

Obituary for Charles H. Corwin

Charles Harrison (Charlie) Corwin died on October 9, 2013, in Tucson, Arizona. He was 92 years old.

Charlie was the second and youngest child of Samuel Wickham and Jessie Webb Corwin. He was born in Bismarck on October 13, 1920, where S.W. Corwin was a pioneer in the automobile business. The family moved to Fargo in 1938, when it was decided to expand operations by opening a second dealership in the eastern part of the state.

Charlie completed his primary education at Fargo High School. He then attended the University of North Dakota, and was a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. Many of his most enduring friendships were formed during this period. This was also when Charlie started his career in sales. He sold Florsheim shoes from his room in the fraternity house.

Like many in his generation, Charlie's college education was interrupted by World War II. His graduation was accelerated so he could be commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army. In early December of 1944, Charlie was transferred to the 28th Infantry Division as a replacement platoon leader. Within days of his arrival, the division found itself in the path of the last major German offensive of the war. What we now know as the Battle of the Bulge ultimately became the largest ground battle ever fought by soldiers of the United States. Although it was forced to give ground and suffered heavy losses, the 28th Division played a crucial role in the containment of the initial onslaught. For his actions during this combat, Charlie was twice awarded the bronze star.

Following his discharge in 1946, Charlie returned to Fargo where he joined his father and older brother Bill in the family business. Charlie and Betty Flatt were married on January 3, 1948. They went on to raise four children and to celebrate 65 wedding anniversaries.

Charlie and Betty shared a passion for travel. Over time, this took them to 58 different countries, and every major continent. They sold their last home in Fargo in 2005, and Tucson has since been their primary residence. In his heart, however, Charlie was always most connected to North Dakota and the lakes country of Minnesota. He had a particular attachment to Big Sand Lake, near Park Rapids, where he spent his first summer with his parents at the age of three. Charlie and Betty built their own home on Big Sand Lake in 1980. This is where they thereafter spent every summer. Charlie's last return to his beloved Big Sand ended in late August.

Charlie loved people and telling stories. He was known by many as "Cheerful Charlie" or just "Cheerful". He treated strangers like old friends. His childhood on Big Sand, and the army years, were favorite topics of conversation.

Although Charlie retired in 1981, the business he helped to grow continues in the form of the Corwin Automotive Group. The business is now owned and operated by Charlie's son Tim,

together with Tim's sons Drew and Tanner.

Charlie was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Bill. He is survived by Betty and their 4 children, together with 11 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. His children are: Carolyn Corwin (Richard Brammell), Fargo; Wick Corwin (Holly), Fargo; Tim Corwin (Nan), Phoenix; and Ann Goutermout (Barnes), Denver.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to Gethsemane Cathedral, Trinity Church in Park Rapids, or the Great Plains Food Bank.