TO THE FAMILY OF
RONNIE GAINNE

FROM THE
DAKOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CAMPUS COMMUNITY
ON BEHALF OF
DAKOTA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Ronnie Gaine was a beloved member of our campus community at DCTC.

He graduated with an AAS degree in Information Systems Management and PC Technician Certificate in May 20, 2020, with Honors (having a Grade Point Average of 3.5 or higher). Ronnie was also on track to graduate with an AAS degree in Software Development in Spring 2021.

Ronnie was a dedicated student and devoted student employee in the Student Affairs Division. Ronnie worked in various areas of the Division, however, his main responsibility was to assist in the Testing Center. Also, Ronnie helped at the entrances of the college to ensure people completed the Health Questionnaire and wore a mask.

Ronnie was a Mark C. Weller, Workforce Development and Student Life Scholarship recipient. He was also a graduate of the Heart of a Leader program.

Ronnie was kind, compassionate, caring, and humble. He shared his artistic abilities with many through the making of trees, rabbits, and peacocks out of bright, beautiful paper (pictured throughout this book). Ronnie also shared his native food with college personnel and found great joy in doing so. Ronnie’s quiet spirit will be deeply missed.

Anne Johnson
Vice President of Student Affairs
FROM ANDI FINK
GRAPHIC DESIGN INSTRUCTOR

I am so sorry to hear about Ronnie’s passing. Ronnie was truly an excellent student, person, and such a creative spirit! Even as a non-design major in a very design focused class he was a big part of making our small group like a little Zoom family. Each project he created involved so much care and thought - you can’t teach that kind of creativity or the willingness to help his fellow students like he did. Ronnie’s absence will be felt in our class - I will be missing each meeting without his name on my list, his hat on my screen, and each new project I don’t get to see from him this semester. I wish I would have gotten the chance to meet in person and share how much of a joy it really was to have him in my classroom. Sending love from our Type and Layout 1 class and the graphic design department - we are thinking of you.

Some of Ronnie’s assignments from Andi’s class
FROM NATHAN BLOMMEL  
IT INSTRUCTOR

I'm very sorry to hear about Ronnie. He was such a great guy (and student). I only had him for one class, but I remember him quite well. He was always "on time" (many times early to class). He sat in the front. He took great notes and didn't stop working on his lab(s) until they were working! I remember one time leaving the classroom at 2:40 pm (because class ended at 2:30 pm) and he was still working on his lab...when I came back to the classroom at 5:45 pm (for my 6 pm night class), he was still working on his lab! What persistence!

In my mind, I knew that one day he would make a "Rockstar of an IT person" for some business. Not only was he smart with learning/catching on to classroom things, but he was just such a genuine guy. I was one of the lucky recipients of his holiday origami trees that he made. It was very thoughtful of him. He will be missed by many!

(Ronnie was one of Nathan’s students)

FROM BEN JAMES  
DCTC STUDENT

There is not much that I can say. I am sorry for your loss, even though that probably doesn't mean much from a stranger. Ronnie was a great guy to have in class and he was one of the few who would actively ask questions from the teacher and brought a great energy to the class. Again, I am sorry for your loss and hope you all are at least coping with this tragedy for now.

(Ronnie was a former classmate of Ben’s)
Ronnie walked these halls daily when he attended his IT classes or visited his instructors in their offices.

Jeffrey Owens (one of Ronnie’s instructors).

One of Ronnie’s classrooms where he spent much of his time while on campus.
Ronnie's main job on campus was helping Karianne Loula and Kate Zweber in the Testing Center. He helped proctor and set up tests, working on homework between testers. His favorite thing to do was to "bug" Karianne and Kate with stories and conversations.

This is the room where Ronnie would set up tests. He was also careful about making sure the student was comfortable before leaving them. If students seemed nervous, he would offer them a word of encouragement.

"This board was something funny. Ronnie and I would take turns sometimes for who got to write on the board, even though, as I liked to remind Ronnie, it was my board and I should be able to write whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted! This quote was one Ronnie particularly wanted on the board. He was so excited to have this one there but refused to write it himself. He got another student worker to write it for him and the we're both so proud." - Kate
This was Ronnie's work station in the Testing Center. He sat next to Kate and liked to tell her stories. Ronnie often came in and studied at this desk even when he was not scheduled to work. Even though he said he "wasn't working," he would still help anyone who came into the center while he was there. Ronnie would help anyone anytime he saw a need.

