



## 2022 Nomination Form

Application deadline: Friday, February 25 by 5 p.m.

DELIVER TO: City Hall, 101 N. Main St., Winston-Salem,  
Marketing & Communications Department, Suite 336

OR MAIL TO: City of Winston-Salem,  
Marketing & Communications  
Department  
P.O. Box 2511  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Nominee's Stage Name: Howell Binkley Given Name: Howell Bagby Binkley

Address at Time of Death: 3007 Ocean Drive, Emerald Isle State: NC

Dates of Residency: 2020 to: 2020 (ex: 2000-2010)

Category:  Music  Visual Arts  Dance  Motion Pictures

Theater  Television  Writing  Radio

### Criteria:

- The nominee(s) exhibited sustained excellence in his or her field for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made distinguished contributions to the community and civic-oriented participation.
- The nominee(s) is deceased (must provide copy of death certificate or obituary).
- The nominee(s) was a resident of Winston-Salem for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made a significant contribution to the arts or entertainment industry in one or more of the following areas: music, dance, theater, writing, visual arts, motion pictures, television, or radio. A "significant" contribution would be iconic in terms of renown and the impact on the artistic disciplines or popular culture.

### Application to Include:

- Attach nominee's performance/accomplishment biography which must include at least 5 years of accomplishments in the arts, culture, or entertainment field.
- Attach a list of nominee's civic/community involvement.
- Attach a copy of nominee's death certificate or obituary.

Sponsor Name: Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County

Address: 251 N Spruce Street

City: Winston-Salem State: NC Zip Code: 27101

Email: khall@intothearts.org

Phone: Home: n/a Cell: 336-749-0720

Signature: Katherine E. Hall Date: 2/3/2022

# Howell Bagby Binkley

July 25, 1956 ~ August 14, 2020 (age 64)



It is with a heavy heart that we announce Mr. Howell Bagby Binkley, 64, of Emerald Isle, NC and New York City, passed away Friday, August 14, 2020, after an heroic 3-year battle with lung cancer. He was born in Forsyth County on July 25, 1956 to the late (Lt. Ret.) John E. Binkley, Jr. and Hattie Louise Binkley, nee Bagby.

Growing up in Winston-Salem, NC, Howell graduated from Richard J. Reynolds High School in 1974. He was the school mascot and worked at the Little Theatre of Winston-Salem. After high school, he attended East Carolina University before moving to New York City to pursue his dream of working in theatre. He was a member of Home Moravian Church and always enjoyed coming back to visit and to attend a Christmas Eve Lovefeast Service.

Howell was a Theatrical Lighting Designer for hundreds of productions. His 52 Broadway shows included: *Hamilton*, *Jersey Boys*, *Come From Away*, *Ain't Too Proud*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and so many more. During his fascinating career, he was nominated for nine Tony awards of which he won two (*Hamilton* and *Jersey Boys*). He was a two-time recipient of the British Laurence Olivier award (*Hamilton* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*). His lighting design of *Kiss of the Spider Woman* also garnered a Canadian Dora Mavor Moore award.

Howell was a two-time Henry Hewes Design award winner for his work on *Hamilton* and *Jersey Boys*. He was also a five-time Helen Hayes award recipient and earned the NAACP award for the musical, *Memphis*.

He received Tony nominations for his lighting design of *Ain't Too Proud*, *Come From Away*, *After Midnight*, the recent revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, the 2009 revival of *West Side Story*, *In the Heights*, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

In addition to his work in the theatre, Howell was the co-founder and resident lighting designer for Parsons Dance.

His work on the recent Disney+ release of *Hamilton*, filmed at the Richard Rodgers Theatre, immortalizes his masterful artistry.

Howell was adored by many and will be missed by all.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Joyce Storey; beautiful daughter, Zoë King; treasured brother, (Col. Ret. U.S. Army) John Binkley and sister-in-law, Vicki, nee Haynie; as well as many Binkley and Bagby cousins.

Our heartfelt thanks to Howell's doctors, nurses, and support staff at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and Onslow Memorial Hospital, NC for their dedicated and compassionate care and to all other health care workers who contributed to Howell's care during this long journey.

A graveside service will be conducted at 2:00 PM EDT Thursday, August 20, 2020, at Salem Moravian Graveyard, God's Acre, Winston-Salem, officiated by the Rev. Ginny Tobiassen and live streamed at <http://howellbinkley.com/>

Donations may be made to *Parsons Dance*, 229 West 42nd Street, Suite 800, NY, NY 10036, [www.parsonsdance.org](http://www.parsonsdance.org) or a charity of your choice.

