



# R. Christopher Lawson

NOV 25, 1966 - APR 1, 2021



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## **R. Christopher Lawson**

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**R.** Christopher Lawson, 54, died on April 1, 2021. He was preceded in death by his beloved aunt, Mary Judith Moses, and his father-in-law, Dr. Don Alan Nall, both of Little Rock; and his infant son, Benjamin Wilkinson Lawson of the home.

Chris was born on November 25, 1966, in Milledgeville, GA; seven months later, his family relocated to El Dorado, AR. His adventuresome spirit was evident by the time he turned 3 years old, when he made a round trip alone on foot to the neighborhood TG&Y store to purchase a pair of toy binoculars. Though it almost cost his parents matching heart attacks, his love of exploring only grew with time.

Chris was reared in a home filled with music. His father, an accomplished concert pianist, taught him to play the piano and to love classical compositions. But Chris also held a special place in his heart for Rush, Yes and Metallica; much to his own surprise, he even grew an appreciation for pop and country as a DJ at local station KLBO. A gifted communicator, Chris discovered the power of public speaking at El Dorado High School when he gave a speech on behalf of Walter Mondale during a student mock election and delivered Mondale an unexpected win.

After graduating in 1985 from EHS, where he'd served as student body president, Chris entered Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia as a Governor's Scholar; he would go on to serve as president of the student senate as well as the Ouachita Student Foundation. Over a rapidly melting sundae at a student mixer in 1987, he asked Felley Nall if he could take her to dinner at notorious romantic hot spot Western Sizzlin'. Within a year, they were married.

Chris graduated magna cum laude from OBU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science in 1989. Between hiking House Mountain and fly fishing in the Maury River, he managed to earn a Juris Doctorate in 1993 from the Washington & Lee University School of Law in Lexington, VA. After graduation, the Lawsons packed a U-Haul and returned home to Arkansas where Chris joined the Little Rock law office of Friday, Eldredge & Clark. He began his career at the Friday



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Firm as an associate in the public finance section, then transitioned to commercial litigation, appellate procedure, employment litigation, and the representation of public-school districts. He was named a partner in 1997.

In 2004, Chris moved his practice to the firm's Fayetteville office. A lifelong supporter of public education, he was proud to join Fayetteville Public Schools as General Counsel in July 2017. At FPS, he was depended upon daily to assist the district in navigating the intricacies of school law. He was named multiple times among "The Best Lawyers in America, Appellate Law" and was a frequent speaker on topics including appellate procedure and education law. Chris also served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Arkansas School of Law and at John Brown University.

Chris was kind. He loved his family deeply, spending time with them outdoors or preparing meals for them from his own made-up recipes or simply listening and being a husband and dad. Among his many gifts, his superpower was his generous, unfailing ability to give his laser-like attention to others. He possessed a quick wit, a gentle spirit, a fantastic sense of humor and a nearly-complete Stephen King library. Chris listened way more than he spoke, and offered thoughtful opinions — but only when asked. He was a Christian and served unselfishly in the churches he attended, most recently Grace Church of Northwest Arkansas in Fayetteville.

Chris was most at peace in the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains or on the Texas Gulf Coast at Crystal Beach, where he was blissfully happy hiking, fishing or just quietly thinking his thoughts. He loved Razorback sports in every kind of weather. His passion for the Boston Red Sox was unequalled in the charted universe.

Chris is survived by his wife, Felley Nall Lawson, of Fayetteville; daughters Elizabeth Clary Lawson and Josephine Hall Lawson, both of Fayetteville, and Madeline Kate Lawson of Rogers; parents Roger Pearce and Jan Elizabeth (Moses) Lawson of El Dorado; brother Jonathan Mark Lawson (Martha) of Liverpool, NY; sister Cheryl Lynn Lawson (John C. Cabell, Jr.) of Waynesboro, VA; mother-in-law Judith Nall and sister- and brother-in-law Ashley Elizabeth and Dr. Robert Lloyd Stuckey, Jr., all of Little Rock; and his nephews and niece: John Aaron Lawson of San Francisco, CA.; Alexander Mark Lawson (Katie) of Syracuse, NY; Nathaniel Asher Lawson of Liverpool; Charles Pearce Cabell of Waynesboro; and Charles Wilbanks Stuckey and Sidney Elizabeth Stuckey, both of Little Rock. He is also survived by many friends and colleagues.



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Chris will be missed. He dedicated his life to making a difference through the study and application of the law and to supporting his family. To remember Chris, listen to a bit of classic rock, go for a long hike, catch a beautiful fish (but throw it back), and be kind to each other.

A memorial service led by Chris's friend John Ray will be held at Vesper Point at Mt. Sequoyah on Thursday, April 15 at 2:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a gift to the Fayetteville Public Education Foundation at <https://www.fayedfoundation.org/>; Olivia's Basket at <https://www.oliviasbasket.org/>; the Fayetteville Public Library at <https://www.faylib.org/>; or Canopy NWA at <http://www.canopynwa.org/>




# Events

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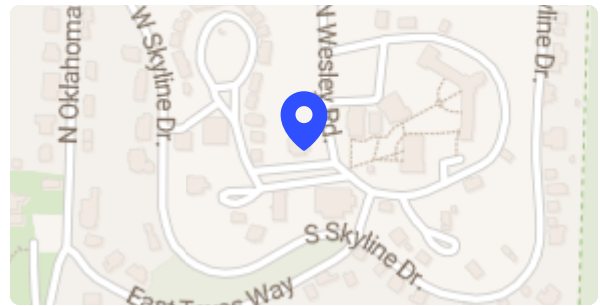
## Memorial Service

