humor, his empathy, and his courage. He was the smallest member of our team, but we all definitely looked up to him.”

Everything Smith said has been echoed by Harris's friends. Harris was the main support for his grandmother and often lent his labor and money to folks in need. He opened his home to anyone who needed one and was often a provider of refuge for anyone who required it.

“He gave me a home when my family left,” his friend Trevor Johnson said. “Danny is the reason I am who I am today. He's part of everything about me. He convinced me to take risks and go to Germany. He convinced me to move to Kansas and get sober. The man I am today is because of Danny.”

“My brother convinced me to pick up my guitar and play music again,” Goble said. “He convinced me to keep going. He helped me get my job at Bossanova and helped me start the rest of my life. I say, my brother because Danny is even harder to say. I miss my brother every day.”

Goble said he wished the person who struck his brother and allegedly drove away could hear the stories he recounted. He said his brother would have forgiven them for what happened and said: “everyone makes mistakes, man, I know how it is.” He hopes they come forward and do the right thing by taking accountability for his brother's death.

Police are still investigating the incident, which took Harris from the community who loved him. As of now, no description of the vehicle has been released. The incident occurred in the early hours of last Saturday morning on the Berm. Harris seemed to have wrecked his black Chevrolet Cobalt, and was on foot near or on the Berm before being struck. It appeared as if Harris was killed on impact from being struck by the vehicle – which has yet to be identified.

Anyone with information on the incident should contact the Alton Police Department at (618) 463-3505.