

Radford University Alumni Magazine  
Title: Radford Enlightens My Life  
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In 2001, I graduated from Radford University with a degree in Theatre. All throughout college, my family thought that I was chasing a pipe dream by deciding to make a living playing with lights and working in the theatre. “Yeah right,” they’d say. Even before I came to Radford in 1997, I knew what I wanted to do --- I wanted to paint the stage with light. Light is a fascinating medium. But lighting design requires passion and a knack for detail. It means analyzing and evaluating the slightest differences in the temperature and color of light. It sounds boring when you have to put it into words, but it’s not. On stage is where the magic happens and painting with light has the ability to change your mood and perception.

Before Radford, I had barely any skill with lighting. I thought it was fun making lights flicker and change colors, and chasing actresses on stage also helped. But it was at Radford where I honed my skills and found my true passion for lighting. I took every lighting design class Radford had to offer by my junior year, yet I wanted more. Begging and pleading with my design professor, Carl Lefko, I was able to do an independent study the spring semester of my last year. I was allowed to design the first musical that Radford had produced in 10 years. It was an amazing experience, one I will never forget.

And, who would have guessed that the one thing I think about every single day came from my least favorite class at Radford? To graduate with a degree in Theatre, as with most degrees, you have to have your core education classes as well as those pesky classes with in your college. I took Acting 101 with Chuck Hayes, and I’ll never forget it. I’ve always said that you will never catch me on stage with an audience in the house. I made that clear on the first day of class. “I am not an actor,” I said. “I just need to pass.” But Chuck instilled in me something that stuck with me and has served me well over the years: “To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late and to be late is to be dead.”

To this day, I can still see Chuck in front of class giving this speech with such passion and force. Kudos Chuck, you scared the shit out of me and I sure as hell won’t forget it anytime soon.

It has been 10 years since I graduated from Radford, and my love for light and theatre is still strong. While I don’t design much as of late, I still am neck deep in the industry I love as the editor of *PLSN* Magazine, sharing a passion for lighting with industry professionals that I learned to appreciate and revere while in the heart of the Blue Ridge. I miss those steps in front of Pridemore.