Online condolences may be made at [www.hayworth-miller.com](http://www.hayworth-miller.com).

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Donations may be made to:

**Parsons Dance**

229 West 42nd Street, Suite 800, New York NY 10036

**Web:** <http://www.parsonsdance.org> (<http://www.parsonsdance.org>)

The company that Howell co-founded.

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## Howell Binkley, Who Sculpted Broadway Hits in Light, Dies at 64

An in-demand lighting designer, he won Tony Awards for “Hamilton” and “Jersey Boys.”



By Neil Genzlinger

Sept. 2, 2020

Most audience members at shows that Howell Binkley worked on, whether Broadway smashes like “Hamilton” or dance performances in small spaces, probably never gave a thought to his contributions. That’s the way Mr. Binkley, one of the most sought-after lighting designers in the business, preferred it.

“I always go back to my roots — simplicity, clarity, showing the text,” he once said. “Not putting on a ridiculous light show. Lighting is to expand the words and music and dance, not distract from it.”

Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of “Hamilton,” for which Mr. Binkley won one of his two Tony Awards, first experienced Mr. Binkley’s artistry on his earlier hit, “In the Heights,” which made it to Broadway in 2008.

“I peppered the show with challenges,” Mr. Miranda said by email, “songs titled ‘Sunrise’ and ‘When the Sun Goes Down.’ The first act ended with a citywide blackout and the company singing, ‘Look at the fireworks.’ Howell never batted an eye, evoking all these natural phenomena with subtlety, allowing the audience’s suspension of disbelief to take them the rest of the way.”

Mr. Binkley died on Aug. 14 in Jacksonville, N.C. He was 64.

His wife, Joyce Storey, said the cause was lung cancer.

Mr. Binkley, who had residences in Emerald Isle, N.C., and East Harlem, had more than 50 Broadway credits and was nominated for the lighting design Tony nine times. He won for “Jersey Boys,” which opened in 2005, in addition to “Hamilton” a decade later.



From left, Daniel Reichard, John Lloyd Young, Christian Hoff and J. Robert Spencer in 2005 in “Jersey Boys,” for which Mr. Binkley won his first Tony. Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Often since his first Broadway credit in 1993, four or five Broadway shows he designed were running simultaneously. He also worked extensively in regional theaters and in dance, including a decades-long collaboration with his friend David Parsons, the choreographer.

Modern Broadway lighting booths are full of high-tech gadgetry, but what Mr. Binkley helped Mr. Parsons achieve with his "Caught" almost 40 years ago, using a strobe to make a lone dancer seem to float and fly against a black background, is legendary in the dance world for its searing, minimalist beauty.

In a 2015 interview with the website Live Design, Mr. Binkley expressed pride at how such minimal elements produced such an impact. "Nearly impossible, yes? And yet it is known as one of the premier dance works in the world," he said.

Caught - Excerpts



That ability to realize daunting visions made Mr. Binkley a favorite of top stage directors, including Harold Prince and Des McAnuff. As Mr. Miranda put it, "There was no challenge Howell couldn't meet with light."

Howell Bagby Binkley was born on July 25, 1956, in Winston-Salem, N.C. His father, John Jr., was an engineer for the Western Electric Company, and his mother, Hattie Louise (Bagby) Binkley, worked at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem.

His interest in the backstage side of theater, and lighting design in particular, developed early. By eighth grade he was spending weekends helping to load and unload trucks for productions at Reynolds Auditorium in Winston-Salem, and in high school he participated in summer theater camps at the North Carolina School of the Arts.

In 1974 he enrolled at East Carolina University, where students studying lighting design, as he was, were paired with student choreographers, experience he found valuable. He took a break from college to do tech work for two years at Opryland in Nashville, then returned to the university, where John Houseman and Margot Harley's theater troupe, the Acting Company, had arrived for a residency.

That led to a summer internship for \$35 a week at the company's site in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., where new shows were rehearsed. Mr. Binkley never did finish college, eventually taking a full-time job with the Acting Company.

After three years there he joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company, hoping to learn from its esteemed lighting designer, Jennifer Tipton. She encouraged him to strike out on his own, and in 1985 he and David Parsons, who was also at Paul Taylor, founded Parsons Dance, with Mr. Binkley doing the lighting designs.

Resources are always sparse for a start-up, and Mr. Binkley learned to do a lot with a little, something he came to see as vital.

“I truly believe that if a lighting designer is able to sculpt a piece with passion, imagination and a limited amount of technology, the world will open to her or him,” he said.

