



Ric Lynn Watkins

May 13, 1957 - July 7, 2019

Ric “Papa” Lynn Watkins passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 7, 2019 at his home in Mandeville, LA. He was born on May 13, 1957 in Laurel, MS.

Ric was the beloved husband of Adair P. Watkins for 35 years. He was the loving father of his much adored children Adair R. Watkins and Charlotte W. Smith, father-in-law to Kristin Watkins and Josh Smith. Ric was the proud grandfather of Lily and Brennan Smith and Amelia Watkins. He was also survived by his in-laws, Agatha Blom and Lynne and Bob Travers and many generations of colleagues and students. He is also greatly missed by his beloved dog, Sugar.

He gave his heart away as freely as he gave a piece of his mind. He had no regrets. You always knew what he really thought. He shared love joyfully and wholly. Ric received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Southern Mississippi and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He was the department head of Fine Arts at Covington High School, where he taught for 27 years. In 2005, he was Teacher of the Year. Preceding his tenure at Covington High, he began his teaching career at Christ Episcopal School. In 1989, he participated in the Metropolitan Opera Guild Creating Original Opera program with Bonnie Stokes. He served as the Minister of Music at Lee’s Creek Southern Baptist Church in Bogalusa from 1986-1991 and again from 2001-2014. Ric was the founder and executive producer of the Covington Louisiana Actors Playhouse System (CLAPS). In 2015, he was nominated for the Tony Award for Excellence in Theatre Education. In 2017, he was awarded a \$35,000 grant for CLAPS from the American Theatre Wing and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative. He was awarded a myriad of other grants for various programs through the years. Ric served as director of Pro Musica, an ensemble of vocalists, who performed for firemen in NYC after 9/11 in 2002, and in Rome and Florence, Italy in 2005. He had a special gift for teaching many the love of music. His passions for music and education were exemplified in every aspect of his amazing life.

“Wherever you see pelicans, I am there with my friends.”

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Ric's name to James Storehouse Louisiana.

Relatives and friends are invited to the Memorial Service at E.J. Fielding Funeral Home, 2260 W. 21st Avenue, Covington, LA 70433 on Friday, July 12, 2019 at 3:00 PM with visitation from 1:00 PM until service time. Please Share a Memory on the Tribute Wall at www.ejfieldingfh.com.

Events

JUL **Visitation** 01:00PM - 03:00PM

12

E.J. Fielding Funeral Home & Cremation Services
2260 W 21st Ave, Covington, LA, US, 70433

JUL **Memorial Service** 03:00PM

12

E.J. Fielding Funeral Home & Cremation Services
2260 W 21st Ave, Covington, LA, US, 70433

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



E.J. Fielding Funeral Home & Cremation S - July 09, 2019 at 02:00 PM



“ Dr. Watkins was as amazing man! He inspired both my daughters, Whitney and Logan Sanders, to always be their best. He helped shape who they have both become. I truly appreciate that they had the opportunity to be in his life!. Our sincere condolences to your family. He will truly be missed.

Sincerely,Almetta Sanders

Almetta - July 12, 2019 at 12:26 PM



“ Dr. Watkins was hands down my favorite teacher at CHS. (C/O '97) I took as many of his classes as I could, but Show Choir had to be my favorite. He really pushed all of us to be the best version of ourselves we could be, and pushed us out of our comfort zone because that is when the magic happens. He had the best sense of humor and was very quick witted, as was I so we would go back and forth. :) I am truly saddened by the loss of this wonderful man. My thoughts and prayers are with Adair, Charlotte, and Adair. God Bless!

Stephanie Hoskins - July 21, 2019 at 03:11 AM



“ A trouper never closes a show. He just goes on tour. Enjoy.

George Sanchez - July 15, 2019 at 07:18 PM



“ Rick lived without hesitation. He will be missed by many. No words can express our sadness. Our thoughts and love are with Adair and her beautiful family.

Louise Rozier and Franklin Evarts

Louise Rozier - July 14, 2019 at 12:06 PM



“ I first met Papa Watkins while performing with his son, Adair, in North Carolina for the Flatrock Playhouse with our other two degenerate friends, Kasey Marino and Matt Faucher back in the fall of 2012. We have a tribute group to Frankie Valli.

