

Celebration of Life



COZELL
McQueen, Jr.

SUNRISE
January 18, 1962

SUNSET
August 5, 2026

Monday, August 17, 2026
11:00 a.m.

St. Stephen AME Church
501 Red Cross Street
Wilmington, North Carolina 28401

Pastor Robert McKoy, Jr., Officiating



PALLBEARERS

Family & Friends

FLOWER BEARERS

Family & Friends

INTERMENT

Greenlawn Memorial Park

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The McQueen family appreciates every expression of kindness, comfort, and joy through telephone calls, donations, floral tributes, cards, prayers, and smiles. A special thank you to Duke Hospital and the Medical Care Team for providing compassionate care to Cozell throughout his healing journey.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO DUNN FUNERAL HOME

810 West Wilmington Street
Burgaw, North Carolina 28425



OBITUARY



Cozell McQueen, Jr., was born on January 18, 1962, in Toulouse, France, to Cozell McQueen Sr. and Betty Francis McQueen. On August 5, 2026, Cozell McQueen, Jr., was called home to be with his Lord and Savior.

Cozell Jr. was the second of six children, the oldest son, and his father’s namesake. As part of a military family, he lived in several places during his childhood, including Bennettsville, South Carolina; Toulouse, France; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina; and eventually Bennettsville, South Carolina again.

Cozell Jr., Vincent, and Beverley—born within a year of one another—shared an especially close bond. When Cozell Jr. was ten years old, he and his closest siblings were baptized together in a lake across from their church in South Carolina. Cozell Jr.’s mother remembered him emerging from the water and saying, “Lord, thank you for saving my soul!” Cozell Jr., had a beautiful voice and used this musical talent as a singer in the youth choir.

Faith and family were central to the McQueens, so it is no surprise that Cozell Jr. and his brother Vincent developed a special bond through sports. Cozell Sr. taught them to catch a football on Sundays after watching games together. While attending vocational school, he proudly earned the Golden Hammer Award, a recognition for outstanding craftsmanship, skill, and dedication in vocational training. Cozell Jr. was always masterful with his hands; being left-handed came naturally to him, and it is a trait that helped distinguish him throughout his life. Basketball quickly became Cozell Jr.’s greatest passion. Cozell Jr. and Vincent played from sunup to sundown— “down west” -- on the backyard goal their father built, and later in the city league. Their first organized basketball experience came at East Side Junior High, where Cozell Jr.’s exceptional ability began drawing attention. Standing nearly seven feet tall, Cozell Jr. combined his size with agility, athleticism, defensive strength, and dominant rebounding to help lead his high school varsity basketball team to the state finals every year. His senior season was especially memorable, as his team faced Xavier McDaniel and Tyrone Corbin—both future NBA players—in a hard-fought state final, falling short by just five points.

Cozell Jr. always had a team-first mindset and sincerely believed, “We all win, or we all lose.” He used his gifts and talents to make his teammates better while also keeping them entertained. In the summer of 1981, he moved to Raleigh to attend North Carolina State University to play for Coach Jim Valvano’s Wolfpack. He was part of a first-year class that included Walter “Dinky” Proctor, Terry Gannon, Mike Warren, and Lorenzo Charles. Cozell and Lorenzo became roommates, teammates, and best friends...affectionately known as “Co and Lo.” On the court, Cozell was fearless, physical and fiercely competitive, impacting the game without ever needing the ball in his hands; off the court, he was a gentle giant who never seemed to meet a stranger, possessing an infectious laugh and personality every bit as large as his frame.

During his sophomore season, Cozell and his Wolfpack teammates embarked upon the improbable journey that would forever become part of college basketball history. When Lorenzo Charles caught Dereck Whittenburg’s desperation shot and dunked it through the basket as time expired on April 4, 1983, NC State became National Champions and the “Cardiac Pack” became immortal.

In August 1983, just months after the Cardiac Pack buzzer beater, Cozell laid eyes on MisChella McKoy for the first time outside of Crazy Zack’s in Raleigh. With several teammates nearby, Cozell enlisted Lorenzo and others to help learn her name and get her attention. Eventually, Cozell decided to approach her himself. By September, Cozell and MisChella were dating; months later they were engaged. Their original plan was for an April 1986 wedding; basketball, however, had other plans, so they married on August 2, 1985, moving immediately thereafter to begin his professional career with the Cacaolat Granollers near Barcelona, Spain.

Cozell and MisChella’s adventurous life together spanned the United States and the world. Cozell played in Spain, before returning to the United States and continuing his career in the Continental Basketball Association. Over the next decade, basketball took Cozell and his family from Wisconsin and Kansas City to La Crosse, Wisconsin, and eventually to the National Basketball Association with the Detroit Pistons. It also carried him overseas again, where he played professionally in France, Italy, and Spain, including successful stops in Tours, Naples, Milan, Zaragoza, and Venice.

