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# Macon created device for deaf

By GARY RUMMLER of the Journal Sentinel staff

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A memorial service will be tonight for Michael W. Macon, 32, a Milwaukee native who helped create a revolutionary 3-D computerized tutor for the hearing impaired.

Macon, who died of cancer March 15 in Portland, Ore., was an assistant professor in the computer science and electrical engineering department at Oregon Graduate Institute in the Portland suburb of Beaverton.

Macon had a key role in the development of the voice of the animated face, called Baldi, that was featured on ABC's "Prime Time" on the day of Macon's death. The voice synthesizer can speak with any person's voice, but the Baldi shown on "Prime Time" used Macon's own voice.

The technology allows Baldi to produce facial movements so precise that children can use it to practice lip reading.

Macon graduated from Thomas More High School in Milwaukee in 1986, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Dayton, and a master's degree and doctorate from Georgia Tech.

Survivors include his wife, Amy; parents, Tom and Mary Ann Macon of Milwaukee; a brother, Bob of Ypsilanti, Mich.; a grandmother, Muriel Macon of Rhineland, and aunt and uncle, Jane and Richard Wargin of Cudahy.

The memorial service will be at 7 p.m. today at St. Matthias Church, 9306 W. Beloit Road, with visitation beginning at 6 p.m. There will be a reception after the service at Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

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