



Mr. Chester Lee Williams

July 24, 1944 - May 14, 2019

Mr. Chester Lee Williams, age 74, departed this life on Tuesday, May 14, 2019.

Chester Lee Williams was born July 24, 1944, to the late Oscar Williams and Edith Massey Williams Bullock in Durham, North Carolina. He was raised with his brother and sisters, Oscar "OJ" Williams, Jr., Patricia Martin and Mabel Thompson. Chester was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Patricia Martin. He passed away in his home in Cary, North Carolina on May 14, 2019. Chester cultivated a creative mind that eventually led him to pursue an education in fine arts and sculpture at North Carolina Central University (BA) and the University of Michigan (MFA).

A lifelong artist, Chester's work has been featured in galleries and publications across the country. The body of his work produced over 45 years has evolved from smooth and supple sculptures into the more angular and defiant shapes seen in his later works. Chester has said: "All of the works are me. I still embrace every one of them." A collection of Chester's artwork can be seen online at ChesterLWilliams.com. Chester enjoyed traveling and exploring different cultures. His art was influenced by his travel and knowledge of African culture. He was an educator for 37 years, teaching at Voorhees College, North Carolina Central University and Florida A&M University before retiring in 2011.

Surviving relatives include his three sons, Corey T. Williams (Marsha Williams) of Great Mills, MD, Christopher Williams (Tracee Thigpen Williams) of Greenville, NC and Cheston Williams of Tallahassee, FL, from his marriage to Lauren B. Sapp; brother, Oscar "OJ" Williams, Jr.; sister, Mabel Thompson; grandson, Charles Xavier Williams; and many loving family members and friends.

"I hope that all of my life is in my art -- my hopeful youth, my wiser middle-age, my identity as an American, and my undeniable affinity with African forms."--
Chester Lee Williams

A celebration of life service will take place on Wednesday, May 22, 2019, at Christ Family Church, 760 Reedy Creek Road, Cary, North Carolina 27513, at 7:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to:

FAMU College of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities: <https://my.famu.edu/sslpage.aspx?pid=597>

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY **22**. 7:00 PM (ET)

Christ Family Church
760 Reedy Creek Road
Cary, NC 27513

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Chester Lee Williams*

October 05, 2023 at 11:31 AM



“ *Chester was always a welcome presence at the UNC Wellness Center in Cary. His levity and gentle presence will be missed. We will remember him fondly and continue to support and appreciate the arts community.*

Karla Dierks - May 23, 2019 at 05:40 PM



“ *Chester has been such a dear friend to me in the last 3 years here at UNC Wellness Center in Cary, NC. I always enjoyed seeing his smiling face and witty sense of humor. He so loved his family and would tell stories about his kids growing up and we would just laugh together. He always gave the greatest advice and was a good friend. We all will miss him dearly!!!*

Colleen Foster - May 23, 2019 at 06:48 AM

EL

“ *We shall remember Chester and his siblings in growing up on Bernice Street in the East Durham Community. The McKinnon Family shall always remember the Williams Family.*

We express our sincere heartfelt sympathy to Chester's family. May our God console and comfort you during this time of bereavement as only He can.

With our deepest sympathy,

Ella Louise McKinnon McAllister and Edna McKinnon Lennon

Edna M. Lennon - May 20, 2019 at 12:10 PM

MA

“ I was lucky to have a friendship with Chester and spent every Thursday evening with him. He was teaching an adult art class and a small group of us attended every session for several years.

Most of the time we worked on whatever we were painting and had conversations about life; its joys and sadness, events of our day and his. Chester would talk about his FAMU students saying: “I almost had to throw another one out the window,” referring to the battle of getting them to put down their cellphones!

Chester had one of the best laughs I’ve ever known.

Over the years our group started to feel almost like family. I was honored when he asked for my help with a couple of small favors. He complimented everyone and even made us exhibit our work in First Friday art exhibits.

He was a kind and generous man. He was so proud of his family. Chester will always be remembered.

My sympathies to all ... Martha Fenner, Tallahassee

Martha - May 20, 2019 at 12:19 AM

AH

“ *To The Family of Chester Lee Williams: We were saddened to hear of Chester's passing. Please remember that God is too wise to make a mistake and too Holy to do anything wrong. We really feel as if we lost one of our blood brothers. In 1953, when I moved from Raeford, NC to Durham, the Williams Family was one of the first families that I met. Mr. Oscar and Mrs. Edith welcomed me into their home and treated me as if I was one of their very own. O.J., Mable, who was my classmate, Chester, and Patricia treated me the same. O.J. was one of my road partners, but Chester was a man of his own heart, by that I mean he was always trying different businesses along with his Art work.*

When we honored Coach Blount naming the Shepard Track after him, Chester made the plaque. He also got government contracts making plaques for the Marine Corps. I will make available to the family copies of one of Chester's first paintings that he gave us 50 years ago, and also make available book markers of the obituary that was in the newspaper.

