



## UConn Stamford dedicates room for Gaines

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STAMFORD -- Wearing a pendent emblazoned with a photograph of her accomplished son Devin, Berneatha Gaines cut the ribbon and officially opened the UConn Stamford room that was built in his honor.

"I'm quite sure that if Devin was here, he'd be thrilled," said Gaines, of the school's brand new Devin T. Gaines Student Involvement & Activities Center.

Her son Devin Gaines, who drowned last July, was noted for his involvement in student life at the University of Connecticut's Stamford campus and at the main campus in Storrs. Two months before his death he was honored for obtaining five degrees from UConn in as many years. The Stamford resident earned degrees in computer science, cognitive science, linguistics/psychology, theater studies and cinema, culture and cognition and planned to attend graduate school at New York University, where he was to study educational communication and technology. Gaines was a recipient of several scholarships and worked summers at UConn Stamford as an administrative technician for the department of student services.

"Today we are going to create a legacy for someone who was so important to so many different people," said UConn Stamford vice provost Michael Ego. "Not just to our campus but to the Storrs campus as well.

"Devin is here. He's here in spirit," said Sharon White, director of student services and campus dean at UConn Stamford. White knew Gaines well -- he worked in her office for years.

"I think it would be an understatement to say we miss him," she said.

It took nearly a year to get the converted student lounge on the second floor approved and built, said Elly Koskorelos, 20, the vice president of the Student Government Association. She encouraged Devin's family and friends to come back and visit.

"A lot of students will be hanging out in this room," she said.

A lot of students already are, says Gayle Riquier, coordinator of student activities, whose office is in the center.

"It's really just a place for students to come," said Riquier, who said that a room like the Gaines center will encourage students to live the sort of busy, productive life that Gaines lived.

Gaines' friend Dave Pierre-Louis, who graduated from UConn in 2006, said Gaines always had a project.

"He was also a fashion designer," he said. "If you had a scarf, he could make it into a hat, into a headband; if he had enough material he could make it into a sari. He was very inventive."

The two men became friends two summers ago when they both worked at UConn Stamford over the summer. Pierre-Louis said that had a room like the activity center been open when Gaines was on campus, he would have made full use of the facility.

"He would have utilized every little piece of this room, including the paint and brick," he said.

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