

Chad Frederick Hagedorn

April 14, 1972 ~ February 2, 2023 (age 50)

The Mind is the Key. The Heart is the Door. The Soul is the Corridor. The Universe is the Destination.

Chad Frederick Hagedorn died on February 2, 2023, at age 50. A resident of Tacoma WA, the loss of his personality, presence, and talents leaves a deep hole in the worlds of all who knew him.



Chad was an accomplished swimmer, visual artist, musician, and coach.

As founder of the *Bernardo's All Stars* U.S. Masters swim team, Chad loved encouraging swimmers of all ages and abilities to reach their goals and introducing people to open water swimming. He had a knack for mixing quirkiness with hard work in the water, as illustrated by the team's shark mascot, Bernardo; hot pink swimsuits; and unique social activities. Chad considered his work with the *Bernardo's All Stars* his greatest accomplishment.

In 2021, Chad was named Pacific Northwest Association of Masters Swimmers **Coach of the Year**, recognizing him for creating community during the pandemic by taking the *Bernardo's All Stars* to open water when swimming pools closed.

He was also a three-time U.S. Masters Swimming All American; 2019 U.S. Masters Swimming 1-Mile Lake Willoughby National Champ; 2019 San Diego Sharkfest Overall Champ; 2018 U.S. Masters Swimming All Star; 2018 Cascade Lake Swim Short Series Overall High Point Winner; 2018 Boston Sharkfest Division Champ; four-time Pacific Northwest Association of Masters Swimmers Open Water Season High Point Winner; two-time Foster Lake Cable Swim 2-Mile National Champ; two-time Swim Defiance Overall Champ; 2017 Alcatraz Sharkfest Division Champ; 2017 San Diego Sharkfest Division Champ; three-time Top 10 in the Nation pool swimmer; 2016 Portland Bridge Swim Overall Relay Winner; and 2019 Portland Bridge Swim Second in Division U.S. Masters Swimming Ultramarathon Distance Nationals.

Chad sought to challenge himself with new, adventurous open water swims. In 2021 he attempted to swim the English Channel, an effort he dedicated to awareness of Parkinson's disease.

His coaching credentials included U.S. Masters Swimming and American Swimming Coaches Association Level 3 certification and U.S. Masters Swimming Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor.

Chad was owner and operator of GreySlade Media. He was passionate about media technology and loved working with people who needed creative ideas and content, including audio recording and production, graphic design, photography, and websites. Chad wrote and recorded his own music and helped other artists and musicians bring their creative visions to life. He twice received the Tacoma Artists Initiative Program award.

Gold Forge Coaching was Chad's recently launched business dedicated to helping people use their painful experiences to their advantage. Its tagline was "Strength and beauty is in the brokenness," inspired by the Japanese method of Kintsugi – mending broken objects with gold, emphasizing their flaws and making them more beautiful than the original.

Chad was born on April 14, 1972, in Albuquerque NM. After graduating from Coronado High School in Lubbock TX in 1990, he attended Central Washington University in Ellensburg WA. He met Diane Michele Schuirman in 1990, and on September 12, 1998, they married in Bellingham. The couple lived in Pierce County for the duration of their marriage.

Chad held a master's degree in performance psychology from the University of Western States; a bachelor's degree in liberal arts with emphasis in communication, media, and psychology from The Evergreen State College; a bachelor's degree in law and justice from Central Washington University; a chemical dependency certificate from Tacoma Community College; an associate degree with emphasis in entrepreneurial business and digital design from Pierce College; and an associate degree in communication technology and a certificate in audio and sound technology from Bates Technical College, where he earned the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence. He was also a certified broadcast technologist, a member of the Society of Broadcast Engineers, and a graduate of Diver's Institute of Technology.

An accomplished swimmer in his youth, Chad left the water for about 20 years before returning to the pool, being recruited to a U.S. Masters swim team, and ultimately founding the *Bernardo's All Stars* and serving as its head coach until shortly before his death.

He would want to be remembered for his depth of creativity and artistry.

Chad is survived by his wife, Diane Michele Schuirman-Hagedorn; mother, Elaine Hagedorn; sister, Kristy Hoff (Tom); brother, Travis Hagedorn (Aimee); in-laws Jan and Lee Schuirman and Angela Leese; nieces Jenna Hoff, Rayley Hagedorn, and Ember Leese; nephews Evan Hoff and Alex Leese; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his father, Frederick N. Hagedorn, Jr., M.D.; grandparents Fritz and Betty Hagedorn and Wenzel and Marcella Ziegler; honorary grandparents Ray and Betty Medlin; and his beloved dogs Tiffany, Phaedra, Tabitha, and Melody.

Chad was part of and the source of many wonderful memories created in the Hagedorn family, and his immediate family remembers him as a terrific uncle.

An open house to celebrate Chad's life was held April 23rd, 2023 in the Suite 205 JayRay conference rooms at The Dock Building, 535 Dock Street, Tacoma.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in Chad's memory to The Humane Society of Tacoma and Pierce County at <https://www.thehumanesociety.org/memorials-and-tributes/>.