

The Department of American Studies is heartbroken at the passing of alumnus Ian Barraza, who was killed in a car accident on March 17, 2018. Along with Ian's family and friends, we mourn the loss of this talented scholar, gifted musician, committed activist, and devoted father and husband. Ian completed his BA in American Studies and Sociology in 2005 and his MA in American Studies in 2012. He was awarded the 2013 Giles T. Brown Outstanding Thesis Award for his thesis, "Lend Me Your Eyes: Attending to Deaf Culture and the Maneuverability of Identity," an original, compelling investigation of identity, community, and political activism within the American Deaf community. The child of a hearing-impaired father, Ian knew of the vibrant communal life Deaf people had forged for themselves, but he had also witnessed the challenges people with hearing impairments continue to face in a hearing world. As a student of American Studies, Ian found himself drawn to questions of how identity and difference interact with forms of power and resistance. In this beautifully written and intellectually ambitious thesis, Ian married those twin commitments, using the Riverside Deaf community as a case study through which to explore the broader scholarly questions that intrigued him.

Since graduating, Ian continued to advocate on behalf of the Deaf community. At the time of his death, Ian was Chair of the Model Deaf Community, which works to create an integrated community that promotes full participation in society, education and employment, effective communication, and cultural awareness. Music was also a central part of Ian's life. He was a singer, guitarist, and songwriter, as well as an owner of the MTL Concert Venue and Lounge in Riverside. Despite his many and varied accomplishments and interests, Ian's greatest love was always his family. He was a devoted and doting father to his son Aiden, now 9. Ian's professors fondly recall him arriving at meetings with infant Aiden in tow, happily tucked into his stroller, enjoying a day out with his dad.

A celebration of Ian's life will be held on Sunday, March 25 at 1:00pm at Life Arts Center (3485 University Ave, Riverside, CA 92501). A Tribute Show for Ian will take place at MTL Concert Venue and Lounge (3630 University Ave., Riverside, CA 92501) on Monday, March 26 at 6:00pm. Donations to Ian's family can be made through Venmo to @Barraza-Trust-Fund.

Model Deaf Community: http://modeldeafcommunity.org/?page_id=108

Ian performing "I'm Gonna Take Care of You" with son Aiden (2011):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPB3CAuwFyA>

Ian signing in ASL (2008): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9WRgg_Qcc

MTL Concert Venue and Bar: <https://go2mtl.com/>