Ronnie's shared a workspace with Kate. He would try to talk her into letting him stay longer in the Testing Center, even after his shift was over. He loved to interact with the people who came into the testing center and make them feel welcome.

Ronnie made Kate a swan for her workspace.
FROM KATE ZWEBER  
TESTING CENTER COORDINATOR

Ronnie was a good friend to many at DCTC. I like to think that I had the special honor of knowing him particularly well having worked with him for many hours in the testing center. The first time I met Ronnie he seemed very soft-spoken, humble, and extremely kind. He always helped you in the best way that he could. I have learned much in the time that we spent working together, but the one thing in particular I learned from him was how to serve others while holding nothing back. I often marveled at how he could help someone and always be thinking entirely of them, not seeming to feel any sort of self-consciousness at all!

Ronnie and I had many conversations sitting behind the front desk of the testing center. These conversations ranged between talking about our favorite colors to knowing the difference between right and wrong. We also liked to tease or banter, and there was a great deal of that bouncing back and forth. Ronnie especially liked to argue with me and would come in to work and ask me what kind of thing we could argue about that day. I was always afraid that Ronnie would say something about me to someone as a joke and they would take him seriously! My first impression of Ronnie may not have been that he was a joker, but he certainly was in his own way!

Ronnie never ceased to surprise me. He had many stories about crazy things that he had done growing up or while he was going to school. He also loved to tell stories about his girls. I could tell they were his pride and joy and that he would do anything he could to make them happy and make sure they had what they needed. He loved to cook for them especially, and would sometimes cook for us too! Ronnie loved giving people gifts and sharing his food or something of his culture with us in the testing center. Sometimes he brought things for us to eat that were not at all like anything we’d ever eaten before, but Ronnie was pretty hard to say no to sometimes so I always had to try it!

That was what the Ronnie I knew was like. Very generous, very kind, very humble, sometimes rather mischievous, devoted to his girls, devoted to his faith, and devoted to his studies. I count myself lucky for having known Ronnie and having had him as a friend, and I know without a doubt that he will be greatly missed.

Origami Ronnie made for Kate and her family
At first glance you would think Ronnie a very shy, timid person who would always do what you asked and would never assume anything. The more I worked with Ronnie the less he seemed to fit that description. Always respectful and humble, Ronnie also had a playful and sometimes mischievous side. An example of that was when I brought back a little toy owl that I had thought would be a fun decoration to put in the testing center for students to see as they came in. I put it at the front desk and didn’t think anything of it until one day I noticed it was gone. I promptly found it again tucked between two computers in a place that only Ronnie could see it. I was a little confused by this, but just decided to put it back in its place on the counter. Next time I noticed it, it was again tucked away between the two computer screens. This time it had something sticky on the bottom so it was harder to move! Ronnie was there later that day so I asked him why he was going around stealing my owl

"That's not yours, that's my owl. I like that owl, I stole it! Its going to be mine now!" - Ronnie

"Ronnie! You cant do that! I put it back in its place." - Kate

It was back to his place a couple days later, then mine again, then his. We would argue back and forth about who it actually belonged to and never agreed on anything! And that was the playful and mischievous side Ronnie that I was privileged to know.
FROM KARIANNE LOULA
TESTING COORDINATOR & ADVISOR

Ronnie absolutely cherished his two daughters, Joan and Megan. He was proud of each and every thing they did (singing in the talent show; babysitting at church, etc.). I worked with him closely during his time at DCTC and he was one of the most amazing, kind hearted individuals that I have had an opportunity to meet. He was very caring and thoughtful and did his best to put a smile on our faces. He must have made hundreds of origami animals and Christmas trees and spread them through all of the desks on the different departments.

My heart is grieving for his daughters and Ruth and all his friends and families. He was a soft and kind hearted soul. I am comforted in knowing that he was very strong in his faith.

Ronnie made many origami items for me I display in my office. And when he learned I had a small hole in my office wall, he covered it with a butterfly. Every time I see the butterfly on my wall, I think of Ronnie.
Ruth: Ronnie was extremely proud that you started to become more involved in attending the church and choosing to do that on your own. He did not want to tell you what you should do and always wanted this to be your choice.

Joan: He was so proud of your desire to learn, your desire to read and explore new things (hang gliding/ coloring your hair blue or purple/ volunteering to help with the babies and young children at church).

Megan: He was very surprised when you signed up to sing in the Talent Show for your school. He came back to work and showed me a video of you signing in front of all of the other students. He wanted you to have the mermaid tail swimming suit.

