



Charles E. Beard

July 26, 1915 - August 27, 2015

Charles Eldridge Beard

1915 – 2015

Charles Eldridge Beard passed away Thursday, August 27, 2015 in Muskogee, OK. He was born July 26, 1915 in Amarillo, TX to Corrine Pittman Freeman and Simeon Eldridge Freeman. His father died when he was three years old. He continued to live in Amarillo with his mother and younger sister, Louise. His family moved to Wichita Falls, TX, when he was nine, where his adoptive father, Vernon Beard, established the Beard & Roberts Dental Laboratory. In 1925, his family moved to Muskogee, OK, and Vernon founded the Beard Dental Lab. In his early teens, Charlie began taking trombone lessons from a neighbor in exchange for doing yard work and odd jobs. He and his lifelong friend, Kenneth Sadler, outfitted their trombone cases with wheels, and could be spotted walking to school with cases in tow. He continued to play the trombone in high school under the direction of Mr. Tony Goetz. During high school and college, he played in the Muskogee Symphony Orchestra and various dance ensembles. Charlie continued to play the trombone throughout his adulthood; playing his final concert with the Muskogee Alumni Community band at the age of 93. He graduated from Muskogee Central High School in 1935, and attended the University of Tulsa on a trombone scholarship. Upon the failing health of his father, Vernon Beard, Charlie returned to Muskogee to lend a hand at the lab and learn the

dental technology business. Prior to Vernon's untimely death, his uncle, Kenneth K Beard, moved to Muskogee from Minnesota to take over the business. His twice-widowed mother later married Kenneth, whose exuberance, wisdom and paternal predisposition helped displaced their household grief. The family assembled a music ensemble and played for local gatherings, with his sister, Louise on the violin, Kenneth the banjo, his mother the piano, and Charlie on the trombone. He continued to work at Beard Dental Lab until his induction into the Armed Forces. He married Martha Gorman in 1938, and in 1942 he was inducted into the Army Air Corps. Following Basic Training, Charlie graduated from the Billings School of Dental Technology in Indianapolis, IN, where he subsequently joined the faculty until his deployment to the European Theatre of Operations with the 358th Fighter Group. He served as a dental technician and medic; administering medical care on the battlefield during the Battle of the Bulge. He also retrofitted an abandoned German Army ambulance, turning it into a mobile dental operator. Upon his honorable discharge in 1945 at the rank of Sergeant, he returned to Beard Dental Lab in Muskogee and continued his studies as a business major at Muskogee Junior College. Following the death of his step-father, Kenneth Beard, in 1950, Charlie assumed ownership and management of the dental lab until 1980. The Lab prospered under his leadership. As a small business owner, he performed numerous roles: CEO, Sales & Marketing, HR, and Master Certified Dental Technician & mentor. In 1982, he and Dr. Mike Stephens established Stephens Dental Laboratory where he crafted dental prosthetics until he was 95 years-old; driving himself to work and arriving at the office by 6:30 AM most days. On the weekends, he could be seen mowing his lawn until he was 96 years-old. Earlier in his adult life, Charlie was active at Grace Episcopal Church as a member of the vestry, choir, and as a lay reader, conducting worship services at regional churches in the dioceses during pulpit vacancies. He later joined First Baptist Church, Muskogee, where he was song leader in his Sunday school class for over 10 years. He was a 32nd Degree Mason and past Worshipful Master of Muskogee Lodge

number 28. He was also a member of the Bedouin Shrine and York Rite Bodies of the KT. He was also active in the Sertoma Club.

Charlie was preceded in death by father, Simeon Eldridge Freeman; mother, Corrine Freeman-Beard-Harper and husband E. B. Harper; adoptive father, Vernon Beard; stepfather, Kenneth K Beard; brother, Vilas V Beard; sisters, Mary Sue Eisenschmidt and Louise Thrall; wives, Martha G Beard and Charlotte B Beard; and nephew, Travis Thrall. He is survived by his wife of the home, Jean Engelbrecht-Beard; daughter, Leslie Cates and husband Rich of Tulsa; daughter, Jo Ellen Beard of Tulsa; son, Ken Beard and wife Rhonda of Muskogee; stepdaughter, Betsy Smith and husband Frank of Edmond; stepsons, John Engelbrecht and wife Rhonda of Muskogee, Tom Engelbrecht and wife Darla of Muskogee, and Mike Engelbrecht and wife Sheri of Tulsa; grandchildren, Austin Bond and wife Jennifer of Tulsa; Lindsay Parker and husband Trent of Tulsa; Cassie Bachman and husband Andrew of Oklahoma City; Vann Beard of Columbus-Ft. Benning, GA; Kyle Beard of Oklahoma City; April Smith and husband Jacob of Muskogee; Chandler Engelbrecht of Muskogee; Sarah Smith of Dallas, TX; Curtis and Ashley Smith of Kansas City, MO; Kelcie Eaton and husband Andrew of Muskogee; John Engelbrecht of Muskogee; Keelie Engelbrecht of Muskogee; Katy Engelbrecht and Macy Engelbrecht of Tulsa. Charlie's grandchildren cherished their visits to Grandpa/Papa & Nana's, characterized by swims in the pool, burgers from the Hasty Bake, and rides on the lawnmower, and occasionally his motorcycle. Their most cherished memories were the individual chats they had with him. He is survived by great-grandchildren, Tessa, Ellen and Charlie Bond of Tulsa; Jonathan Parker of Tulsa; Beau and Linley Smith of Muskogee; and Calaway Smith of Kansas City. He is also survived by nieces Terry Goranson and husband Ron of Dallas, Jane Konkler and Husband Gerald of Tulsa, nephews Jim Thrall and wife Maggie of Yuma, AZ, and Chuck Thrall and wife Karen of Houston, TX.

The family will be accepting visitors at Cornerstone Funeral Home on Monday,

August 31, 2015 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

A funeral service will be held at 10:00 AM Tuesday, September 1 at Grace Episcopal Church, Muskogee, with Reverend Bob Wickizer officiating.

Interment will be in Memorial Park Cemetery with full military honors.

Pallbearers will be Vann Beard, Kyle Beard, Austin Bond, John Engelbrecht, Curtis Smith and Chandler Engelbrecht. Honorary pallbearers will be Andrew Eaton, Jacob Smith, Andrew Bachman, Trent Parker and Dr. Mike Stephens.

Friends may wish to remember Charlie by making memorials to the Shriners Hospital.

Funeral services are under the direction of Cornerstone Funeral Home, 1830 N. York Street, Muskogee. Condolences may be made to the family online @ www.cornerstoneofmuskogee.com.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Park Cemetery

7600 Old Taft Rd.
Muskogee, OK 74401

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 29. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory
1830 North York Street
Muskogee, OK 74403
(918) 682-1500

Visitation

AUG 30. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory
1830 North York Street
Muskogee, OK 74403
(918) 682-1500

Visitation

AUG 31. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory
1830 North York Street
Muskogee, OK 74403
(918) 682-1500

Family Visitation

AUG 31. 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory
1830 North York Street
Muskogee, OK 74403
(918) 682-1500

Service

SEP 1. 10:00 AM (CT)

Grace Episcopal Church
218 N. 6th Street
Muskogee, OK 74401

Tribute Wall



“ *Charles E. Beard*

October 23, 2023 at 09:38 AM



“ *I remember Mr. Beard as our neighbor for many years on Howard Street. I send my condolences and warmest regards to his family.
Love, Rob Sandlin*

Robert Sandlin - August 30, 2015 at 04:42 PM