He had ample opportunity to test that creed as the young dance company toured extensively both in the United States and abroad, performing in all sorts of spaces in the days before light boards were computer controlled.

“We loved the hardship,” Mr. Parsons said in a phone interview. “We would clean theaters if they were too dirty. Howell was up on ladders — it was all manual, all gels.”

Mr. Binkley often equated the art of lighting a dance performance to sculpture.

“You are sculpting the body from all sides in order to give definition to the body as it turns, as it’s lifted, as it rolls on the ground,” he told *The Winston-Salem Journal* in 2012. “I try in my lighting of plays and musicals to use that same carving tool.”

His big break in theater came after he did the lighting for a gala on Theater Row in Manhattan. Harold Prince attended and apparently liked what he saw.

He asked Mr. Binkley to be the lighting director on a Broadway musical he was preparing: “*Kiss of the Spider Woman*.” The show ran for more than two years and earned Mr. Binkley the first of his Tony nominations. It also earned him the admiration of Mr. Prince, who used him on other shows, including “*Parade*” in 1998 and “*LoveMusik*” in 2007.

Mr. Binkley’s second Broadway credit was the 1994 production of “*Grease*.” By then his work had caught the attention of another top director, Mr. McAnuff, who recruited him for his revival of “*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*” (1995) and used him repeatedly thereafter, including on “*Jersey Boys*.” That musical ran for more than 16 years, one of the longest runs in Broadway history.

Among Mr. Binkley’s most recent Broadway credits were “*Come From Away*,” “*A Bronx Tale: The Musical*” and “*Summer*.”

Mr. Binkley’s marriage to Linda Kent in 1988 ended in divorce. In addition to Ms. Storey, whom he married in 2014, he is survived by a daughter, Zoë King, from a relationship with Anne King; and a brother, John.



From left, Anthony Ramos, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Daveed Diggs and Okieriete Onaodowan in "Hamilton" in 2015. "There was no challenge Howell couldn't meet with light," Mr. Miranda said. Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Mr. Binkley often said he particularly enjoyed the collaborative nature of dance and theater. Mr. Miranda recalled his calming, veteran presence on "In the Heights," whose creative team was relatively youthful — Mr. Miranda himself was still in his 20s at the time.

"I'd gravitate toward his tech table, where he kept a small bowl of assorted chocolates," Mr. Miranda said. "He caught me picking out the peanut butter cups on the first day, a huge grin on his face. On the second day, I found another bowl of candy on his table: this one only full of peanut butter cups, just for me."

Neil Genzlinger is a writer for the Obituaries Desk. Previously he was a television, film and theater critic. @genznyt • Facebook

