



William "Chad" McArver

SEP 3, 1961 - AUG 6, 2025



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William "Chad" McArver

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William Chadwick McArver, 'Chad', 63, passed away Wednesday, August 6th, 2025 after a fearless 3-year battle with cancer. Chad confronted his illness with the same strength, resilience, and determination that had driven him to succeed in high-pressure situations throughout his career in theatrical productions.

Chad was born September 3, 1961 in Charlotte, N.C., to William Edward McArver and Emily Jane (Hawkins) McArver. He went to West Mecklenburg High School, class of 1979, and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1985 with a BA in Communication and TV Production. While attending UNC, Chad worked summers in Cherokee, NC at the outdoor drama Unto These Hills. He worked tirelessly for more than a decade to modernize the theatre's lighting design while working alongside a cast of loving, free spirited friends that would remain close to him through-out his life. After graduating from UNC, he stayed in Chapel Hill and worked for the university supporting several venues including the Memorial Hall performing arts center. Working in Memorial Hall propelled Chad's love of theatrical lighting where he provided lighting expertise and venue support for artists such as Lyle Lovett, Indigo Girls, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. In 1990 he left UNC to pursue his theatrical dreams in New York City after he was awarded a full scholarship to New York University's highly acclaimed Tisch School of the Arts, and he graduated with a MFA Degree in 1993. Chad's years at NYU proved beneficial beyond his imagination, allowing him to build connections that led him to realize his dream of a full-time career in theatrical productions.

Chad would go on to work alongside many talented designers including Tony award winning lighting designer Howell Binkley on shows that included The Best Man, Minnelli on Minnelli, Parade, and High Society. He also worked with Pulitzer Prize-winning director George C. Wolfe and scenic designer Riccardo Hernández.

Chad designed lighting and scenery for Off-Broadway theatre in New York City and regional theatres on the East Coast. His credits also include lighting for theatre and dance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the LG Arts Center in Seoul, South Korea and the opening show for the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, NV with Hugh Jackman.



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As his design career progressed, Chad decided to also pursue his passion for teaching. In 1998 he began teaching at Fordham University where he found his 'home' in the center of Manhattan at Fordham's Lincoln Center campus. Chad cultivated a classroom culture that nurtured creativity, curiosity, and confidence. Chad built a lasting legacy at Fordham, including rising to the position of Chair of the Department of Theatre and Visual Arts during his 27 years with the university. During Chad's illness, the kind words and outpouring of support from his students, alumni, and other Fordham faculty was truly amazing. Chad was more than a professor, he was a passionate mentor, a guide, and a champion for both students and fellow faculty members. He was an educator whose creativity helped his students find their voice and 'light' their path.

While Chad pursued life and dreams in New York City, he always remained connected with his family, spending several weeks every year at home in Charlotte, NC. Chad loved our annual trip to Litchfield Beach in Pawley's Island, SC. Being home for Christmas was also a priority for Chad and he always made it home just in time. The family is beyond grateful that Chad made it home to us one last time.

Chad felt the love and support of all the amazing people that have touched his life. We are all so grateful for the heartfelt prayers and love shared with Chad and our entire family. We especially wish to thank Fordham University, Mt Sinai Hospital, NY, Levine Cancer Institute, NC, Englewood Hospital NJ, Tideland Hospital, SC, NYU Langone Cancer Center NY.

To cherish his memory, Chad leaves behind his mother; Jane and his father Eddie, of Cornelius, NC, brother Michael McArver and sister-in-law Cathy McArver of Fort Mill, SC, his niece Michaela McArver plus many more caring and supportive extended family members. Chad loved his family and was a tremendously dedicated son, brother, and uncle.

A service to celebrate Chad's life will be held at Paw Creek Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C., at 1 p.m. on Saturday, August 23rd, 2025. In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that memorials may be made to Fordham University Theatre Department. Fordham Theatre Program Support: <https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/28757/donations/new>

Memorials can also be sent to:
Fordham University Theatre Program
Chad McArver Memorial
Lincoln Center



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113 W 60th Street
New York, NY 10023

Arrangements are in the care of James Funeral Home; please share condolences online at James Funeral Home.