He and his lovely wife Dairsie came over from Louisiana not only to support their incredibly talented son, but to meet his fellow performers, to judge whether they were worthy of singing with his incredibly talented son, and then if so, to, of course, throw an incredible dinner party which would last the entire weekend with Louisiana homecoming, lots of drinks and endless laughs and stories and gossip.

I say all of this because by whatever happenstance, the other boys and I didn't meet Ric and Dairsie til after they saw our performance that first night they came to town.

I write all this in order to give you my first (of many) and lasting and loving memory of Papa Watkins.

He walked right up to me after the concert, shook my hand and said, 'Son! My name is Ricky Lynn Watkins and your dick can SING!'

Although I laughed and continue to laugh when I think of this first meeting, his truly unique words meant the world to me. First of all, Adair, his son, is one of the best damn singers I've ever known. Second, I know Papa didn't mince words or bullshit you, he didn't have the time for it, so I knew he meant what he said. And having Papa's approval and acknowledgment of talent will always mean the world. More still, Papa Watkins took all of us degenerate singers under his care and took care of us many times over the years since. I have many fond memories of Papa, but my dick being able to sing will always top them all as it reminds me of just how special and truly authentic Papa was.

Much love always,
J.D. Daw

J.D. Daw - July 12, 2019 at 03:06 PM



“ Although we didn't see Ric as often as we would have liked, we knew that he was always there for us in our time of need. He was a wonderful soul- so bright, funny, talented, loving, and giving. The world is at a loss with his passing. But we know that he's in heaven cracking jokes and entertaining in every way, as only Ric can. Our sympathy goes out to Adair, Charlotte and Adair and your families. He was such a wonderful role model and loved by so many. He will be sorely missed.
Love, Nelson and Stevie Brevé

Stevie Breve - July 12, 2019 at 11:07 AM



“ Ric leaves behind not only a wonderful family but also the thousands of students whose lives he positively impacted! What a fantastic legacy.

Bill and Carolyn Bruggmann - July 12, 2019 at 09:41 AM



“ My deepest sympathies to the family during this difficult time. The CHS community has experienced a great loss. Dr Watkins was a wonderful man who did a lot for the CHS community. We would speak many mornings at the first bell. I use a power chair and many times he would hold doors for me. Dr Watkins will be greatly missed. It was an honour and a privilege to have him as a co-worker.



charlotte emerson - July 12, 2019 at 12:09 AM



“ Adair and Family,
Our prayers are with you all during this difficult time. Please accept our sincere sympathy. To honor him, the family donated to James Storehouse in his memory.
Sincerely,
Mary Alice Renfroe, Tim and Channon McLaurin, Jerry and Zelda Prescott

Channon McLaurin - July 11, 2019 at 10:19 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 11, 2019 at 10:10 PM



“ Adair, Charlotte and Family,
So very sorry to hear of Ric's passing. Keeping all of you in my thoughts and prayers.
Judy Achary



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 11, 2019 at 05:58 AM



“ Thank you Mr. Watkins for bringing me out of my shell. You gave me a voice and a back bone and I am forever grateful. RIP you are greatly missed.

Rasheda Morris - July 11, 2019 at 05:55 AM



“ In 2005, Dr. Watkins stood up for me when no one else would. I was to be expelled that day. My family was torn apart by divorce, and I felt I had been abandoned by everyone. Discerning my broken heart he asked me to stay after class, (I thought I was in trouble again), but he just looked at me very matter of fact and said, "Want to tell me what is going on?" He listened to me and responded with unconditional Love. He drove me himself to the head of the school board and spoke for me, and of me, in a way no one else ever had. I will never forget that. I tell that story every time I hear his name. I would of never married my beautiful wife, who has blessed me with three beautiful children. Thank you with all my heart Dr. Watkins. This town is better, because you cared for it like a garden. Watering it with love, and an unparalleled integrity.