Ronnie Stories:
- Ronnie and all the other young boys at the boarding school pooled their money together and hire an adult to beat up the head man at the boarding school because they didn’t like them.
- He loved to cook and share his dishes and always swore that he got the best cuts of meat because he knew the owner.
- He would always take the day off before every single one of his college math tests to study.

He loved to learn anything. He planned everything in advanced when it came to going back to school. He saved and planned for several years and had planned to continue on with his 4-year bachelors degree. He always had a book or project that he would keep his hands busy with.

He would always share stories about traveling and living in Japan, going to boarding school, how he was so fortunate to have gotten selected for a green card, being a father and raising his family in the US. He wanted to his daughters to have any and every experience and would do his best to ensure that they wanted for nothing.

I worked with Ronnie since he first enrolled at DCTC, first in the Center for Student Success and then the Testing Center. We are a very small Testing Center Department and without Ronnies continued hard work, dependability, reliability, kindness, humor, quiet leadership, etc. we would not have been able to accomplish nearly as much. He took the time to brighten the day of all of our students, but also the staff and faculty and Kate and I truly laughed a lot with Ronnie.

Ronnie was the epitome of a caring soul. He would walk Kate and myself out to the parking lot and make sure that our cars would start before he would leave…even on nights when he would have evening classes. He would pride himself on coming to work early to help get things set up in the Testing Center bringing his special colored paper and constantly making origami figures.

Ronnie touched the hearts of many individuals at DCTC, but most definitely my own. Ronnie was very devout in his faith and a strong Christian. He told me that he had a dream just before my son Greyson was scheduled to have his 3rd open heart surgery and in that dream, God told him that Greyson would do well during his surgery and not to worry.
FROM JILL FRAHM  
HISTORY INSTRUCTOR  
Last year, Ronnie made numerous little paper Christmas trees that were displayed all over campus. When I was in the Testing Center I complemented him on the trees and told him how much I liked seeing them. The next time I was in the Testing Center, he handed me 6 trees that he made for me. I was so surprised and pleased! It was just like Ronnie to do something like that. I carefully saved his trees last year and will think of him when I display them in my home this year. Ronnie was a very nice man and will be greatly missed at DCTC.

FROM DAVID MOSS  
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER/FRIEND  
I truly enjoyed spending time with Ronnie. Ronnie, like myself, had an affinity for learning and developing software. He and I would spend quite a bit of time talking about career paths and software. We would talk about the classes that he was taking and I would assist him in anyway I could to help him achieve his goals and to complete his work. We talked about each others hobbies and of course there was our families. I am totally shocked of the news of Ronnie's passing. I will miss him, our talks and his friendship.

FROM VERA KAIZER  
DCTC STUDENT  
I want to extend my deepest sympathy to Ronnie's family. I want to let them know that he was a caring, funny, and God fearing man. Ronnie was full of encouragement. His demise was very sad, shocking and heartbreaking, not only to me but I know to all those who knew him on our campus. Ronnie rest in peace.

(Vera attending Heart of a Leader with Ronnie and interacted with him often on campus)
FROM KRISTEN PAHL
FRONT DESK COORDINATOR

I was heartbroken to hear of the loss of Ronnie. He was always so kind and said hi to me every morning, and waved bye at the end of the day. He took so much pride in his work, I knew that any task Ronnie was doing would get done and done well. Ronnie was a man of faith, and was always willing to talk about his faith, and loved asking me questions about my trip to Israel. He will be greatly missed here at DCTC and I am grateful for the memories and trees we all have! I am praying for peace and healing as you grieve the death of Ronnie.

FROM CHERYL BROGGER
ADMISSIONS SPECIALIST

Ronnie was a wonderful person and a calming presence on campus. He will always be remembered and he will be deeply, deeply missed.

Natalie Shretha (pictured left) was Ronnie's Academic and Financial Aid Advisor
Ronnie often also worked in the Center for Student Success. Here he assisted students who needed help logging on to computers, printing, getting a student ID card, accessing tutors, and more. No job was too small for Ronnie. He would jump in and help wherever it was needed, before he was even asked. When he noticed a need, he filled it. No questions asked.

Ronnie made an origami pen holder for the Center for Student Success.

Daniel Skillicorn was a Student Ambassador with Ronnie. Daniel appreciated how helpful Ronnie always was helping him learn the ropes as a new student employee.
The Math Tutoring area (located inside the Center for Student Success) was one of Ronnie’s favorite study spots on campus. He spent a lot of time there, and left his mark with origami.