When I purchased my first component set, Chester built me a cabinet to put it in. He was one of the finest men that I have ever met. He always treated everyone that he met with love and respect. Chester is really going to be missed by all of us that had the pleasure of enjoying his love and respect along with his willingness to help anyone who needed his help. I will say to his sons and grandson that you have some big shoes to fill, but all you have to do is always remember what he has taught you and you cannot go wrong. Just continue to spread the love and respect and be willing to help others.

*This is with much Love,
The Albert & Dorothy Huey Family*

Albert Huey - May 19, 2019 at 10:11 PM

MK

“ Sorry to hear about Chester. He was a talented artist and a good person. He will be missed

Marsha Kee - May 19, 2019 at 12:07 PM

DW

“ We are heartbroken and devastated by the death of our beloved Cousin Chester. Cousin Chester was a teacher, mentor, artist and a friend to many. We will miss our daily talks and visits . Our family celebration will not be the same. We have loss a gift in our life.
Alexzine and Darlene Whitted

Darlene Whitted - May 18, 2019 at 12:06 PM



I send my deepest condolences to his sons and entire family. I met Mr. William through his cousins, Alexzine and Darleen Whitted several years ago. Right away he told me and my daughter we were his cousin too. He was such a joy and delight. He shared with me his love of art and music, his children and grands, and a good dessert. We celebrated Christmas dinner last year together with family members. He was a gentleman with a wonderful sense of humor. He leaves a legacy to be cherished. May you Rest in Heavenly Peace cousin Chester.

Deborah Belk - May 18, 2019 at 02:16 PM

AW

One of the most caring and God fearing Man I know!!! Over the years I grew to love this man like the father I never had. Mr. Chester always gave me great advice and listened to my concerns. I will truly miss you Mr. Chester. One thing I know for sure is that you are at peace and with our Heavenly Father. Another Angel is home.

Anthony Watson - May 18, 2019 at 02:24 PM

ET

I'm so heart broken, Chester was such a beautiful kind person a real gentleman. I got a Mother's Day greeting from him. I thanked him and said I would call him soon.... I went to school with Chester, use to try and compete with him in art class. I called him my brother, my maiden name was Williams and his mother and I shared first names (Edith). Please God help us. Rest in Heavenly Peace Chester. Love you Bro!!

Edith Thorpe - May 18, 2019 at 04:31 PM

TF

Waltonwood will miss Mr Chester. He was a wonderful person to our residents. He volunteered a few years. He is at peace.

Tina Forsythe - May 19, 2019 at 08:52 PM

LW

I have known Chester for almost 70 years. He was a very caring, compassionate, thoughtful and talented person. We have lost a great "Hornet" and "Eagle". He will be missed by all. Rest in Peace my friend.

Larry Wilson

Larry Wilson - May 19, 2019 at 11:18 PM

CM

To Chester's family and to the siblings family of OJ and Mable. Our hearts are truly broken but we know, as well as you do, that because of his love for our Lord gives us peace and comfort. You may not know but he loved to play cowboys & Indians being my twin brother and I was from Texas visiting. Continue to stay close to each other.

Clayton Massey Family, Northglenn, Colorado

Yvonne Massey/ Davis Family, Austin Texas

Clayton Massey - May 20, 2019 at 10:26 AM

NB

Our heartfelt sympathy to O.J., Mable and the rest of the Williams family on the passing of Chester. Chester and were cousins and we grew up together. He was a very unique and talented person. We are going to miss him.

*Norman (Lank) and Carolyn Burnette
Adelphi, Maryland*

Norman Burnette - May 21, 2019 at 04:51 PM



*Praying for our family that God will see us through this loss. I am going to miss you uncle Chester...Love you always
Angel..*

Nikita Belton - May 22, 2019 at 06:26 PM

PW

Deepest condolences to the Williams family. Chester was a very warm & caring person, he rendered a painting for me while at Central - pathetic refinement -it is still admired by many. RIP

preston d weaver - June 08, 2019 at 03:00 PM

DW

Chester was my colleague at Florida A&M University. I remember him fondly and have nothing but good things to say about him. I ride by his sculpture outside the Gaither gym on a regular basis. His advice was always good and he didn't hesitate to give it. My sincere condolences to his family.

Derek Williams - June 10, 2019 at 03:39 PM