



Paul John Denayer

June 29, 1979 - October 26, 2024

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Paul Denayer on October 26, 2024.

Born on June 29, 1979, in Peterborough, England, Paul was a devoted husband to Kelly Doyle and a loving father to Abigail Denayer. He leaves behind his parents, Pierre and Pamela Denayer, his sister, Angelique Cace (Peter Cace) and his beloved nieces and nephews.

Paul's legacy is etched in the hearts of all who knew him and made a lasting impact as a son, brother, nephew, uncle, cousin, friend, teacher, and mentor. He inspired us all with his passion for life and unwavering compassion.

Paul was at his core, a dedicated teacher. He devoted over 20 years to nurturing the minds and hearts of his students. His students became lifelong friends, a testament to his profound impact on their lives.

Remembered as a visionary whose creativity in lighting, scenic, and sound design set the stage for extraordinary performances. His summers were filled with the magic of sound, inspiring all who had the privilege to witness his work.

Amidst a busy life filled with responsibilities, he never lost sight of what truly

mattered: his family and his passions. His unwavering support and expertise made him the go-to person for tackling any challenge. Whether undertaking electrical work or building something new, he was always there to support his friends and family.

Perhaps his proudest moment happened in 2015 when he welcomed his daughter Abigail into the world. She was truly his greatest pride and joy.

He created countless memories with his family at Disney World where he embraced his inner Jedi. Celebrating a life filled with adventure and creativity. From family camping trips to traveling the world and watching countless hours of Doctor Who, his passions knew no bounds. His talent for Lego construction was unmatched. He was a true theater enthusiast, a loving cat dad, and so much more.

As we reflect on Paul's remarkable life, we find comfort in knowing that Paul's legacy lives on through the lessons he taught us, the love he shared, and the memories we will cherish forever.

"The Force will be with you, always"

A Celebration of Paul's life will be held on November 1st, at 6 PM at Riverside Church at Park and King at 2650 Park Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204. All are welcome and all means all. Children are encouraged to attend too. The service will be streamed for those unable to be present in person. Afterward, we invite everyone to a gathering in the fellowship hall.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to a memorial fund or Abby's future education fund. For more information please visit <https://linktr.ee/welovepaul>

The Memorial service will be streamed live at the links below:

<https://m.youtube.com/@riversidechurchjax>

https://www.facebook.com/riversidetgether/live_videos

Previous Events

Memorial

NOV 1. 6:00 PM (ET)

Riverside Church at Park and King
2650 Park Street
Jacksonville, FL 32204

Tribute Wall

AB

“ *he was a awesome dada* ❤️😄😊❤️❤️❤️💕💕



abbyd - February 18 at 02:43 PM

“ We all loved Paul Denayer so much. If you've spent any time in the theatre world, you know we are unlike any collection of humanity on civil earth. Theatre people are always going to be, as popular vernacular dictates, "like that." We have our haughty leading acts, our two-scene character sketchers, our seasoned antagonists, nervous stagehands at the mercy of production & director, & your solemn sound op's & agile, acrophiliac light rig techs. They are all distinct personalities that mostly like have no acceptable function in an industrialized world, but is indeed the sandbox of the mind & soul. One can only truly know all this with actual experience, & whether its not for you or you have found your life's calling, one thing is univerally true: once & always, you are "one of us."

Then, completely shattering all of the above archetypes & expectations, there was Paul.

He was the closest I could have ever had the fortune (or dumb luck of) to be graced in the presence of a true visionary; a scientific genius in a class of his own, his knowledge allowing no limits for any fields or discipline; a veritable polymath, & perhaps one of the very last; a creative hurricane, a legendary teacher & master of his many vocations, some of which the credentials for could've been sworn in either honor or blood; you can take your best guesses as to which belonged to what distinction.

Paul, my beloved technical director, as well as my most informative, thorough, cautious &, to be blunt, intellectually-challenging professor. Before I'd been under his watch as student, shop hand, on-stage talent & crewman, I had only heard of him spoken of in hushed whispers; he had a legend of his own, well before he'd departed us.

The rigorous courses, homework & training, the grueling & possibly deadly labor of the scenic shop, the guardianship & living embodiment of terror known as "the muffin monster," (it is best not to ask), &, the greatest indicator of his stress & disgruntlement, the

sudden return of his English accent. Come to think of it, he may have been the only real human being I know of that had what could be considered a "Transatlantic accent." It seems though that already makes him a greater & truer artist than Cary Grant, to my mind. Still, I digress.

Those who know best know one thing: Paul Denayer was so much more than a teacher, a boss, an inspiration, or even a contemporary. He was, frankly, an experience unto himself. He has been the one teacher I have looked back upon more than any other. More than anyone I've ever known, Paul made a man out of me. I only wish I got to tell him so.

Paul was an endless source of wisdom from which one, from then forward, would write into their hearts, I've heard of some getting tattoos from the stuff, though I cannot determine the veracity of this claim. A true renegade in every sense, a surprisingly keen satirist, no different from the likes of Voltaire or Swift, & perhaps, oddly enough, if Paul were not a warrior in the traditional sense, then he curiously & cautiously maintained the most well-honed warrior's spirit; that which could even cause kings to yield to him.

Paul was also, as his legend had informed me, a man of great passion & fearsome urgency. Having first met him, I discovered a lovable rogue who'd somehow found time to fashion himself into the most refined artist, composer, carpenter, draughtsman, interior designer, electrician, forensic scientist, mathematician, quantum physicist, & lay philosopher. Most assuredly, the best educated man in the Southern United States at the time that I had known him, though his credentials lie firmly tied to the theatre & live arts.

I owe everything to him. I mourn with his family, friends, colleagues & students. Rest in absolute lighting-riding power, Paul John Denayer.

-Jaden Swiger

Jaden Swiger - March 29, 2025 at 01:58 AM

CL

“ Paul was my professor at Flagler College from 2017-2021. From him I learned tenets of theatrical design and execution that...I have unfortunately forgotten and don't actively utilize. But I also conversed with him about the theories of why we make theatre, argued with him over what naturalism is, and gained so much confidence from him when I showed him sketches and designs I thought were subpar and he said they were a great start actually. He was an incredibly passionate and intelligent man that taught me it's ok to stand up for what you know is right and what you need. I may not remember how to program lights on an ETC board, but I'll always carry with me the larger lessons about going through life that he taught me and so many others.

Clark Levi - November 01, 2024 at 05:59 PM

BG

“ I got the chance to work with Paul in 2001, when he created graphics for *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE* at the University of South Florida. I remember his creativity, team spirit, and can-do attitude fondly.

Bob Gonzalez - October 31, 2024 at 12:58 PM