Ronnie will forever be remembered on campus through the origami figures he has made for us. They can be found on desks and in workspaces of employees all around campus.
FROM CORI ROBINSON
TRIO ADVISOR

Ronnie was a kind, caring, humble, and gentle soul. He was a wonderful human being. Ronnie was always so very helpful to others and a joy to be around. I am so glad I was able to work in the Center for Student Success with him. I smile when I think about last year around the holidays when he made many of the staff origami trees for our work spaces. It was such a sweet thing, and those trees will be displayed again this year with fond memories of Ronnie. He will be deeply missed. My thoughts and prayer are with you during this devastating time. I am so very sorry for your loss.

FROM XUONG TRAN
TRIO ADVISOR

Ronnie was an inspiration to everyone that knew him. His gift in giving his heart and soul to help students in the center for student successful was what I cherished the most. His friendship of kindness in making food for people to share and making origami Christmas trees for anyone is what I will always remember. His calm demeanor and love for his two daughters will be cherished forever. It is still very sad to hear the shocking news that he passed at such a young age. He is loved and will be missed by everyone at DCTC.
FROM NICOLE MEULEMANS
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

I will always remember Ronnie greeting me at the front door as I transported my entire desk to and from DCTC during COVID (pictured below). He would always rush to the door to try and open it, and offer help to me. I never accepted his help in order to keep socially distanced, but each day, he would kindly offer and ask if I needed anything. He will be remembered for his kind and gentle soul, for the love he had for his daughters and family, and sharing his gifts of origami with our campus. What a special and fierce guardian angel we have.
FROM MICHAELA HOMLAN-SCHMIDT  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

My time with Ronnie was short compared to others who spent time with him, but he is one amazing person. Always very kind, helpful, and cheerful. He loved making origami figures for our work desks and taking on additional tasks if anyone needed help. He always offered to help lift heavy items in the office, so that the other staff wouldn’t strain themselves. He said hello to me every day and managed to put a smile on my face even when I was having a bad day. This man was truly a blessing in my life and helping me stay positive. I hope to be as kind and caring as Ronnie. I am so heartbroken about his passing and I am sending love and prayers to his family.

I would just like to share my condolences. I was on the zoom call 11.24, but I was crying the whole time! Ronnie- such an amazing soul. He was always so sweet, asked if staff needed help with anything, would always operate the ID machine with positivity and friendliness. I did not spend as much time with him as others, but I have been truly touched by his positivity and his willingness to help other people. Every time I would come in he would say "good morning, Michaela, how are you?" and I just think that is the sweetest greeting every morning.

I would hope that one day, people will say at least half of the nice things everyone can say about Ronnie. I was truly blessed to have known him. Thank you for sharing him with us. Stay strong, reach out, and please remember he will be with you always! <3

FROM MELISSA TROSKA  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

I had marveled at the paper trees Ronnie made for Career Services and that very day, Ronnie came by, introduced himself and gave enough trees to decorate the entire front desk in Academic Affairs. The only problem was that everyone liked them so much, we all had some on our desks. He brought so much cheer to our area with such a simple gesture. Truly a remarkable person who will be greatly missed. I felt extra special because I got a tree with snow on it and a tea light to light it. I took the tree home to my daughter who still has it on her bookshelf to this day.
FROM ANNA VOIGHT
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE

Ronnie was the most selfless person I have ever known. He demonstrated the Christian values of loving God and loving people more than anyone I have ever known. My first interaction with Ronnie talking about faith was one I will never forget. I was preparing for my first 1-1 meeting with him as his new supervisor and did a quick Google search of Bangladesh to learn what I could about his culture before our meeting. I learned that 99% of people in the country followed Islam or Hinduism.

In our meeting, Ronnie made some comments implying his faith was important to him and that it guides his life, but he did not say what religion he was. I cautiously reciprocated and noted that I have strong religious values that guide me as well, trying to keep my comments as vague as possible, since I assumed we followed different religions. After I said I was "religious" Ronnie proceeded to tell me that faith in God is more than a religion; it’s a relationship, and went on to tell me the story of Jesus. While Ronnie was sharing this with me, I was smiling on the inside while I listened. As he shared, it was evident that he and I shared the same beliefs. Not only that we were both Christians, but we shared the same outlook in living out our Christian values through our actions and relationships. When I told him that I was a Christian and believed everything he had shared, he did not believe me at first and kept telling me about Jesus! I finally had to interrupt him and say "Ronnie, that's exactly what I believe, and this is why..." After I shared my story and quoted some Bible verses for good measure (I didn't think he would trust me otherwise!), he finally believed me. Then we discussed some verses (Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Philippians 2:14-15; and Colossians 3:23) and how they guide both of our lives.