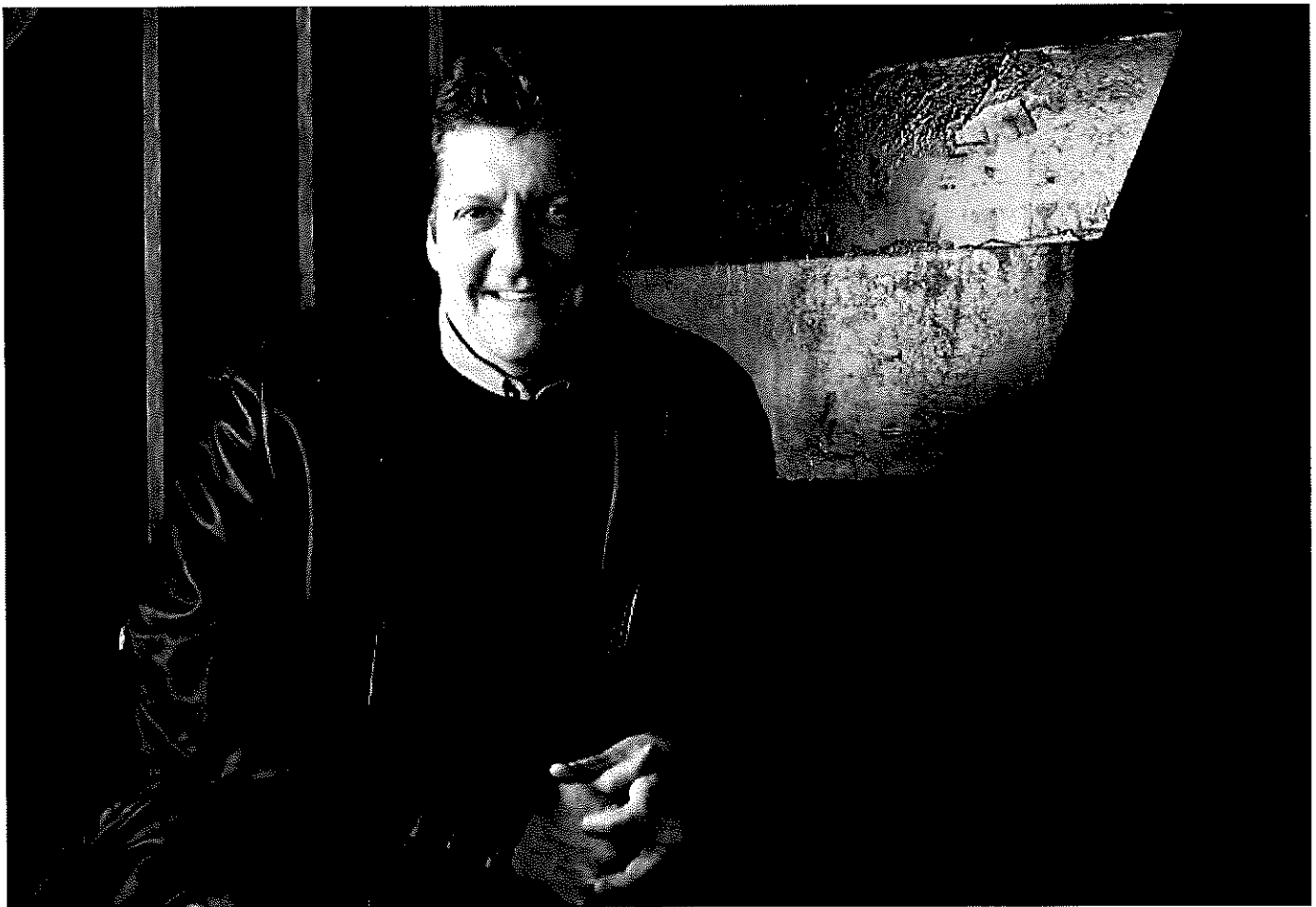
A version of this article appears in print on , Section B, Page 12 of the New York edition with the headline: Howell Binkley, 64, Lighting Designer Behind 'Hamilton' and 'Jersey Boys'

[https://journalnow.com/relishnow/the\\_arts/howell-binkley-winston-salem-native-designing-his-way-into-the-spotlight/article\\_49b177d2-4daf-5d95-9961-b8904d54e890.html](https://journalnow.com/relishnow/the_arts/howell-binkley-winston-salem-native-designing-his-way-into-the-spotlight/article_49b177d2-4daf-5d95-9961-b8904d54e890.html)

## **Howell Binkley, Winston-Salem native, designing his way into the spotlight**

By Lynn Felder Winston-Salem Journal  
Oct 9, 2016

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Howell Binkley, a Winston-Salem native, is at the top of his field designing the lighting for Broadway musicals.

Courtesy Howell Binkley

By Lynn Felder Winston-Salem Journal



When Howell Binkley was a student at Reynolds High School, he was dazzled by the road shows that played there on a regular basis: symphonies, dance companies and rock stars.

“I was working on the crew at Reynolds that did the load-ins. That’s where I got my start,” Binkley said. “I was fascinated as a young kid to see how a show was mounted. This big truck would pull in, and we’d unload all the sets and lights and instruments and costumes.

“It was so organized, so orchestrated. They would do this great show, and the next day the theater would be dark again. I’d just think, ‘When’s the next one coming?’ At that early age, I started getting the bug.”

Now he’s the one doing the dazzling.

Binkley, 60, won a Tony Award last year for his lighting design of the musical “Hamilton.”

“It was an honor to be voted on by your peers,” he said. “There was some heavy competition. I was pleased and honored. ‘Hamilton’ has been such a great project for us all. I’m happy to see it be so successful, not only for the creators but also for the audiences.”

He mounted a production of “Hamilton” in Chicago in September.

“It was a thrill to take the show and put it in Chicago,” he said. “It’s in a beautiful city and a beautiful theater. The tickets are selling fantastic. It’s got a great cast.”

Next year, he will design a “cut-down version” of the lighting for a national tour of the show.

“Jersey Boys,” the show he won his first Tony for in 2006, closed on Broadway on Jan. 15 after an 11½-year run.

“It’s the 12th longest running show in history,” he said. “It was still selling tickets but not making quite enough money. The tour is still out there and kicking.”

Binkley did the lighting design for “A Bronx Tale,” directed by Robert De Niro and Jerry Zaks, which opened on Broadway Dec. 1.

