

Charles Clark (Chuck) Russell



Charles Clark (Chuck) Russell, age 100, of Stillwater, Oklahoma passed with love on Monday, September 13, 2021 at Primrose Retirement Community in Stillwater. The family will greet friends at the funeral home Sunday, September 19, 2021 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. A graveside service with military honors will begin at 1:00 p.m. Monday, September 20, 2021 at the Buzzard Cemetery in Grove, Oklahoma. Mr. Russell's memorial service will begin at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at the Stillwater First Christian Church.

Charles was born in Watts, OK on January 10, 1921 on a small farm obtained during the Allotment Act in the early 1900's. He graduated high school in 1938 and with no prospect of college; he began working in the CCC camps.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he went to John Brown University where he began pilot training. Flying was a dream he had had from his childhood. He trained as an aviator cadet at four different locations in Texas. He completed advanced flying school on July 29, 1943 and received his silver wings. During WWII, he piloted the B-24 Liberator bomber and the B-24 Tailwind in missions over Germany and France. In total, he flew thirty-three missions, thirteen to France and twenty to Germany. He was a highly decorated veteran of the U. S. Army Air Force earning the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the European African-Middle Eastern Theater Medal.

In 1946, Charles enrolled at the Oklahoma State University (OSU) (then Oklahoma A&M College). He was recalled to military duty in 1947 and served during the Korean War flying missions as an airborne forward air controller. By 1948, he was married to Julia Dugan and in 1951 they had a daughter, Carol Sue. In 1956, they returned from Germany with a son, Charles David. He again enrolled at OSU in Stillwater to finish his degree in electrical engineering. He then spent over 20 years in the U. S. Air Force, retiring in 1968. Not one to slow down, he spent two years at Bendix working with the Apollo space program. After that he worked for the Maryland Board of Education for twelve years developing systems for their computers, payroll and accounting.

Charles led a wonderfully full and exciting life. After Julia died, he wed Eleen (Little) Ezell and then Jane Best. He was a caretaker to each of them toward the end of their lives. His interests were many and varied. He loved photography, reading, trying new recipes, barbequing, gardening, playing bridge, writing, drawing, watching baseball, dancing, building porches and shelving, and traveling. He had a knack for telling a story and making a joke. Did we mention his love of buffaloes? His interest must have been inspired by his Native American heritage and being a member of the Cherokee Nation.

Charles loved his family and extended family. He provided joy, laughter and comfort to them. He was a member of American Legion Post 129 and of the First Christian Church in Stillwater, OK.

He was preceded in death by his three wives, Julia Dugan (PA), Eleen Ezell (TX) and Lois Jane Herde Best (OK); his brother Gene (Florence), Olathe, KS; his parents Charles and Minnie Russell, Westville, OK; and his daughter-in-law Barbara Russell.

He is survived by his daughter Carol Sue Wanzer and husband Christopher of Ocean Pines, MD; his son Charles David Russell of N. Chelmsford, MA; step-daughter Jan Courtright and husband Terry of Stillwater, OK; step-son Larry Best and wife Gwen of St. Charles, MO; his granddaughters Julie Wanzer of Denver, CO and Michele Smith and husband Ryan of North Laurel, MD; his step-granddaughters Erin Renollet and husband Jeremy, Dara Beasley and husband Scott of Stillwater, OK, and Eva Best of St. Charles, MO; and his step-grandson Devin Best of St. Charles, MO. He had three great-grandchildren: Zach, Zoey and Alexis Smith, of North Laurel, MD; and two step great-grandchildren, Daxon and Irelyn Renollet, of Stillwater, OK. Extended family includes nieces Mary Ellen Sippel and husband Greg of Overland Park, KS and Gale Hansen and husband Jim of Lexana, KS.

Charles left a wonderful legacy of service to his country by his participation in the World War II History Project at the Oklahoma State University Library. Charles' story may be viewed by going to <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/Spot/id/971/rec/1>.

Happy 100th, Mr. Russell



Charles Russell shown surrounded by his family.

PHOTOS PROVIDED