[date]

(recipient's name)

(recipient's institutional address)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is not often that I have the opportunity to write a letter of recommendation for someone as uniquely gifted and personable as Claude Ryan (Rion) Towery. As chief executive officer of the D.L. Dykes, Jr. Foundation, a not for profit, operating foundation that promotes critical thinking about the role and place of religion and ethics in society, I am particularly delighted to find a young adult who shares an awareness of and passion for a vision of society in which all are included and all work together for the common good. In Rion's case, I also see an appreciation for academic and professional discipline together with specific devotion to Theatre Arts and a broad commitment to the Fine Arts.

I came to know Rion through his parents in Ellisville, Mississippi at the time he was showing great interest in performing arts while he was still in high school. I know that he graduated with a

Bachelor of Arts in Music and Vocal Performance degree from Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana. Since that time I have had opportunity to see him perform on stage in a variety of settings including musical theatre, vocal stage performance and dance.

Rion is highly intelligent, personable and creative as well as being deeply motivated. He exhibits a strong work ethic as well as being gifted in voice, acting, dance and direction. Rion demonstrates keen awareness about issues of equality and justice and shows an authentic empathy for others.

He is particularly aware of the specific issues that affect the lives of LGBT people and navigates comfortably through today's pluralistic, multicultural society.

Over the past 15 years I have followed his work as a teacher of modern dance with students from elementary age through the high school level. I recently had the privilege of observing several of his classes. I was struck by the rapport he had with the students. He exhibited an ability to show interest in individual students in a way that was equitable and mindful, while at the same time, demonstrating a clear expectation that they pay attention to his direction and energetically follow it. He maneuvered easily between standing apart as director and teacher one minute and then dancing alongside them the next. His love of dance is infectious and his students respond in kind.

I am particularly glad to recommend Rion to your program because he shows deep interest in the health and vitality of the community in which he lives and works. He continually teaches his students about the relationship between dance and theatre and their power to lift the quality of individual lives and the life of the community as a whole.

David R. Dykes,

Executive Director

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