He designed the lighting for “Come From Away,” which will open on Broadway in previews Feb. 18. It’s a musical about the re-routing of the American Airline flights to Gander, Newfoundland, on 9/11. And he’s is already working on shows for 2018.

“He’s very busy,” said Phyllis Dunning, 83, Binkley’s 10th-grade teacher at Atkins and later at Reynolds.

Norman Coates, director of lighting in Design and Production School at UNC School of the Arts, described Binkley’s technique.

“There’s a dynamic use of color, and he cuts through that color with a purity of white light,” Coates said. “The dynamic of being able to create the motion in light that matches the motion in the music and dance could be what makes his work so successful.

“In a lot of ways, he epitomizes the current state of lighting design on Broadway.”

## **Life and work**

Binkley lives in New York in East Harlem. He does a lot of work in New York, and travels a lot for work as well. “To mount a new show, I’m usually in Chicago, Washington, D.C. or Boston for four to five weeks. We’re in tech for a good two weeks, previews for three or four weeks.

“Once the show opens, I’m done, and there’s a whole staff that maintains a show and runs it.”

He was on a short break when I spoke to him by phone from his beach house in Emerald Isle. He was walking on the beach, working on the house, playing golf, and hanging out with Joyce Storey and Hazel, a 150-pound, 11-year-old Saint Bernard. Binkley said that Hazel has a degree in politics from Paw U.

He has a daughter, Zoe, who graduated from Bryn Mawr last year and lives in Philadelphia.

Even at the beach, he was thinking about the shows that he's working on simultaneously.

"You've got to stay in touch with everybody," he said. "I'll work a little in the morning, then play a little bit. Hazel loves it here, and she loves it in New York."

Then, he drove back to New York before turning around and flying to Winston-Salem to teach a class in the Design and Production Department at UNC School of the Arts.

"I come back once or twice a year. My associate, Ryan O'Garra, and I will take turns teaching the class for a half-semester while Norman (Coates) takes a break," Binkley said. O'Garra is a UNCSA alumnus. As associate, he drafts all the lighting plots and rigs that will be handed over to the theater.

UNCSA frequently brings in guest artists to work with the students. Binkley has taught at the school twice before.

"There are multiple benefits to the students," Coates said. "It gives them a contact with somebody who has high-profile success. They learn that he's just a regular person, another human being. They get to see another process and a current look at a Broadway design team.

"Everybody has their own process. The students get to learn Howell's process, which helps them figure out their own process."

Designing lights for a Broadway show is done in phases, Binkley said.

“In phase one, you get the job and you go through a series of meetings with the set designer and the director,” he said. The show is formatted and scenes planned out. The designers have to learn the show and then start executing the designs. “It could be a year before a show goes into production in a theater.

“In phase two, you get approval and start drafting the design, but that can’t be done until all the sets and scenery are approved.”

In phase three, the designers put the light plot with the scenery and start doing tech, which means hanging the lights and getting everything in place.”

Binkley started working on “Come From Away” three years ago.

“It opened in San Diego in a small theater and then moved up to Seattle,” he said. “In D.C., it had a 12-week, sold-out run, and it sold out at the Royal Alexander Theatre in Toronto. It can take a while to build up investors and secure a Broadway theater.”

Binkley said that technology introduced in 1986 dramatically changed the lighting designer and technician’s job.

“In the beginning, we had fixtures that were fixed,” he said. “We hung them. We focused them. They had one purpose — to light a chair, for example. Now, we have an automated fixture that we hang, and it’s run by a computer. We can focus it on the chair, on the wall, on the audience.

“Automated lighting has become a huge part of the lighting rig that we use. They are very reliable. It’s been a major change not only in lighting but also in scenery and in sound. ... There are not a lot of guys pulling ropes, and actors wear wireless mics.”

## **Long, winding road**

Long before Binkley was a successful Broadway lighting designer, he was the Demon mascot at Reynolds High School.

“He was acting then,” Dunning said. “He was my student when he was about 15 and was a 10th grader at Atkins that first year of total integration. I always encouraged students to go to fine-arts events: symphony, opera, theater. Any time I mentioned going to something, Howell’s hand went up first. He said it was because ‘You said we could get extra credit.’ But, really, he always wanted to go.

“That year, the Little Theatre (of Winston-Salem, now Twin City Stage) did acting workshops for teenagers. I told him to go.”

“I went to a summer session at UNCSCA and learned a little bit of everything,” Binkley said. “Acting, directing, designing — and I had a blast. It gave me a great education about theater — and I was doing acting in a little drama club.