Events


William "Chad" McArver

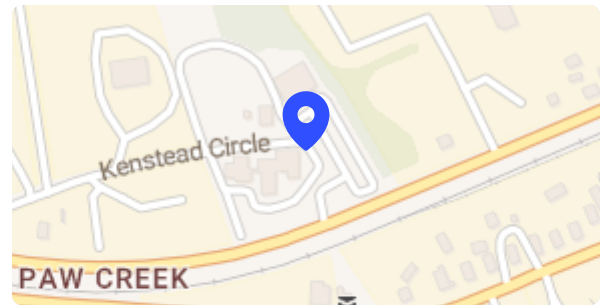
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Celebration of Life

 **Saturday**, August 23, 2025

 1:00 PM ET

 **Paw Creek Presbyterian Church**
7400 Mt Holly Rd, Charlotte NC





Tribute Wall

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Jennifer Moy posted:

Chad was such a special person - kind, talented, and so funny - with an ease to him that made everyone feel comfortable and seen. He was a fantastic teacher, and almost 20 years later, I still think of him as one of my greatest mentors, having spent just 2 years at Fordham and not being as involved as I wanted to be in the theater program due to my work needs and living off-campus. He truly took me under his wing, even got me several scenic painting opportunities throughout NYC. I looked up to him so much and have so many fond memories of him. After my senior showcase, we talked very intentionally about what path I wanted to take in my future, and I made the difficult decision to leave theater. I often think about what would have come with the latter choice in staying in NYC, but in turn, I am now a visual arts educator for K-12 public school students, and I also design sets for the theater department when I can. In every single show, and often with my students, I think of Chad, and I always will. Thank you Chad, for so much that I am now passing on to my students, and thank you to his family. I am so fortunate to have met him, laughed with him, and learned from him. May everyone who loved him find peace in his most wonderful and kind memory. -Jenn (Stanislaski) Moy FCLC '07

September 4 at 10:47 PM



Timothy Pendleton posted:

Chad approached everything he did with zeal and incredible creativity. He was loving, kind and very positive. I learned so much from him both professionally and personally. Rest in peace and power Chad McCarver. Tim Pendleton

August 23 at 12:21 PM



Justin Sherin posted:

It feels wrong to call Chad a Southern gentleman. His spirit was much greater than that. Almost instantly I thought him one of the nicest people I ever met. Our business studies humanity, so he was always gentle, patient, curious, and humane. We all know how rare this is. Life is difficult—often especially so in our work. Chad never forgot it. He cared for us because he loved life, and he knew that a healthy theatre puts people at the center. We've all learned from his versatile, surprising designs. But the way he taught is even more important. He was curious, exacting, good-humored, and loyal. He had excellent taste, and he never lost connection with life as it's lived. He carries on in us—a great artist, friend, and example.

August 21 at 6:32 PM



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HF

Hinsch Family sent a Beautiful in Blue to the McArver family.



August 19 at 11:34 AM

FW

From Miguel And Wayne sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the McArver family.



August 15 at 4:04 PM

HL

Host Lkn posted:

<https://www.fordham.edu/academics/departments/theatre/about-the-program/support-the-fordham-theatre-program/>

August 11 at 10:38 AM

HL

Host Lkn posted:

Sending love to all the McArvers - Chad was a hilarious, goofy, brilliant person and profoundly committed mentor and teacher to so many of us Fordham kids. His many lessons are with me in every rehearsal room. What he lacked in punctuality he made up for ten fold in genius and panache! He will be deeply, deeply missed. Thank you to your family for sharing him with us ❤️Morgan Gould

August 11 at 10:37 AM

HL

Host Lkn posted:

Deeply saddened to learn this news. For all who knew and loved Chad, I offer my sincere condolences. Chad was one of a kind, a complex, deeply human human being with real integrity. And a gifted artist! I have so many wonderful memories of working alongside him for 13 years at Fordham. We shared mutual respect. And his devotion to the theatre students was demonstrated time and again. Chad was a genuine ally during very difficult times. And I will always remember his steadfastness. There was a light in Chad I suspect was lifelong, and so long as I knew him, he remained oriented towards possibility. Daniel Alexander Jones

August 11 at 10:34 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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