Caleb Clarke - July 11, 2019 at 03:11 AM



“ Charlotte, we were so sad when we heard about Dr. Watkins passing. He made attending Lee's Creek Church very joyful with the music he performed and enjoyed doing that for the people. You and your family are in our hearts and prayers. Knowing him, you know he is singing in that heavenly choir. May God put His arms around you in this time of sadness and grief. Zack, Tiffany, Tenzley, and Riley-Wren Little and Callie and Glenn Keating

Callie Keating - July 10, 2019 at 10:46 PM



“ Class of 2012 + Ryan, Camille and Francesca <3 purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



Class of 2012 + Ryan, Camille and Francesca <3 - July 10, 2019 at 04:10 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 10, 2019 at 03:43 PM



“ Ric Watkins, a true character, was one of the most influential instructors of my high school career and I am sincerely saddened by the news of his passing. There are countless things that I can attribute to his memory: tough, encouraging, entertaining, gracious, sometimes intimidating, always energetic, and we could have asked for no better head of Fine Arts at CHS. I was admittedly not the best student of his; in that phase of my life I was introverted, lacking confidence throughout my years in musical theatre and CLAPS. He only encouraged myself and others like me to challenge that; to extend the range of our talents and presence and creativity, and showed us means and provided an environment to do so. I was also a student of his in piano, where my musical talent shined more than on stage and I was challenged just as much when tackling advanced pieces--but still he cheered on the entire class regardless of our skill, as long as we put in the effort. Undoubtedly, Dr. Watkins has found some form of immortality in his own musical and teaching career and in the thousands of memories he has left with each of us, all of which I am thankful for. My heart is with his family through all of this; he will be rightly missed.

Morgan Allen - July 10, 2019 at 11:34 AM



“ Dear Adair, Charlotte, Adair and family,
Ric was one of the most unique people I have ever known. He was the instigator of some of my favorite moments in this earth. He gave me the opportunity to learn great music. I will always adore him. I am sure he will have Tal, Raymond and Bart singing in heaven and maybe I will have a voice too when I get there. My heart hurts

for your loss. He was probably one of proudest fathers I have ever seen!



Maria Jackson - July 09, 2019 at 03:49 PM



“ Loved being your neighbor, hearing Ric playing piano from the front lawn was a thrill. I respected his opinions whether I agreed or not. He enjoyed life so much. He will be dearly missed. My prayers remain with your family.

isabelle Bahan Moore - July 10, 2019 at 10:09 AM



“ I am so saddened by your loss. My love and prayers go out to all the family. My memories of time spent with him are a gift. We have all been blessed by knowing him. Love, Aunt Diane

Diane Reddoch - July 10, 2019 at 10:16 AM



“ Adair, I am so sorry for you and your family's great loss. I was so glad to have been able to get to know Ric over dinner a couple of times. He was so full of life and such a "happy go lucky" guy. I know he will be sorely missed by all the lives he has touched. Love and Hugs to you!!

Carole Henley - July 11, 2019 at 04:25 PM



“ Dr. Watkins was a remarkable performer, teacher and friend. He taught, and expected, professionalism in every performance. And when CLAPS season was over, often hosted a pool party to celebrate with the kids. He was tough and understanding, professional and comical. Our lives were truly enriched by knowing him.

Barbette Boutté - July 09, 2019 at 12:45 PM



“ Theo Thomas and family purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



Theo Thomas and family - July 09, 2019 at 12:22 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to Adair and and your children and grand children, My family and I will never forget the kindness and industry Ric showed to my children when they participated in CLAPS and the friendship and joy my late husband Tal had signing with Pro Musica and with the church choirs Ric directed. I will always remember the fun that Ric, Raymond and Tal had being together, I hope they are singing and drinking together again. All my thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Theo Collier Thomas Annie, Cadi ,Siani and Will

THEO THOMAS - July 09, 2019 at 12:16 PM



“ I remember Ric Watkins as a fierce champion of his students. He demanded the best from them & gave 100% of himself in return. My daughter was one of his students & we enjoyed watching him interact with students while preparing for a production. He will be missed by all who knew him. Heaven's choir will be the richer by having him there.

Diane Spaar - July 09, 2019 at 09:22 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 09, 2019 at 09:06 AM



“ I have very fond memories of Ricky during the fledgling years of planning and enjoying The Mississippi Picnic in Central Park!

Missing Him!

