

Charles Wayne Prater



Charles Wayne Prater, 80, died July 30, 2021 in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Charles was born on August 10, 1940 to William A. Prater and Mariam Vandusen in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

In his younger years as a preteen, he loved everything mechanical, he got a scrap Cushman Eagle and had it up to 50 mph until the St. Bernard Sheriff's Department pulled him over. Because he was 12 years old, they sent him home. Taking anything and hot rodding, it was his passion, even in the military he and two other shipmates bought a '52 Ford and put a Buick Nailhead in and blew out Rear Differentials weekly. He sold his part to the other guys as he was deployed to the USS Saratoga. He loved to get one over on someone and make them laugh and smile. His love for speed ended with him making an impulse purchase with all his Sea pay and the money from the '52, a 1962 MGA MK 2 twin cam at a dealership in France. To their surprise he paid in cash and said he was treated like royalty. He had it shipped home to New Orleans. He ship to shore, phoned grandma to ask her what she thought of his new pride and joy. She said "It's fine if you like dragging your Butt at 60 miles an hour".

He came home after the service and always had a project. He soon realized at around 6 years old that he better start teaching Wayne about cars after he found him on the porch with the carburetor off the family car and mostly apart. From that point on, into Matt's birth he was always teaching from rebuilding V-8s to VW flat fours. Any kid in the neighborhood was welcome to attend "class" he always said, "If a man designed and built it, then a man can repair it." I have no idea how many kids between Matt and Wayne's age know how to do brakes or change oil. He believed in learning things without coddling, no training wheels, figuratively and literally. Wayne rode a 2-wheel bike at 3 and Matt at 2, Wayne was riding a dirt bike at 5 and Matt was riding it at 4. He always said, "you remember better from mistakes than you do from anything", but he wouldn't let the mistake go beyond repair before he reeled you in. He took ownership of everything he did. He kept things squared away and when it was time to get up it was feet on the floor. He always led by example. If the hospital had ice on the lots, he was there 2 hours and 30 minutes before nurse shift change, clearing the sidewalks and parking lots. When the guys arrived, they didn't even ask, they just got after it.

When Wayne became involved in Boy Scout Troop 14, he went before the Troop

board and suggested that they stop using popcorn sales to fund the troop. He suggested selling firewood. It taught a skill and showed everyone that they could do whatever they put their mind to. Robert Oertmann the Scoutmaster agreed and it got so busy with sales Chuck surprised the boys with a commercial log splitter. He was also the official tent zipper replacer. Whenever a tent needed mending, be it a troop or personal tent, he was always ready to break out the sewing machine. He also bought uniforms for scouts that couldn't afford them. Something we didn't learn until decades later.

Something both Wayne and Matt can attest to, is the many times that someone would find out "oh your Chuck's boy", which was always followed by something nice that dad had done for them. From car repair, to seeing someone down, and buying them a coffee mug, which Wayne received with a note of the story. Dad was not only just dad, but he was an example of hard work, perseverance, and an attitude of "I can do it". He made the best deviled eggs, according to Heather Prater and Shana Peaden. He made an old family recipe for banana ice cream from our great grandfather Lucas, that was amazing. Thankfully it wasn't hand cranked like when he was a kid in the 40's.

Charles is preceded in death by his parents; three grandsons, Lucas Charles Prater, Rance Broughton Prater and Connor Allan Prater and one sister, Marilyn Estopinal.

He is survived by two sons, Wayne Allan (Tonya) Prater and Matthew Collin (Heather) Prater; two grandchildren Victoria Lynn Prater and Kaedyn Henry Prather.

Charles Wayne Prater was a member of Hanner-Sharp American Legion Post 129 Stillwater, Oklahoma.