

## **JONATHAN LARSON**

Class of 1978

Inducted 1997

Jonathan Larson, 1978 graduate of White Plains High School, was a blossoming author, playwright and composer when he died suddenly, at the age of 35, in 1996.

Mr. Larson wrote the book, music and lyrics for "Rent," a musical which opened just three weeks after his death. It went on to receive four Tony Awards, including best musical, and its creator won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. "Rent" remains a sold-out, must see Broadway hit.

"Rent," a rock opera based on Puccini's "La Boheme," has been hailed as the break-through musical of the 90s. It has also been called the "most exuberant and original American musical to come along this decade."

While at White Plains High School, Mr. Larson was active in dramatic and musical productions. Acting was his dream and he won a four-year, full tuition acting scholarship to Adelphi University on Long Island.

Following graduation in 1982, he moved to New York City to pursue his goal to be on stage, but, like many before him, worked as a waiter and made extra money writing music whenever he could. At one of the workshops sponsored by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) he regularly attended, Mr. Larson met his idol, Stephen Sondheim, who became a mentor.

Mr. Larson had six musicals produced in workshops and cabarets, including rock monologue "Tick, Tick... Boom!" and two Off-Off Broadway musicals, "Superbia" and "J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation," before "Rent."