



Charles 'Charlie' LeGrande Saunders

December 10, 1925 - March 18, 2016

Charles L. Saunders, loving husband, caring father, avid golfer, nature lover and "Uncle Charlie" to many, died on March 18, 2016. He was 90 years old.

Charlie was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, December 10, 1925 to Ethel Saunders. His father, Grover Cleveland Saunders, passed away before his birth. An older brother, Cleveland, died when Charles was 2 months old. He was raised by his mother and two older sisters, Frances and Lois. He liked to say that he was one of the youngest people to ever attend college as he spent some time at Campbell College where his mother worked as a dietician during part of his early years.

Charlie lived in Winston-Salem and in Raleigh. He graduated from Broughton High School in 1943. During high school, he worked at Pine State Creamery. His children well remember that every trip to the beach took them through Raleigh where they were regaled with stories of Pine State Creamery and the Hayes Barton Pool. After graduation, he joined the Navy where he served as a gunner on a dive bomber and developed a love of flying which stayed with him through life.

It was in 1948 that a family friend in Winston-Salem, Andree Holt, introduced him to her sister, Francine Vercruysse, who was visiting from Belgium. He was smitten! Despite language and cultural differences, they were married just 4 months later. Francine was the love of his life. Together they had 4 children: Patricia, Suzanne, Steve and Michelle.

Charlie worked at Western Electric for several years and then took a job with

the Glenn L. Martin Company in Baltimore. He was proud of his union activities and believed strongly in treating people fairly. In 1956, he returned to Winston-Salem and founded what was to become Crofts & Saunders Engineering, Inc. In 1976, he and Francine moved to Lake Norman. He sold his interest in the company in 1994.

Charlie never met a stranger and enjoyed knowing a variety of people. He remembered everyone he met and had stories to tell about most of them. He was a very generous man and even when finding it hard to make ends meet, he would share with others in need. He often said he wanted his tombstone to read "He had the patience of Job, he wasn't chintzy and he was a good ol' fart". He believed in education and regretted that he was unable to attend college. He was a lover of nature and a questioner of the universe.

Charlie was preceded in death by his son, Steve.

He leaves behind to continue his legacy his loving wife Francine; three daughters: Patricia Ball (James), Suzanne Gordon (Ralph) and Michelle Meeks (Tommy); eight grandchildren, Courtney Ball Clark (Sean), Ryan Ball (Megan), Carrie Saunders, Emily Gordon, Stuart Gordon (Kelley), Jenna Meeks Ames (Aaron), Charlie Meeks and Caitlin Meeks; and 4 great grandchildren, Sierra, Kate, Alice, and Eliza Grace Clark.

He will be greatly missed.

The family will receive friends from 1-3 PM on Tuesday, March 22 at Cavin-Cook Funeral Home. A short informal service of music and remembrances will occur at 2 pm in the visitation area.

Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of your choice or to Hospice & Palliative Care of Iredell County, 2347 Simonton Road, Statesville, NC 28625.

Cavin-Cook Funeral Home, Mooresville, is serving the Saunders family.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.cavin-cook.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *Charles 'Charlie' LeGrande Saunders*

February 14, 2021 at 11:24 AM



“ *Charles 'Charlie' LeGrande Saunders*

February 14, 2021 at 11:04 AM



“ *Charles 'Charlie' LeGrande Saunders*

February 14, 2021 at 11:03 AM

MC

“ Uncle Charlie was an incredibly important part of my life and I will always be thankful and feel blessed to have known him and his wonderful family. He has impacted my life and my families life more than he could have ever imagined for his love, his support, his kindness, his friendship, his generosity, for being.. him. Throughout my life, he has instilled the importance of hard work and determination, and at each milestone or graduation he made me feel like he was extremely proud. I will never forget the amazing stories Uncle Charlie would share, the time we spent together, and I will continue to think of him every time I see a pool table I laugh when I think of the times we played against each other of course the games were always high stakes, and of course he would always let me win (contrary to what I believed were exceptional pool skills for an eleven year old). I will continue to cherish these memories, think of his incredible smile that always extended to his eyes, and the laughs we would share. No matter what age I was, from 10 years old to 28, he found a way to connect. I will never forget what an exceptional person Uncle Charlie was - he will be thought of often and fondly. I extend my prayers to the wonderful Saunder's family during this time. God Bless.

Monique Conway - March 23, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ I had the pleasure of living a few houses down from Francine and Charlie for several years. He was a dear man and he always brightened my day when I ran into after we moved away. We always recounted the time that I was away from the house and he took my kids and nanny out for a boat ride, Francine chastised him because he hadn't asked me if it was ok! He was just being his usual sweet self! Heaven has indeed gained an angel.

