

Renovated Media Lab Honors Former Students



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Staff Reporter

This school year gave way to an adjustment at Dunbar High School. The studio space, previously home to the TV Production class, has been repurposed, and more noticeably, renovated.

Instead of just serving the TV Production class, the *Lamp-lighter* has moved from Lab 302 into this space.

The lab has been furnished with new computers and monitors, two new large whiteboards and a fresh paint job.

More importantly, the media lab also has a new name: The Jesse Higginbotham Memorial Lab. The new name was given in honor of former Dunbar student, Jesse Higginbotham, who died as the result of injuries from a car accident in 2007.

"A lot of current Dunbar students don't know about Jesse, so I'm happy we've dedicated this space to him," said Mrs. Wendy Turner, who advised him on the *Lamp-lighter* staff.

Jesse's participation in both STLP and the *Lamp-lighter* is what spurred Mr. Jim Adams, the school's network technician and STLP advisor, to think of connections between school technology improvements and the memory

of students who were involved in media and technology at Dunbar.

"The love and the energy came together to create a lab in memory of Jesse Higginbotham, a kid of love and energy who did great things and served others," said Mr. Adams



Photo by Emily Avioli

Jesse's portrait hangs outside of the Media Lab, commemorating this former student and the joy that he brought to everyone around him.

Mrs. Turner indicated that the lab has also become a place to honor one of Jesse's close friends, a former student who was also a member of STLP and a staff writer for the *Lamp-lighter*.

Hannah Marie Landers died in a car accident in May 2008, only two weeks from her graduation, and Mrs. Turner said that "bits of [Hannah's] person-

ality have popped up" in the lab during the renovations this summer.

The new coat of paint decorating the walls of the media lab is named "Rocker Girl Purple" in honor of Hannah. Purple was her favorite color, and while she was an organizer of the Dunbar Memorial Garden, she picked out several purple native plants for the space.

The most obvious change to the new media lab space is the painting hanging outside the door. Mr. Adams orchestrated the placement of a painting of Jesse which was created by Dunbar graduate Alyssa Dean, and hung by Jesse's father, Jerome Higginbotham, and Jesse's best friend and Dunbar graduate, Jon Jones, over winter break.

Mr. Adams said that improvements to the media lab will continue next year as well. He plans to have a sound-proof ceiling installed in the lab, and he is also looking for the funds to make the lab a "smart classroom," furnished with a smartboard screen and a projector.

The letters "JHML" (which were donated by Third Street Stuff) were hung on the wall in the lab over the summer. Mrs. Turner noted that it is serendipitous that the lab's initials (JHML) contain Hannah's initials (HML).

"It's like they're both there in spirit," she said.

"I'm glad that these two students will continue to be remembered at Dunbar."