During those years, he was simultaneously expanding his professional legacy and building a private legacy of his own: Cozell McQueen, III, was born in March 1987, Chaz McQueen in August 1988, and Chyna McQueen in May 1992. For all the places basketball took him and all the uniforms he wore, Cozell’s greatest role would become that of husband and father, and later, father-in-law and grandfather. After a professional career that spanned more than a decade, Cozell eventually stepped away from playing the game; however, that did not mean stepping away from ambition. Cozell was an entrepreneur at heart, a man who was willing to dream big, take chances, and create opportunities for himself and others. Among his ventures was his ownership of the Raleigh Cougars of the United States Basketball League from 1997 through 1999. The team played its home games at Dorton Arena and gave professional opportunities to players while bringing another chapter of professional basketball to the city Cozell had come to call home.

His entrepreneurial spirit also led him beyond basketball. In 1999, he helped bring the Legends of Boxing to Fayetteville, North Carolina, an ambitious professional boxing event featuring former heavyweight champions. Over the years, Cozell pursued numerous ventures, but the common thread was his willingness to imagine something, believe in it, and then try to make it happen.

That same desire to create opportunity was matched by a desire to give back. Through the Cozell McQueen Family Foundation, Cozell sought to help people and families in need by creating opportunities, giving of his time, and lending his name. He believed helping others was the right thing to do.

For all the attention that came with being a national champion, Cozell remained remarkably approachable. He would graciously stop for photographs, sign autographs, talk basketball with Wolfpack fans, and carry on conversations with people he had only just met. He never seemed to forget that the memories people had of meeting him mattered.

His faith was an essential part of the man he was. Cozell was a longtime member of Wake Chapel Church, where he participated in the Men’s Ministry and especially enjoyed attending the church’s men’s conferences. Wake Chapel Church is intricately woven into the fabric of the McQueen family; in fact, Cozell took pride in the fact that both of his sons eventually married women who shared that church connection.

Through all of life’s chapters, Cozell never lost his connection to NC State or to the brothers with whom he had made history. The 1983 championship team has had a lasting bond, inducted together into the NC State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2019.

More than four decades after Cozell stood in the paint against some of the greatest players in college basketball history, he faced the greatest opponent of his life when he was diagnosed with glioblastoma. And, true to form, Cozell fought.

The same man who had never been afraid to battle Ralph Sampson for a rebound, defend Hakeem Olajuwon at the rim, or stand his ground against someone bigger, faster, or more celebrated than himself, approached his final challenge with the toughness that had defined so much of his life. He fought alongside MisChella, his wife of more than 40 years, and was surrounded by his greatest accomplishment —his children and grandchildren.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife, Reverend MisChella McKoy McQueen; his children and their spouses, Cozell (Raven) McQueen III, Chaz (Dr. Ashley) McQueen, and Dr. Chyna McQueen-Lane (Chris); Father-in-law, Robert McKoy Sr; his grandchildren, Naomi, Taylor, Emilio, Ella, Chris II. and Cary; his siblings, Helen McQueen of Bennettsville, South Carolina, Beverly (Jeffrey) McQueen Muse and her husband of Dover, Delaware, Desi McQueen of Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Philip McQueen of Bennettsville, South Carolina; his in-laws, L’Tonya (Vern) Messick, Robert (ShaRon) McKoy Jr., and Rodney McKoy; along with host of nieces and nephews, his extended family, friends, former teammates, fans, and the countless people whose lives he touched.

Cozell McQueen, Jr., has always been a multi-faceted phenomenon: there was the fearless and ferocious 6-foot-11 center, the National Collegiate Conference Champion who defended the paint, controlled the glass, and helped one of the greatest underdogs in sports history shock the world. And there was the gentle giant, the man with the unmistakable laugh and enormous heart who loved his wife, adored his children and grandchildren, cherished his friends, cared about his community, and placed his faith in God.

Those who knew and loved him understood that his greatest legacy was the life he built after the final buzzer: the family he built, the people he loved, the community he helped, and the faith that carried him home.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional..... Pastor Shelton Miles

Hymn of Celebration.....*Jesus Is Real*

Prayer of Comfort Bishop J. Jasper Wilkins, II

Chant *"Thank You Lord"*

Scripture Readings:

Old Testament Reverend ShaRon McKoy

New Testament Presiding Elder Teresa Holmes

Hymn *"Hold to God’s Unchanging Hands"*

Acknowledgements..... Alesia G. O’Neal

Reflections *Two Minutes Each, Please*

Church Pastor Sharon Nesbit

Friend..... Tony Knoxx

Teammate Nate McMilian

Family Cozell “Tre” McQueen III

Family Chaz McQueen

Famly Dr. Chyna McQueen-Lane

Obituary (to be read silently) Goodness of God

Song of Inspiration..... *"I Trust in God"*

Words of Comfort Reverend MisChella McKoy McQueen

Mortician In Charge

Recessional *"He’ll Welcome Me" / "When We All Get to Heaven"*