 **Thursday**, April 15, 2021


 2:00 PM CT


 **Chapel at Vesper Point / Mount Sequoyah Retreat & Conference Center**

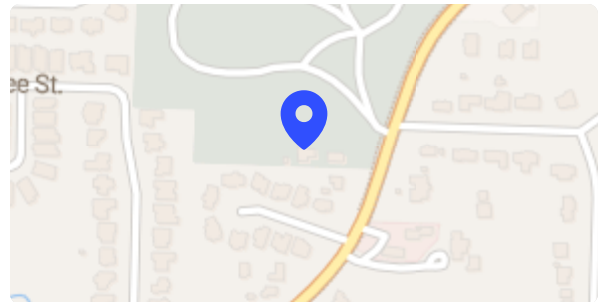
150 N Skyline Drive, Fayetteville AR 72701



## Cemetery Details

 **Fairview Memorial Gardens**  
1728 East Mission, Fayetteville AR 72703

 **(479) 521-8701**





# Tribute Wall

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**Christy Lewis Younts** posted:

Chris I remember we were at church camp and I had forgotten my toothbrush. You gave me one of yours. I was one of youngest there. You made me feel accepted. I was very shy. But you would take the time to walk with me from the cafeteria if I was alone. We may not say a word to each other but you made me feel like that was okay. You will be missed. My heart is better for knowing you.

October 1 at 3:34 PM



**Judy Stone** posted:

So sorry to hear of the passing of Chris. I knew him at Friday, Eldredge & Clark in Little Rock. I still work there and do think of him from time to time. He was an excellent attorney, a fine fellow, and I'm sure will be missed by many. My heartfelt prayers are with you all! Judy Stone

April 22 at 6:08 AM



**Meredith C Dowse** lit a candle in honor of R..

We are so very sorry to hear about the passing of Chris. It seems he was somewhat a part of our extended family. Thoughts and prayers to all the family. Meredith Collier Dowse



April 20 at 9:34 AM



**Jeanette Light** posted:

I am so sorry and sad to hear this. I didn't know him very well, but used to work at Friday, Eldridge and Clark in LR, and I remember him. He was so nice. My condolences to his family.

April 20 at 2:17 AM



**The Fayetteville Athletic Department** sent a Lavender & White Sympathy Basket to the Lawson family.



April 15 at 4:09 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Blue & White Sympathy Basket to the Lawson family.

April 14 at 10:48 AM



**Geniece Yates** lit a candle in honor of R..

Only knowing Clary, I'm sorry I can't add to the beautiful memories here about Mr. Lawson. However, his daughter Clary still holds a special place in my heart as a dear former student. She is a testament to his love, grace and kindness. My best to the family.

April 14 at 5:53 AM



**Fayetteville Public Schools** sent a Floor Plant for Sympathy to the Lawson family.

April 14 at 4:56 AM



**Beth Winberry** posted:

I am so sorry to hear of your loss. May God comfort and provide peace for you and your family. Much love, Beth Nail Winberry

April 13 at 8:37 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Cherished Memories - Multicolor Pastel to the Lawson family.

April 13 at 5:04 PM



**Beth Coulson** posted:

We are so very sorry for your loss. Beth and Mike Coulson

April 13 at 3:55 PM



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**Laura Nix** posted:

Felley, our hearts are heavy over the news of your loss. We have continued to hold you both in our hearts all these years since the two of you embarked on life after finishing at OBU. True friends remain just that despite time & distance. Know you all will be in our prayers over these next difficult days ahead. We loved Chris, & send our love to you. Laura & Joe Nix

April 13 at 12:23 PM



**Bettie Duke** April 18 at 4:01 PM

Felley, my heart is so heavy to hear of Chris' passing. I loved both of you while Students at OBU. I worked with Chris in Development. Both of you are special friends!!



**Robin Green** lit a candle in honor of R..



April 13 at 11:25 AM



**Brooke Gertsch** lit a candle in honor of R..



April 13 at 9:26 AM



**Brooke Gertsch** April 14 at 3:37 PM

I worked with Chris for several years and I feel fortunate to have known him. He had a brilliant legal mind, an unstoppable work ethic, a kind heart, and a subtle sense of humor. He was a remarkable person and he will be missed by many.



**Butch Reeves** posted:

I first met Chris when he was in junior high in El Dorado when FBC/El Dorado went on a mission trip to Myrtle Beach, SC. Even then he was an exceptional young guy. Then when we were both members of Immanuel in LR, Chris was a lawyer by then and a leader there too. He will be missed by those who knew him even if we hadn't seen him for a few years. Butch Reeves

April 13 at 5:19 AM



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**Steve Percival** posted:

Chris was one of the good guys. He created an atmosphere of calm, competence, and focus whenever he spoke. His representation of the Fayetteville School District was stellar and his opinions and positions were well considered, researched and presented. In addition to all that, he was a really nice guy and a joy to talk with. I will miss knowing he's in the physical world. Thoughts and prayers for all his family and friends.

April 13 at 3:48 AM



**Michael Harrison** lit a candle in honor of R..



April 12 at 12:21 PM



**John & Gina Moore** sent a White Standing Spray to the Lawson family.



April 12 at 11:46 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

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



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