Ron Carter

Ron Carter - July 09, 2019 at 08:45 AM



“ I remember when one of my first encounters with Dr. Watkins at CHS , he told me “girl you not all that cause you can sing” lol my goodness and the memories continued. When I got my first tattoo he told me “them music notes , they’re cute now...but what are you gonna do when you get old and gravity takes its toll on you , have a treble clef to your knees” I truly loved this man and the many times we spent together. From class , to performances , to CLAPS!! You will truly be missed & to your family , I send my deepest prayers and condolences.

Laneshia West - July 09, 2019 at 06:51 AM



“ Dr. Watkins truly encouraged each student that passed through his care to reach their fullest potential. He assisted countless students in applying and getting into college who otherwise might not have gotten to attend. He cultivated our repertoire and helped us grow into musicians, performers, actors, and artists. Besides all of those wonderful attributes, he sure knew how to make us laugh. I will forever be grateful for the many summers I spent with him at CLAPS, and I send my deepest and most heartfelt condolences to his family during this time. All my love to the most fabulous man.

Catherine Comardelle - July 08, 2019 at 11:49 PM



“ I didn't think I liked drama in high school, but Mr. Watkins made the performances come so into life at CHS that I began looking forward to every production. He started playing piano at my church not long after, and I was so honored, but too nervous to ever tell him. What sad news, and what a life to be missed.

Monique Koll - July 08, 2019 at 09:12 PM



“ Dear Adair and the Watkins Family,

We are so sorry to hear of Ric's passing. We always enjoyed our chats with him and admired his great wit and wonderful sense of humor. He was a great neighbor and such a kind man - in particular, we will never forget him coming to our rescue in Hurricane Isaac and letting us borrow his generator while our power was out for several days. He was certainly one of those gentlemen (and a true gentleman he was) who made the lives of those around him better.

Please know that we are thinking of and praying for all of you.

With deepest sympathy,

John and Cindy Sanders

Long Grove, Illinois

John Sanders - July 08, 2019 at 08:47 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 08, 2019 at 08:27 PM



“ Dan, Ian, & Will purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



Robert Garvey - July 08, 2019 at 08:06 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 08, 2019 at 07:42 PM



“ Peace Eternal Wreath was purchased for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



July 08, 2019 at 07:16 PM



“ This makes my heart incredible sad. Dr. Watkins was the best teacher I've ever had. He was so quick witted, but would always encourage his students. He always challenged me to be uncomfortable because that's when growth happens. He also helped teach me how to be confident in the talent I have. I owe a lot of what I know about music to him. Praying for his family and loved ones. It breaks my heart I cant attend his memorial.

Maddie Leavines - July 08, 2019 at 07:00 PM



“ Hearing this news placed me speechless. He helped me grow in my music experience. Believed in me, but was also to the point with me. Bringing truth and honesty to my talents and seeing in me what I yet had and pushing me to be my best and a chameleon in music styes while still not loosing site to who I was and growing to me. Giving me many singing and musical firsts. Sarcastic and witty he was his own spirit and so respected nonetheless. Prayers to the family and all that experienced the 'Watkin' spirit. Truly an honor to know you and have you part of the journey God blessed me with. I am SO sure that you are directing the choirs of Heaven. Hugs to the Watkins family!

sharon schech-rock - July 08, 2019 at 06:58 PM



“ Dr Watkins was a great teacher. I had always loved choir and when moved here he was placed as my teacher and altho many love hate moments thr was more love for sure. He was strict but always brought a smile wherever he went and even when u were mad at him he found a way to make u laugh. His class was always the highlight of my day and years later he was my sons teacher. I'm truly saddened by this great loss and send prayers and love to his family as he was so proud of all of u and talked about you constantly! God bless and RIP Dr Watkins

Tammy Wimmer - July 08, 2019 at 06:53 PM



“ Dearest Family,

I was deeply saddened to learn of Ric's passing. Ric Watkins was my dear friend. He, in many ways, was like a brother to me. And he still is...because death ends a life, not a relationship.

I was truly honored to have known Ric and accompanied him and his community choir during many holiday presentations at Lee's Creek Baptist Church in Bogalusa, LA. What a time we always had! We didn't realize we were making memories, we just

knew we were having fun.

As was said many times where music and his work were concerned, "25% of Ric was better than 100% of most anybody else." It is a tremendous understatement to say that the 'performing arts' has sustained a great loss.

Yet, somehow...we must not be dismayed at goodbyes. A farewell is necessary before we can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are children of God.

