



Maggie Wright Tesch

April 14, 1967 - August 27, 2025

Maggie Wright Tesch, Professor Emerita of Dance

Maggie Tesch, beloved mother, wife, daughter, sister, friend, teacher and colleague died peacefully at home in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 27, 2025 surrounded by those she loved the most.

Margaret Zachary Wright was born April 14, 1967 in Atlanta, Georgia, the third child of Ethel Simons Williamson Wright and James Anderson Wright, Jr. (Sue). She is survived by her parents, siblings and their spouses Simons Wright Michels (Jeff), James Anderson “Jamie” Wright, III. (Erin) and Kate Waring “Katie” Wright Gibson (Jason).

Before she met Dennis Tesch and welcomed their daughters, Maggie’s true love was creating art through dance. She began dancing at age five at Ruth Mitchell Dance Company in Atlanta and when she discovered ballet shortly thereafter, she told her parents that she wanted to become a ballerina. During her second year at the University of Utah, her professor (Joy Ludlow) asked her, “Why are you here? You should be dancing in a professional company.” Later that year, Maggie joined the corps de ballet at Ballet West and spent the next 20 years working with the Company’s artistic directors and choreographers on some of the most iconic ballet repertoire and innovative creations in this rigorous discipline. Maggie’s unique physical combination of

classic beauty and athleticism, along with her intellectual curiosity in artistic exploration with her collaborators, created performances that endure in the hearts of those of us lucky enough to have sat in the audience or backstage during her many hundreds of performances. Maggie was known for her work ethic and dedication to excellence, and she was unflagging in her commitment to bringing her very best to every project. Over the last several years of her professional career, Maggie finished her BFA in Dance at the University of Utah.

On September 26, 1992, Maggie married her best friend and life partner Dennis Tesch in Atlanta, GA. Dennis and Maggie are the parents of two daughters, Arden Behling Tesch and Mary Ann Wright Tesch. It gave Maggie so much joy to watch her girls grow, witness their accomplishments and everyday activities, and share with them her own family stories and legacy. She relished welcoming their friends into the vibrancy of the Tesch circle. Arden's and Mary Ann's courageous and fierce care, – along with that of Arden's fiancé, Zachary Campbell, and Mary Ann's partner, Connor Doyle -- for their mother in her final physical days on earth is a tender inspiration and was a great comfort to their mother and father.

Dennis is Maggie's north star, and she his.

Maggie is also survived by Dennis' loving parents, Dennis Thomas Tesch. and ValRae Benson Tesch and his siblings and their spouses Marnie Dorese Erickson (Brandon) and Korey Arden Tesch (Edvina).

Maggie leaves behind numerous aunts and uncles, sixteen (16) beloved nieces and nephews, and seven (7) grand nieces and nephews whom she adored, and in whose lives she took a personal interest from the time they were born.

After retiring from Ballet West, Maggie embraced a new chapter of her artistic life in teaching. She was an integral faculty member in the Ballet Program at the University of Utah for 25 years. During this time, she taught ballet technique, pointe/variations, and ballet pedagogy courses; staged historic ballet repertoire for mainstage concerts; helped develop and evolve the curriculum and served as a mentor to faculty and hundreds, if not thousands, of students. Maggie also served in significant leadership roles, including as the Recruitment Director of the Ballet Program for several years and as the Director of the Utah Ballet Summer Intensive. The Ballet Summer Intensive was one of Maggie's favorite teaching opportunities, and she helped countless ballet dancers chart their course to professional dancing or teaching careers, or on their journeys after they finished dancing. Maggie had a gift for kind truth-telling that helped her students embrace the most authentic path forward and so many are grateful to her for her wisdom and generosity. Her contributions to the ballet legacy at the U are immeasurable. The University of Utah School of Dance will be honoring Maggie's memory in several ways and the Tesch family asks, in lieu of flowers in Maggie's remembrance, that you consider a gift to the Maggie Wright Tesch Endowed Scholarship in Ballet at this link: <https://donate.utah.edu/the-maggie-wright-tesch-endowed-scholarship-in-ballet>

Maggie loved the outdoors – hiking, skiing, walking with her many dogs, cuddling with her kitties, tending her beehives and harvesting their honey, good food, tequila neat, Emerald Isle, a great concert or college football game, deep conversations, hockey, warm socks, early bedtimes and early mornings. Her life was so well-lived and her memory will endure in every sunset at the beach, the spring blossoms of the magnolia trees, and every time the curtain rises with the swell of the orchestra and the dimming of the lights. May she rest forever in peace.