Dawn Wight - March 23, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DD

“Mr. Saunders” was a very special part of my life due to his friendship to my father, Al DeVita. He always made me smile with his loving smile...he had a great sense of humor. He was a smart man, had a curious mind and I believe he was a great inspiration to my father. He was my father's best friend and I couldn't have thought of a better best-friend then Mr. Saunders. Lastly, I'm so happy that Charlie got to meet my husband and play golf with him! They hit it off immediately. A gift that I will always cherish. It pains me that we weren't able to attend the service and visit with Francine and the kids. We will soon.

Darlene DeVita - March 23, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“Uncle Charlie, One of the kindest men I have ever known. Always quick with a joke and more than willing to help anyone in need. Marie always said he was her angel and now he is for sure. Aunt Francine I just cannot get this old truck to go fast enough to be at the service but I will be thinking of you and your wonderful family.

March 22, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ Uncle Charlie will always hold a special place in our heart. There isn't a day that goes by without thanking God for you and aunt Francine, you are both thoughtful and caring uncle and aunt as we call you. You were one of the most caring and compassionate man I have ever known. Your love always shined in your eyes. We are forever grateful to God for transplanting us to be your neighbors, friends, and then extended families. Your funny stories and words of wisdom will reside in us always. When Marie speaks of you, she always refers to you as her "angel without wings." Now you have your wings and relishing in the presence of our father. We will miss you until we reunite again....May god give comfort to the Saunders family. The Conway Family.

Marie Conway - March 22, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ What a wonderful man who adored his family. May God give the family strength and closeness during this time of grief. Many blessings to the family.

debby boozar - March 22, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ I'm going to miss my "rib" buddy and our trips to the Dollar store. I will also miss all those good times we had together and all his teachings and wisdom he has shared over the years. I will also especially miss our "woodsman of the world" handshake. He has always made me feel loved and he was definitely loved back. Mayhew will feel empty without its sheriff. Say hey to Jesus and put in a good word for me. May God Give comfort to your family. Love Sean

Sean Conway - March 22, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ Charlie Saunders was my closest friend for more than half of my life. He had a love of humor was great. He and I have enjoyed many happy hours on the golf course with other friends and the best part of our time together was telling funny stories about each other. Charlie never shrank from competition in business or in sports. In my opinion, he was equal to the very best in the business of selling and marketing. Charlie (to you personally), I will miss you during the rest of my journey through this shoal of time and I will never forget the good times we had together. Most of all, I will never forget the power of our friendship. God's speed to you from your pal, Jack Anthony

March 21, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ There could never be anyone with a better heart than Charlie. He would give you the shirt off his back. Nor could there be anyone with a more vibrant personality. No matter the situation there was always a story to tell. Perhaps what I remember most was that Charlie was not ashamed of his humble beginnings, but instead was so proud of the devotion of his mother and siblings. He loved his wife, children, and grandchildren with all his heart. Charlie gave new meaning to the word "friend." He and Johnnie probably already have a tee time in Heaven. Rest in peace, my friend. The world was a better place because of you.

Lorri Lemmonds - March 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ Prayers for you all. Charlie was always such an important figure in my father's life...Dad will miss him terribly, he was a great friend.

Denny Sapp Driver - March 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ Trish, I'm so sorry to read about your father's passing. I remember him as such a wonderful man and fantastic host when he'd have the NCAGT board down to the lake house for a retreat. He was always so supportive of everyone's work on behalf of gifted children and a great, fun guy to just be around. My prayers go out to you and your family.

Linda Morris - March 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ So sad to learn of Charlie's passing. I am a cousin that loved him dearly. Many times he had us for food, fun and love in his home on the lake. I am a younger cousin, daughter of Helen and Chick Wilson. Helen was the daughter of Charlie Kimel. Due to poor health, I will not be able to be part of the activities surrounding his death but I just wanted everyone to know how much I loved him and will miss him.

Jo Ann W. Goodson - March 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ Carolen Schock

March 19, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ Uncle Charles was the brother I never had. he taught me how to use my hands. hard work was the effort. he has always been a important part of my life. He will be greatly missed my me and my family.

Jimmy Dorsett - March 19, 2016 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ I miss my "Grandchuck", as I called him, already. I am wishing I could hug him again, but I know when I say I love him he still hears me. I have so many fond memories of spending time with him at his home on the lake as a child and youth, hearing his stories, going golf ball hunting, going to visit his "cousins" going out for ice cream. I cherished that as I got older we became more like close friends that would talk about religion or nature or politics. He was always an amazing grandfather that made me feel special and loved. I hope we all make him proud and remember him often.

Emily Gordon - March 19, 2016 at 12:00 AM