Ric, I'll see you on the other side my dear friend!

In memory of a life so beautifully lived - and a heart so deeply loved.

Gordon Thomas - July 08, 2019 at 06:35 PM



“ So sorry to hear of your passing. So glad I saw you a while back and we talked . Thanks for being such a great inspiration to so many. Love and prayers to the family .

Gwen Richoux - July 08, 2019 at 06:33 PM



“ My family, particularly my son Lee and I send our thoughts and prayers to all of Ric's family. I will always remember his passion for education, for music, and for theatre. He always made you laugh. I remember after he was chosen as Teacher of the Year him sitting in a throne like chair in the teacher's lounge with a Burger King crown on his head. He will be missed. Hana Jeansonne

Hana Jeansonne - July 08, 2019 at 06:31 PM



“ A wonderful person with a magnetic presence! He made me smile and laugh even when I didn't want to. He has been so influential to those around him, my child included. She is pursuing a path that he encouraged her to take and she is flourishing in the guidance that he helped give her. Such an amazing person who will truly be missed!

Paula Carter - July 08, 2019 at 06:27 PM



“ Dr. Watkins was one of my favorite teachers at Covington High. He taught me so much and lifted my spirits daily with his wonderful sense of humor. My thoughts and prayers to his friends and family for the loss of such an amazing man.

Brandi Steinberg - July 08, 2019 at 06:23 PM



“ David and I are truly devastated by his passing. His wit and charm and laughter will forever remain in our hearts.

cindy and david allen - July 08, 2019 at 06:19 PM



“ Dr. Watkins was a true educator and mentor. He showed his students how to truly live and take advantage of every opportunity, to seize each moment. I will never forget all of the fond memories and words of encouragement. I pray that your family and friends find peace at this moment.

Terri Rushing - July 08, 2019 at 06:17 PM



“ I just got to know Ric these last 4 years after knowing him since the 90s. His wit was sharp as a razor, his wrath was the thing of legend, and his heart was quietly large as an elephant. He will be missed. My prayers go out to Charlotte and the family.

Donald Simmons - July 08, 2019 at 06:07 PM



“ Dr. Ric Watkins lived a life for others. He fought and helped those he cared for more passionately than anyone I've ever known. He loved his students dearly. Though he could have retired long ago, he stayed to keep doing what he loved: helping, impacting, and teaching others. Had he retired, I'd have never known the joy of having this man as a teacher, a mentor, a friend, and often, a father-figure. He helped me through some of my darkest times without a second thought and was proud of me when I couldn't have felt more ashamed. He may be gone from here, but the impact he made on myself and everyone to have known him will last forever. I love you, sir. Thank you for everything. I miss you more than I can ever put to words. I'll see you again someday.

Kaitlin J Fouquet - July 08, 2019 at 06:02 PM



“ Ric was a great guy who often helped me help my students. Remembering him fondly today for his great sense of humor and his willingness to speak plainly.

Betsie Huben - July 08, 2019 at 05:32 PM



“ Amanda Hanson Martino purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Ric Lynn Watkins.



Amanda Hanson Martino - July 08, 2019 at 04:49 PM



“ Loved this man. As quick as he could be to roast his students with his devastating wit, he was just as quick to come to his student's aid and take their part. I remember Dr. Watkins being one of the first people to pull me out of self-isolation and depression when my family went through a rough time in my sophomore year of high school. Dr. Watkins is very near and dear to my heart, and I am so honored to have been his student. He taught everyone who would listen how to be their own individual, have self-love, and strive towards excellence. His love for music and performance abounded and touched many lives. I look forward to celebrating his life, as the legacy he leaves behind in this community will live on for generations to come. Much, much love to the whole family.

Maria Hefte - July 08, 2019 at 04:33 PM



“ We are so sorry that Ric has left us. We have wonderful memories of our time with him in Promusica. Please accept our condolences for all of his family as we know that his passing has left a huge hole in all of our hearts and in the universe.

With much love,

Tamara Murray and Melissa Rousseaux

Tamara Murray - July 08, 2019 at 04:23 PM



“ Our heartfelt sympathy to the Watkins family. You are all in our thoughts and prayers.
Coach Darryl and Gina Graham

Gina Graham - July 08, 2019 at 04:02 PM