A celebration of life will be held on November 2, 2025, at the Alice Marriott Sheets Center for Dance at the University of Utah.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 2 (MT)

Alice Marriott Sheets Center for Dance
330 S 1500 E
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Tribute Wall



“ Maggie,

From the moment my feet touched the red velvet carpet of the Capitol Theater for my first Nutcracker, I knew there was magic.

In my white cotton stockings and black patent leather Mary Jane's, I knew a few other things:

I knew my great grandmother and my mother had loved and protected this place.

And that in turn, our entire family followed in adoration, respect and stewardship.

But most importantly, I knew this was a magical place.

Growing up, I felt it in every stair, every seat, and every toe tap, silent as it was strong on that stage.

*I loved meeting the dancers. I loved watching rehearsals. Being engulfed by the love and production of dance. I loved being twirled during breaks, and I loved having my hair put into a bun by busy hands so to practice with *no hair!**

I LOVED being shown how to properly break in a pointe shoe!

I loved being allowed in the dressing rooms to watch Johann and David mend and dress and primp and make sure our dancers and their costumes were beyond perfection.

I grew up in this theater. I grew up with this family. I have watched, I have played, and I have grown and I have served.

And there has been no greater honor and magic than knowing Maggie Wright.

Our Sugar Plum Fairy.

To watch her dance was to witness perfection. And to know her was to know love of an art, love of the world, and love in general.

She was grace. She was happiness and air on stage and off.

Effortlessly elegant and the smile to win it all.

Once when I was a little girl, tagging along with my mom, Maggie carried me around, balanced on her tutu during a rehearsal and I felt like I was dancing myself.

.... Then she tried to teach me

To be clear) I have two left feet. I am an AWFUL dancer. But Maggie was so patient with me. She held my hands. She let me put my floppy feet on her invaluable feet and taught me the steps. And when I just couldn't get it, she lifted me and balanced me on her tutu and she danced with me whilst humming Tchaikovsky in my ear. I will never forget that moment as long as I live. And when she finally put me down, hugged me and thanked me for the dance, we sat in the costume studio, and she gave me her beautiful banged up rehearsal shoes.

Maggie breathed life into Ballet West. Into Ballet in general. Into dancers (and in my case, not dancers but enthusiasts) But boy did she try with me. Every time I step into the Capitol, Maggie's is the face I see

Her grace, love, dignity, patience, humor, and legacy will never be forgotten

Maggie,

We will love you forever.

I want you to know that I still have the well loved, totally broken in, and a bit dirty pair of point shoes you signed for me that day when I was 7 years old. And I will never forget when you carried me around on stage, and somehow, made me feel like a ballerina too.

I will cherish the shoes always.

And I will cherish you always-- as my one, my only, Sugar Plum

Fairy 💜

I love you Maggie,

Lee Elizabeth Quinney

Lee Quinney - November 01, 2025 at 09:59 PM

MH

“Magnolia”

Marrie Hadfield - October 30, 2025 at 10:02 PM



“Maggie.. I don't believe it's real. You have impacted my life on so many levels. You were my idol as a young 8 year old. You had this force and inexplainable energy when you entered the stage. To this day I still have this memory of you performing Woman 1 in, In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated. It was the first real contemporary ballet I had ever seen and it was a dream role for me to perform ever since. I remember when that dream came true I carried you with me onstage, hoping I could eminent a version of you. As I grew up we got closer, I remember you saying I was a little too spicy at times with my attitude, but you also mentioned how it got me places. I loved our deep talks and how you continued to remind me to prioritize my life outside of ballet and that there is more to it all. Thank you for being a true leader, for being vulnerable, sharing your wisdom, and including everyone you interacted with. My love to your family. Thank you for everything. ❤️❤️”



Chelsea Keefer - September 18, 2025 at 03:23 PM



“Maggie’s turn of phrase “Something is amiss!” is running on repeat in my head. It’s true. We all feel the giant hole Maggie leaves behind because of her effervescence in life. Her laugh will remain with me, her approach to teaching ballet will be shared with my students, and all the precious memories running UBSI with Maggie stored forever in my heart.



Laura Kay Young - September 16, 2025 at 01:55 AM



“I loved our friendship over the years. Thank you Maggie ❤️



Jennie Creer-King - September 12, 2025 at 05:07 AM

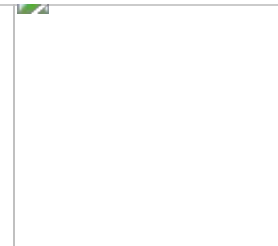


“Dear Dennis,

We were deeply saddened to hear about your loss. Our hearts go out to you and your family. We are sending thoughts and prayers your way.

*Sincerely,
Ben, Michele, Maya and Meena Shih*

Ben Shih - September 11, 2025 at 10:45 PM





“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Utah Cremation Society - September 11, 2025 at 02:53 PM