“In my heart of hearts, I had a dream of being an architect. N.C. State had the best architecture school in the state, but I didn’t get in. I got turned down at every major school in the state. I got turned down by the school of the arts.

“A lot of my friends said, ‘If you can’t go to college, go to East Carolina University.’

“It got me out of Winston-Salem.”

His interest in the backstage part of theater that had been sparked by those road shows at Reynolds resurfaced at ECU.

He spent 1½ years in the theater department at ECU, then moved to Nashville for a couple of years to do the lighting at Opryland USA, an amusement park in suburban Nashville. It closed in 1997.

Shortly after he returned to school, he met the cast and crew of the John Houseman Acting Company when they came to ECU on tour. Houseman, probably best known as Prof. Kingsley in the TV show and film “Paper Chase,” also ran the drama division at the Julliard School and founded The Acting Company in 1972 with members of the first graduating class, including Kevin Kline and Patti LuPone.

“It was a very prominent touring company,” Binkley said. “They did shows in repertory. You’d hire the company, and they would present three shows.

“I got to know the people in the company, and they said, ‘Send us your resume.’”

He was hired to be the lighting supervisor. “That was my open door to New York,” he said. He moved to New York before graduating.

In 1992, Binkley got his big break to design a Broadway show, “Kiss of the Spider Woman,” directed by Hal Prince. He was nominated for a Tony and won a Laurence Olivier Award in 1993 for best lighting design in the London production.

Since then, he has worked steadily on Broadway productions including “Avenue Q,” “The Full Monty,” “In the Heights” and “After Midnight,” and has received nominations or awards almost annually. He co-founded Parsons Dance, based in New York, with David Parsons in 1985 and, as its resident lighting designer, has done more than 60 productions. He has also worked with the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago.

He doesn’t apply for jobs. They come to him.

“I am called by the director,” he said. “I have a core of directors who I work with, and when they get a show they will call me first.

“There are some shows that come up with directors who want me that I haven’t worked with before, and I will have a sit-down meeting with them.”

Besides being his teacher, Dunning was a friend of Binkley’s late parents and has received friend-of-the-family benefits for years.

“Whatever he was involved with, he always had tickets for my husband and me,” Dunning said. “All the years that he’s been in New York, he as been wonderful to invite me to all his Broadway openings and the Tony Awards.”

She was in the audience the night he won Tonys for “Jersey Boys” and for “Hamilton.”

“It’s electric,” Dunning said. “The broadcast starts at 8, but the Tony Awards start at 7. There is great entertainment. ... It’s such an exciting night — and the party after. The ‘Hamilton’ party was at Tavern on the Green (a famous glass-walled restaurant in Central Park). It looked great that night — inside and outside — all the music and the dancing and the food.

“He’s an amazing young man, so talented.”

And, apparently, a good friend to have. It’s always best to have the guy weilding the spotlight in your corner.

Howell Binkley

ANDREW DYE

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**lfelder@wsjournal.com** (336) 727-7298

# Howell Binkley

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**Howell Binkley** (July 25, 1956 – August 14, 2020)<sup>[1]</sup> was a professional lighting designer in New York City. He received the Tony Award for Best Lighting Design in a Musical for *Jersey Boys* in 2006, and again in 2016 for *Hamilton*. He died due to lung cancer on August 14, 2020.<sup>[2]</sup>

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## Career

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Binkley attended East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina where he began his career working with dance programs.<sup>[3]</sup>

In 1985, he moved to New York City where he co-founded the Parsons Dance Company with David Parsons. Binkley then went on to make his Broadway debut as designer for *Kiss of the Spider Woman* in 1993, which earned him his first ever Tony nomination. From this success he went on to design and light a plethora of major Broadway shows. In total, he designed 52 shows for Broadway and was nominated for a Tony Award nine times.<sup>[4]</sup> Over the course of his work in Broadway, he became a frequent collaborator with Hal Prince and director Des McAnuff.

In addition to his work in New York City, Binkley worked across America, including national tours of *Applause* in 1996; *tick, tick...BOOM!* in 2003; and *Flashdance* in 2012. Alongside this, he worked at regional theaters such as La Jolla Playhouse, Shakespeare Theatre DC, Old Globe Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, The Goodman Theatre, and Hartford Stage.<sup>[3][5]</sup>

Binkley was well known for his use of saturated color, accompanied by white or slightly cool highlights. He frequently used smoke or haze to draw attention to his use of angle. His designs are partly based upon Craig Miller and Tom Skelton's use of cross focussing to make diamond effects.