Ronnie went on to share with me that the reason he chose the programs at DCTC he did is because he wanted to develop an app when he graduates that translates the Bible into the languages in Bangladesh so everyone in the country has access to a free Bible. He added that only 0.03% of the population in the country are Christian. I admire Ronnie for his courage in sharing his faith, and I appreciated our conversations about it. I don't have that opportunity with many people at work given the guidelines we follow as state employees.

After Ronnie passed away, I was looking through my old journal entries and found one from the day Ronnie and I had our first 1-1 (9/10/2019). That day I had written about our meeting and that I felt God had brought Ronnie into my life for a reason. Today, I would add that I know God brought Ronnie into my life, and the lives of every other person he knew for a reason. Ronnie showed love to others and pointed them towards God in all that he did. Ronnie will be dearly missed.
Ronne spent much of his time between March - September 2020 helping screen visitors at the front and east doors.

Ronne made friends with everyone on campus. While he was helping at the doors, he enjoyed befriending everyone who came in.
Asia Charette (pictured with Ronnie) was a Student Ambassador who worked with Ronnie at the doors.

If Asia wasn’t quite herself during a shift, Ronnie would ask her if she was feeling okay and ask if there was anything he could do to help. They talked about their love of ice skating, and Ronnie often showed her pictures of his family. Ronnie would always try to cheer Asia up if she was having a bad day.

FROM JASON WETZEL
DEAN OF TRANSPORTATION, CONSTRUCTION, & MANUFACTURING

I wanted to share with you what a wonderful person Ronnie was. I met Ronnie for the first time at the front door during the Summer COVID screenins. He was quite nice, and thanked me for going through the process. We chatted for a bit and I moved on with my day. The next time I came in (and every time thereafter) he greeted me “good morning Dean Wetzel” with a large smile. He was so pleasant and truly enjoyed our school and staff. I have missed his wonderful energy at the entrance of our facility. He will be missed.
FROM MARK WESTEMEIER
STUDENT AMABSSADOR

Ronnie was such an amazing person. I worked with him over the past 2 months at DCTC. He was so selfless. He always made sure I was ok, and if I was struggling at all he did everything he could to help. If everyone person has 1 to keep or give, Ronnie was always giving of his 1 when others were against themselves. He was constantly at a 0 because he gave all of his 1 to others to make sure they were not at 0. He was always at a 0 but he was the most successful and selfless 0 ever. He was at a 0 because he gave all of himself to everyone else. It didn’t matter who you were, he gave his all to you. I had this feeling that he was always looking out for me, and I still do. I think he will look out for everyone until the end of time. He was and is selfless and I will miss him, but he will never be far. He will remain in our hearts forever. I will live the rest of my life keeping him alive by sharing my 1 with others as I believe he wants me to do. Hopefully I pass my 1 on, and with it his 1, so that his 1 will stay alive forever. I am here for anyone if they need help during these tough times, and I will always be here for you, with Ronnie here forever.

(Mark worked with Ronnie as a student ambassador, primarily helping at the doors)

SHARING MEALS

Ronnie enjoyed cooking and sharing the food he made with the people he worked with. These are some of the dishes he prepared and shared with members of the campus community.
SCHOLARSHIP NOMINATIONS

Mark M. Welter Scholarship Recipient

Nomination submitted: Ronnie, while originally from Bangladesh, has lived in Singapore and Japan before coming to the U.S. in 2004. He learned the importance of different customs, religion, and common world problems as he immersed himself in his studies and the culture. He continues to be dedicated to helping provide funding for a primary school in Bangladesh to support the needs of all students that have a right to an education. He has a deep appreciation for higher education and is truly an example of a lifelong learner.

- Nomination submitted by Karianne Loula

Student Life Scholarship Recipient

Nomination submitted: Ronnie is a fantastic Student Ambassador who is reliable, hard-working, and willing to do any task needed to help the team. He has stretched himself beyond his comfort zone this past year and I could not be more proud of him!

- Nomination submitted by Anna Voight

Ronnie graduated from Heart of a Leader, a 2-day intense leadership course offered through Student Life. Ronnie was voted "most improved" by his peers in the training."