BENTONVILLE, Ark. (Dec. 15, 2011) A concert pianist who has performed at benefit events throughout Northwest Arkansas now will present a concert aiding college scholarships in his late father’s name.

“A Knight To Remember” is planned for 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 16, (tonight) in the Walmart Auditorium of the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technologies.

Dr. John Story was a longtime faculty member at NorthWest Arkansas Community College, teaching science courses to hundreds of students during a span of almost 20 years. Student evaluations through the years referenced his teaching ability, his compassion and his interest in helping each student learn. “Dr. Story is the strength of this course,” a student wrote from a spring 2008 class. “His knowledge is unbelievable. … He goes above and beyond what most instructors do, and his comedy makes this class enjoyable!”

Story, who was known as the “white knight” within the college’s science department, died in late July.

Dr. Daryl Lancaster, life science department chairman at NWACC, said his recollections of Story are based on his colleague’s love for students and the institution.

“John was always one of the first here and the last to leave,” he said. “We would consistently joke about how amazing it was that he could put away his cot from sleeping here overnight, and get cleaned up for teaching before I arrived at 7 a.m.”

Lancaster said for many students, Story was truly a champion who saved the day.

“After a very lengthy meeting helping a student with both an in-class and out-of-class issue, I jokingly said, ‘Wow, you just rode in on your gallant steed and saved the day. You were her white knight.’ The nickname stuck. He was remarking about the pictures on the office doors one day. To then have him join the ‘club,’ I copied a white knight chess piece and put it on his door. This has become his emblem.
“John will forever be remembered for his giving personality, his willingness to do whatever the
department needed, and his steadfast focus on the good of the students,” Lancaster said.

Story’s son, Jonathan, holds a master’s degree in piano performance from the University of
Arkansas and has accompanied such diverse ensembles as Schola Cantorum at the University of
Arkansas, the Mashburn Singers, and the Gospel Echoes Quartet. A recent performance,
“Concert on the Lawn,” raised more than $12,000 for Habitat for Humanity of Washington
County.

The musician said his father always attended his concerts and enjoyed hearing him play. It was a
natural decision for the faculty member’s son when Dr. Marvin Galloway from NWACC
introduced the idea of a concert to benefit a science scholarship to be presented in John Story’s
name.

Jonathan Story asked tenor John Garst, a renowned opera singer and instructor at NWACC, to
participate also, and he agreed.

The concert on the NWACC campus in Bentonville will be free, but donations will be accepted
for the John Story Memorial Scholarship program.

“My dad would be pleased, and he would be surprised as well,” Story said. “He would be
honored and humbled.”

Story said for him, the concert is a way of honoring his father and at the same time showing
appreciation to the community college, where his father enjoyed teaching for 17 years. Story
worked for Campbell Soup as a research scientist from 1977 to 1994 and began his career as a
professor of microbiology at NWACC in 1995.

“He felt so valued and appreciated,” Story said.

With the concert, the son wants to help a good student who loves science to succeed, a goal Story
believes his father would endorse. “My dad would be very pleased,” he said.

Dr. Dixie Androes, an instructor in the science department who also worked with the veteran
faculty member in the Baptist Collegiate Ministries, described Story as a colleague able to
connect with students.

“The first I knew of John was when he was our son Spencer’s biology instructor,” she said.
“Spencer was a concurrent student (high school/college), so he was still living at home and rarely
came home from classes without a story or a comment about how funny his biology teacher was.
He loved his class. John knew how to connect with students. I observed him firsthand with
students in NWACC’s Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) as he would get on their level to find
out how they were doing, what was up in their lives, or whether they could outdo him in the
number of cookies they could devour by the end of the hour.
“John Story was a ‘knight’ in so many ways,” she said. “He earned my respect because he stood up for things he believed in and fought the good fight. Yet, like the knight in a game of chess, he could come out of nowhere with a joke or a laugh that would get everyone going. I learned quickly that this knight was also completely human with both the gift of humor and gab. He glowed with pride about his son, Jonathan, and his wife, Jan. He loved his church, NWACC and the BCM. He gave so much to us all.”

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a comprehensive, public two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living. NWACC’s service area is defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as Benton and Washington counties in extreme northwest Arkansas. The commitment of NWACC to life-long learning can be seen in the quality of instruction it offers, and the variety of programs it has designed to move students into the job market in a minimum amount of time, enrich people's lives, and prepare them to further their education. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.