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# TechNews

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## Illinois Tech remembers Jermiron 'Jay' Morris

**Soren Spicknall & Genevieve Hummel**  
TECHNEWS WRITERS

Late last week, many of us here at Illinois Tech lost a friend, collaborator, and inspiration. Jay Morris was killed by a fellow classmate outside Keating Sports Center in the early hours of Thursday morning, followed by a series of commemorative events demonstrating the impact he had on the student community. He was a dedicated student leader at the university, and will be missed. Here are some brief observations from many here at IIT who came in contact with him at one point or another:

**Angie Jarka**

"I had the pleasure of watching Jay progress through his education at Illinois Tech. He was one of the kindest, most dedicated, generous, respected, intelligent, and positive gentlemen that I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. I remember him bringing his adorable young daughter in the computer lab and they were both working on homework. He was an amazing father, diligent student and a true representation of a brilliant and hard working young man. He went out of his way to help other students and was the first one to volunteer and take on new projects. This senseless tragedy still seems like a bad dream. I can't imagine not seeing his smiling face on campus. He had so much left to offer this world and I'm heartbroken for his family and the world at what a loss! I miss you Jay and hope you are at peace. I will never forget you. Gone too soon my friend."

**Arlene Hayes**

"Jay was a man to be admired. His passion, drive and commitment inspired me every time we spoke. As a representative of the students he was always trying to find a better way to reach out to people and to provide the best for them. He would send me messages at 1 a.m. because he had just thought of a way around a problem we were having, or he just remembered something from a meeting he had attended and wanted to get my feedback as soon as possible. He was dependable and reliable but nothing came before his girls. The night before an event he would send me a quick text full of apology because something came up and he had to be with one of his daughters. "I gotta be there for my girls" or "My girls need me" was a common thing to hear him say. It always made me smile just to hear him talk about them because the dedication was palpable. There would always be a look of pure joy on his face, just knowing that he was doing everything he possibly could for them.

He had so many hopes and dreams. He often talked about his plans after graduation, the company he was aiming to work for, the life he wanted for himself and his family. He was a simple man with a heart that seemed too big even for his body. We would be carrying items from the RHA office to one place or another and he would see me organizing boxes and offer to take them all himself. "I'm just trying to make it easy for you," he would say, then he would still try to open the door for me with his arms full. There was no rejecting his help. A true gentleman in every sense of the word.

I could go on and on as more of our brief interactions come to mind but every single person who has come into contact with this man has firsthand knowledge of the impression he leaves with you. I can only hope

that Jay knew how loved he was, how much easier he made the lives of everyone around him and the smiles he still brings to our hearts as we remember him now and always... May his beautiful soul find comfort in a place beyond this world. Rest in peace Jay"

**Khadijah Muhammad**

"Jay was like a big brother to me. He always told me I was doing a good job even when I didn't think I was. He was a member of BSU that I am president of, but to be honest he really was a special part of the exec board. He really helped me push and talk about the topics that I was scared about and he introduced me to people I never would have thought to meet. He was such a fun person and was always the life of the party. I feel that he was doing what Jill Scott sang many years ago. He was living his life like it's golden with the people he loved."

remember thinking to myself that Jay was the kind of guy I wanted to get to know better. In the couple of hours we spent talking I already knew that Jay was the kind of person everyone wanted to have as a friend. When I found out what happened I was shocked and incredibly sad. The world has truly lost a great person and an amazing friend. My thoughts and condolences go out to everyone that knew Jay, may he rest in peace."

**J. Echols**

"I had the opportunity to assist Jay during the admission process to IIT and saw a tremendous amount of potential from the start! He has truly been an asset to IIT and his legacy is a strong motivation for many who want to do better. I count it as an honor to have known him and hope his journey serves a positive example for all especially for the

