



HEATHER MCGAUGHEY

August 20, 1982 - July 16, 2005

Heather Jean McGaughey, at age 22, was a professional actress and entertainer. On July 16, 2005 she lost her life in an accident. A drag racing truck ran a red light and hit her car broadside. Heather was a rising star, employed at the time as a featured actress in a regional production with an acting company. At the invitation of a major casting agency on Broadway, she was to next travel to New York to pursue her career.

Heather was born in Conroe, Texas. She was a National Merit Recognized Scholar graduating Summa Cum Laude from Conroe High School and a Class Orator at graduation. Utilizing both theater and academic scholarships, she was a 2004 Magna Cum Laude graduate of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in theater and dance.

She was a naturally gifted performer beginning her career in classical ballet at the age of 6 and progressing to principal roles in "The Nutcracker." Heather became involved with drama in high school, performing in plays and UIL competitions. At Southwestern University, Heather had many leading roles including *Picasso at the Lapine Agile*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Grease*, *Cabaret*, and *Dames at Sea*. In addition, she earned a grant in 2002-2003 from the King Creativity Fund for her work in costuming.

A person courageous enough to follow her dreams and passion for performance, she was an intern on Broadway and began her career working in regional theater starting in Amana, Iowa, at the "Old Creamery Theatre." In the spring of 2005, Heather and the company toured Iowa performing children's theater in public schools. In her final roles on stage Heather was the leading actress performing in Farmington, New Mexico as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and on the evening of her death, she had received a standing ovation as Nellie in *South Pacific*. Her parents were present to see her perform that evening and take her final bows, then to learn of her death.

Gracious and humble in accepting applause and accolades, Heather strove both to pursue excellence in her art and to elevate those around her to their best. With her generous spirit shining through, she radiated life and was a model of inner and outer beauty.

In a span of 22 short years, Heather touched hundreds of lives for the better. Her God-given talent and study of her art inspired others to more fully appreciate and contemplate their lives through drama, comedy, song, and dance. Her expressions of grace and beauty gave meaning and form to her passion to uplift spirits. Her ability to reach out to others in friendship, in family, and in community encouraged all she met to seek and do their best for themselves and others. No parent could ask for more; no friend or loved one could be disappointed in her life. She had the courage to follow her dreams with determination and energy in the pursuit of the good in life. An endowed scholarship and naming of the rehearsal hall at Southwestern University, the Heather McGaughey Children's Theatre in New Mexico, an Outstanding Intern Award at Telsey & Company on Broadway, and a scholarship award at Conroe High School provide worthy legacies of her life. It is hoped that a spark of her spirit and energy will advance the dreams of other equally gifted students eager to grow and explore their talent in theater.