## Awards and nominations

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Year	Production	Award	Category	Outcome
1993	<i>Kiss of the Spider Woman</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design	Nominated
		Olivier Award	Best Lighting Design	Won
1998	<i>Parade</i>	Drama Desk Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Nominated
2000	<i>The Full Monty</i>	Drama Desk Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Nominated
2003	<i>Radiant Baby</i>	Lucille Lortel Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Nominated
2005	<i>Jersey Boys</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Won
2007	<i>LoveMusik</i>	Drama Desk Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Won
2008	<i>In The Heights</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Nominated
2009	<i>West Side Story</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design	Nominated
2011	<i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Nominated
2014	<i>After Midnight</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Nominated
2015	<i>Hamilton</i>	Lucille Lortel Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Won
		Drama Desk Award	Outstanding Lighting Design	Nominated
		Hewes Design Award	Lighting Design	Won
2016		Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Won
2017	<i>Come From Away</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Nominated
2018	<i>Hamilton</i>	Olivier Award	Best Lighting Design	Won
2019	<i>Ain't Too Proud</i>	Tony Award	Best Lighting Design of a Musical	Nominated

## References

1. Genzlinger, Neil (2 September 2020). "Howell Binkley, Who Sculpted Broadway Hits in Light, Dies at 64" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/02/theater/howell-binkley-dead.html>). *The New York Times*.
2. "Tony Award-Winning Lighting Designer Howell Binkley Has Passed Away" (<https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Tony-Award-Winning-Lighting-Designer-Howell-Binkley-Has-Passed-Away-20200814>). Retrieved 2020-08-14.
3. Eddy, Kathleen. Simply Howell Binkley ([http://livedesignonline.com/mag/lighting\\_simply\\_howell\\_binkley/](http://livedesignonline.com/mag/lighting_simply_howell_binkley/)) livedesignonline.com, Feb 1, 2004
4. "Remembering Howell Binkley" (<https://www.ald.org.uk/news/243983/remembering-howell-binkley>). *The Association of Lighting Designers*. 2020-08-15. Retrieved 2020-08-16.
5. Credits as of November 2006 ([http://americantheatrewing.org/biography/detail/howell\\_binkley](http://americantheatrewing.org/biography/detail/howell_binkley)) American Theatre Wing

## External links

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- [Howell Binkley \(https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/25554\)](https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/25554) at the [Internet Broadway Database](#)
- [Internet Off-Broadway Database profile \(http://www.lortel.org/lla\\_archive/index.cfm?search\\_by=people&first=Howell&middle=&last=Binkley\)](http://www.lortel.org/lla_archive/index.cfm?search_by=people&first=Howell&middle=&last=Binkley)
- [London Theatre Database profile \(https://web.archive.org/web/20080205144708/http://www.ltdb.co.uk/node/18322\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20080205144708/http://www.ltdb.co.uk/node/18322)
- [American Theatre Wing's Working in the Theatre Episode on Lighting Design \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqMYsjHU5rU&t=1s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqMYsjHU5rU&t=1s)

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## News Services



*Howell Binkley was an ECU alumnus and Tony Award winning lighting designer (Photos by Rhett Butler)*

# LEGACY OF LIGHT

## Broadway lighting designer Howell Binkley's posters, Tony nomination letters given to ECU

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East Carolina University alumnus Howell Binkley earned a reputation on Broadway as the lighting master behind shows including "Jersey Boys," "In the Heights" and the blockbuster "Hamilton." But he was even more well known for his love of life.

