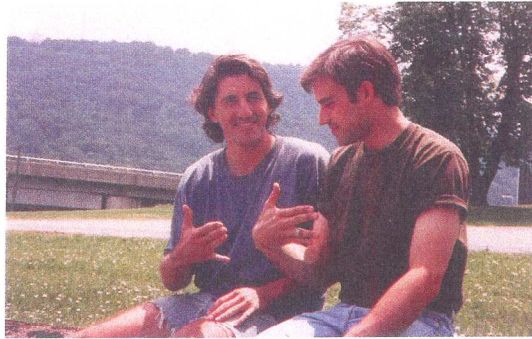




A FRIEND'S GIFT

Mark Jamison '90 and Slash Coleman '89 formed a lasting bond during their years at Radford University. Sharing a love of art, music, and the absurd, the two formed a jazz band, pondered the ways of the universe and love, and maintained a close association after graduation. Jamison developed local notoriety as a neon artist, known by many as the Neon Man. Coleman pursued writing, alternative health and performance art.



Slash Coleman '89 (left) and Mark Jamison '90 in 1992

When Jamison died last year as the result of a tragic accident, Coleman sought to express his grief and leave Jamison's son with a record of this unique friendship. Using his talents as a playwright and performer, Coleman has produced a seven-act, one-man show that attempts to capture the highs, lows and in-betweens of this wild and wonderful relationship. "I'd like to think *The Neon Man and Me* is a care package to Mark's son and family, but it has helped me in my search for peace after his death, too," Coleman said.

The world premiere of *The Neon Man and Me* will be at Roanoke's Mill Mountain on the Waldron Stage, October 14–16. Contact alumni@radford.edu for ticket packages and more information. Profits from Coleman's show go toward a fund for Mark Jamison, Jr.

Excerpts from *The Neon Man and Me*: We push start his car and drive to the Wafflehouse and with the doors locked, we sleep with our heads against the windows, all the while the yellow Wafflehouse sign shining in on us like the sun. When I get kicked out of the writing program in graduate school in Chicago, he'll call and say, "Writing, Smiting ... Neon argues more of a case for brevity and accuracy than writing ever can. Come to work for me and you'll really learn to write." It's raining. I'm sitting in my car outside Gold's gym in Richmond, Va. I've pulled over here to write about Mark ... on my atlas. The memories pour out when I drive and sometimes I steer with one hand and write on old gas receipts, scraps of snack bags, the margins of the my check book and now ... I'm slowly filling my atlas with his memory. My atlas is covered. If you needed to find your way around, Washington, Wyoming, or Wisconsin, forget it. You'd only find your way back to my friend.