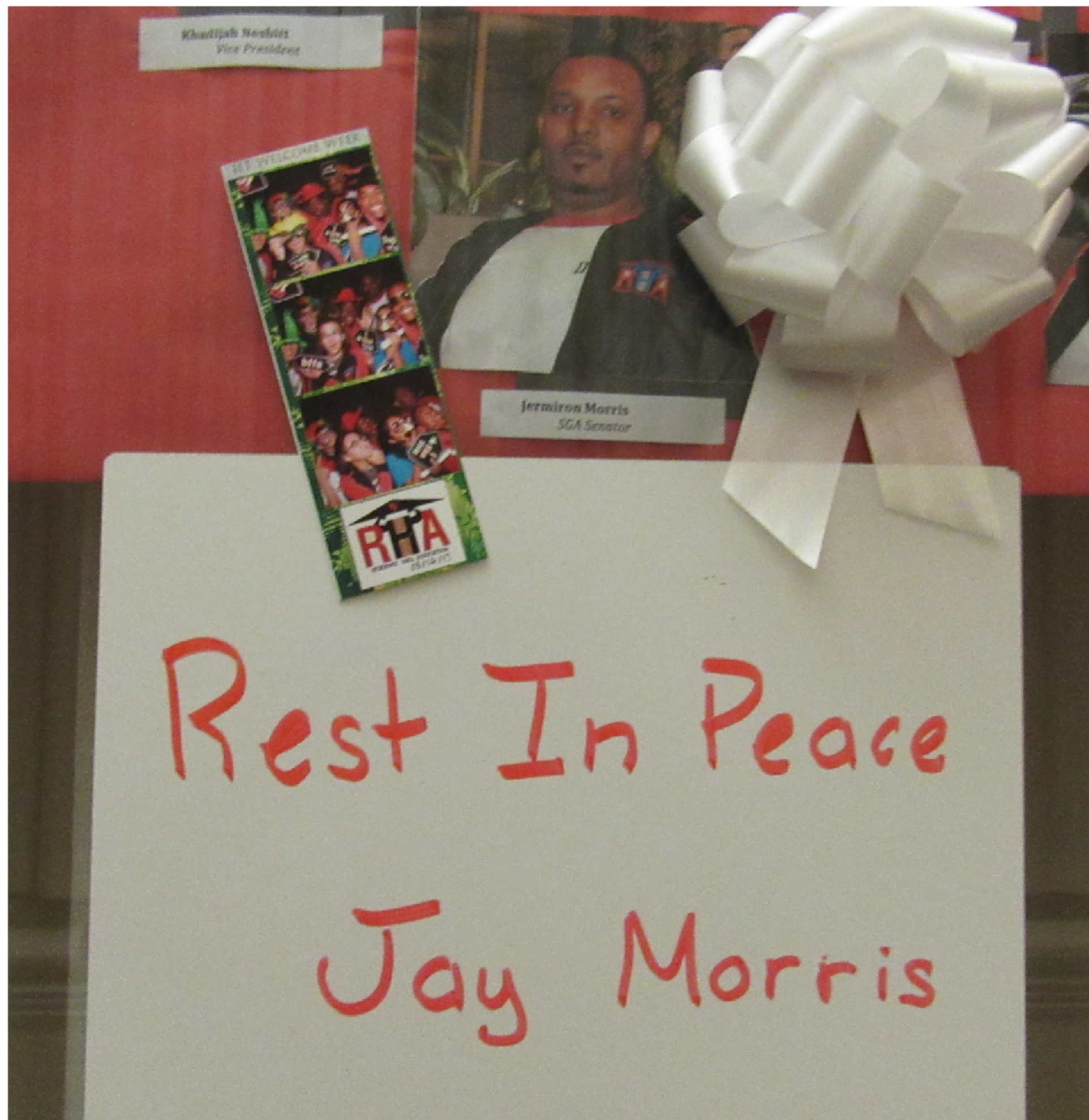


Photo by Soren Spicknall

**Soren Spicknall**

"Jay was one of those people who truly didn't care what other groups you were a part of or where you came from; if you were ever on a team with him, he was an immediate friend and resource. Though my interactions with him were mostly through organizations like RHA and SGA, it was clear that on a human level, he was a genuinely kind and determined person. Jay had the combination of high spirits and work ethic that we should all aspire to, and the world is certainly better off for him having been here."

**Genevieve Hummel**

"I only met Jay a couple weeks ago, at the student organization fair. We were at adjacent tables and we ended up talking about what we were involved in on campus. He had seen me around and had noticed me at the senate meetings. He told me that he appreciated that I covered the meetings for TechNews. We only talked for a couple of hours, but our conversation stayed with me. I

African American male, young and old."

**Katrina Matusak-Errant**

"I knew Jay as a gentleman, friend, and former classmate. I reflect on all the people's lives he could have changed if he was still with us. This was a senseless loss."

**Wallace Muhammad III**

"What I admired about Jay was his spirit, person, and impact on those around him. He was the embodiment of greatness and righteousness and one of the greatest and most inspiring people I have ever met in my life. Many people whose lives he's touched looked upon him as a mentor, not just for his wisdom, but for his humanity. His spirit was an inspiration to everyone that knew him, even for a short period. One conversation or interaction with him was all that was needed to appreciate this great man along with all his credentials. His involvement and leadership at Illinois Tech was unparalleled. He was a man purely devoted to the best and the good

in all people. He worked tirelessly without falter during the entirety of his career at our university for the best of the university. He was a completely selfless man and had a level of strength and resolve that was rare to find. The trials he had to face were very challenging, but you would never know as it never showed. He had the strength to remain at peace with himself and maintain the love of everyone he met. All you'd see is a happy face and peaceful spirit when you talked to him. His humility was so present. Nothing weighed him down, and that is something I personally have been motivated to aspire to because of him. But it's not only me, the characteristics of this man were something everyone who has met and known him aspire to. He inspired me as the community service chair to grow in that position. His vision for me and everyone was always huge. His ambition just showed his strength and he always had a game plan for large scale greatness. He never expressed any deterrents, and encouraged everyone he's met of their capacity and potential. He knew everyone had the ability for greatness and was always there to remind and encourage them of it. He was fearless in his pursuit for large scale improvement. His vision for the future and our future set numerous milestones for our community. For me, he always told me the importance of establishing relationships and I believe there is so much wisdom in that. That, I believe, is so overlooked. The gifts of knowledge that he had and worked for were always given and used to the best of its ability. The insight that he had was very powerful and I have to always thank him for giving me a piece of it. He told me that companies and top employers were actively looking for those underrepresented, he knew this from experience and the relationships that he established. He didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk, he was a man of his word and always lived by what he said. He had established relationships with numerous people and leaders and always made an effort to share what he could to those who needed it, the younger generation. He also told me his desire to have us reach out to other schools and form a coalition, and connection of BSUs and businesses in our neighborhood. We can have such a big impact on things outside of our university too and he saw and expressed that on a regular basis. He had a vision for the capacity of the students here, a very large vision, one that would intimidate most, but he always believed in it and believed in us without fear, but with only desire and drive. But because of his humility he never forced on us, he would always say that it was just what he believed, and that we should do what we thought was best. But we all knew that we should follow his words, his ideas were incredibly beneficial to everyone, so we made it a point to force it on ourselves and continue to do so today and for the future. The groundwork he has laid will never be forgotten and will be used to help us grow for the end of time."

**Antoinette Wright**

"On the behalf of his family, we really appreciate all the kind words and the time taken out to acknowledge the good deeds that he accomplished in his life. He was truly a blessing to us and we see that he was a blessing to others also. His legacy will continue to live on through all of the good that he has done."