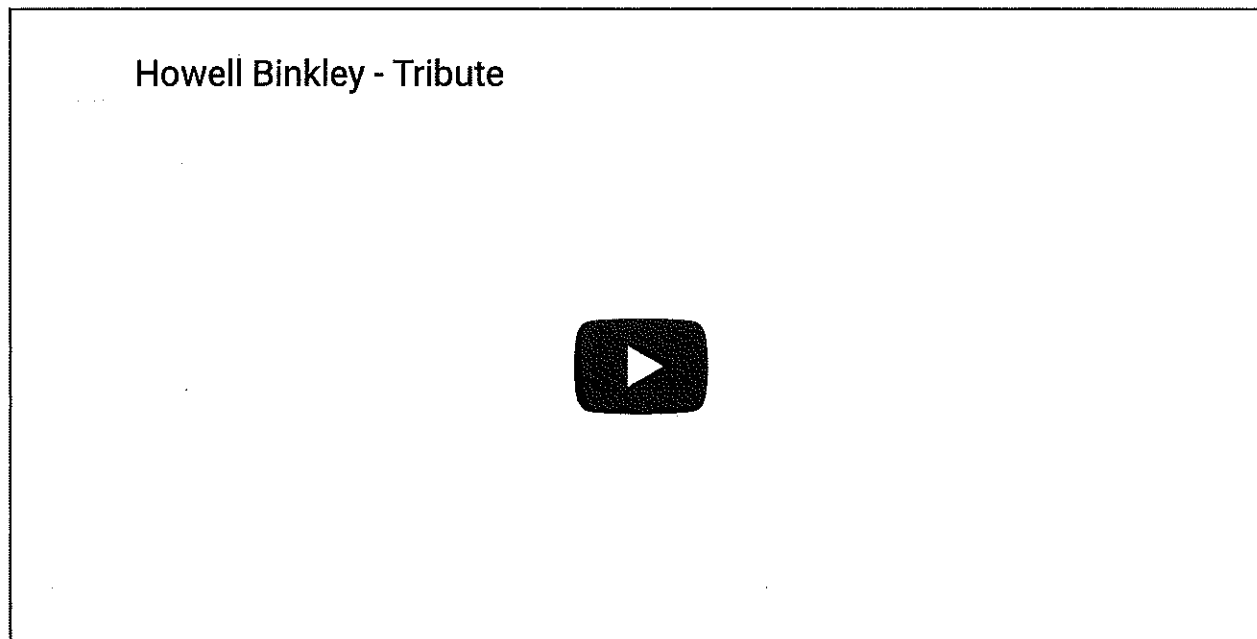
"He had no limits on his imagination or enthusiasm. I think one of the reasons people were so drawn to him was his joie de vivre," said his wife, Joyce Storey. Binkley died of lung cancer in August 2020, at age 64.

His last work before he died was for “Fly,” a play based on the tale of Peter Pan. It was fitting, Storey said, because Binkley walked through the world as if sprinkled with pixie dust — he brought a childlike joy to his work that was magical.

Now, ECU’s School of Theatre and Dance has pieces of Binkley’s magic on display in the form of his nine Tony nomination letters and posters from his Broadway plays. The posters are framed and hung in the hallway of McGinnis Theatre. The hallway has a red carpet lit by a double row of professional lights and a gobo (a partial screen used in front of a spotlight to project a shape) that was named after Binkley by Rosco Laboratories Incorporated. The Tony letters are hung in the school’s Roulston Room.

“As an alumnus, Howell represents the talent that we have here and the tradition of excellence. We are extremely grateful for this generous donation and proud to house these precious documents that are a testament to Howell’s success in the field,” said Jayme Host, director of the School of Theatre and Dance.

Storey donated the documents as well as other trophies and memorabilia because she knew ECU would treasure them.



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*(Tribute video from Hamilton cast remembering Howell)*

“It’s so appropriate to Howell. He would be thrilled. He loved ECU,” she said. “My greatest hope is that it will inspire students to strive to be all they can be. That they walk down that hallway and say, ‘If he can do it, I can do it.’”

Binkley grew up in Winston-Salem, where he participated in both high school and community theater. He went to ECU to pursue a degree in architecture and got involved in the theater program. His mentors at ECU encouraged him to focus on a specific area of theater, and Binkley chose lighting. He studied at ECU until 1977 but left before graduating to work in New York.

His first Broadway show was "Kiss of the Spider Woman" in 1992, for which he earned his first Tony nomination. In total, Binkley designed lighting for 52 Broadway shows. He won Tony awards for "Jersey Boys," which opened in 2005, and "Hamilton" a decade later. In addition, he founded Parsons Dance Company with choreographer David Parsons that toured all over the world.

Before "Hamilton," he worked with the show's creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda on "In the Heights," Miranda's Broadway debut, which recently adapted into a movie. In a New York Times story about Binkley's death, Miranda said, "There was no challenge Howell couldn't meet with light."

As he rose to prominence, Binkley stayed connected to ECU and returned to teach theater classes. He created a mentorship program where a senior theater student from ECU could intern with him in New York.

"It was a passion of his to help the next generation," Storey said. She added that the Howell Binkley Fellowship Program will continue to be run by his associates in the industry.

His career success and desire to give back made Binkley a "titan of lighting design but an even bigger and better person," Host said. "He had a generous and youthful spirit. He made everyone feel special and important. He saw the world through a positive lens."

His letters and posters at ECU will serve to honor his work and contributions to the school and the field.

"I'd like to thank ECU and specifically Jayme Host for honoring his legacy," Storey said, "I made the gift, but under Jayme's leadership, it became something so much more special than I could have ever imagined. Seeing his items cherished in this way – I'm so grateful."

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