

Biography of Charles F. Williams

Grand Exalted Ruler

1993-1994

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A.

Charles Williams is a native Texan who recently retired after 33 years as an engineering manager in the defense airborne communication industry, and he has dedicated all of his personal activities since 1972 to the fraternal Order of Elks, culminating in his election as Grand Exalted Ruler, the Order's highest office and its national president.

Charles Farrell Williams was born on January 24, 1934, in the rural farming area of Wylie, twenty miles northeast of Dallas, Texas. Being the only son in a family of three, Charles often worked during his early years on his grandfather's farm harvesting peanuts, picking cotton and topping onions. His friends called him "Chuck" and encouraged him to join the Wylie Boy Scout Troop with them. Charles attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas, Texas, and graduated in 1951.

He enrolled in Texas A & M University at College Station, Texas, and participated in the spirited Texas A & M Corps of Cadets, an ROTC program. It was during these collegiate years that Charles met his first wife and they had four children. They would eventually dissolve the marriage 16 years later. Charles graduated from Texas A & M in 1956 with a degree in Engineering and was hired by General Electric in Dallas until he was called to fulfill his military obligation.

Charles Williams was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army in late 1956. His military service involved Perimeter Defense of military sites in South Carolina and Pennsylvania. Charles was honorably discharged as a Captain in 1958 to return to a brief employment with GE in Schenectady, New York. It was during this period that Charles became involved again with the Boy Scouts, initially as Assistant Scoutmaster and then Scoutmaster. However, Charles' desire to return to his native Texas resulted in relocating his family to Dallas and working as a Field Service Engineer with Collins Radio Company, a move that would eventually introduce him to the Order of Elks.

Employment with Collins Radio Company, an Iowa-based firm, provided Charles with international traveling adventures. Assigned to the NASA Apollo Tracking Station installations, he travelled to over 20 foreign countries, working in remote, unpopulated area and encountering many different languages and customs. Another assignment provided Charles with travel to all of the U.S. Air Force's SAC Bases worldwide to install flight control instruments in military aircraft. Charles further broadened his professional experience by affiliating with the American Society of Quality Engineers, the National Management Association and the Society of Logistic Engineers.

Charles became reacquainted with his childhood sweetheart from Wylie, Janet Clark, whom he courted and eventually married. Janet then pursued her desire to work in the garment industry. She attended El Centro College and received a degree in Pattern Drafting and Draping. She worked in the garment industry for fifteen years before retiring. Together Charles and Janet have eight children and 16 grandchildren.

It was Charles' work associates, who were members of the Order of Elks, that introduced him to the Elks. Brother Williams was initiated into the Order of Elks at the Institution of Plano, Texas Lodge No. 2485 on December 10, 1972. Because of his experience with the Boy Scouts, Charles became involved with the Lodge Youth Activities Committee. Because of his leadership experience at Collins Radio Company, later absorbed by Rockwell International, Charles was singled out as a Lodge Officer. His enthusiasm motivated the Lodge Officers to compete and win honors in district, state and national ritual contests. In 1975, Charles won the All-State Esteemed Leading Knight ritual award. He was elected Exalted Ruler of Plano Lodge No. 2485 in 1977, and at the State Association Convention, won the Eleven O'clock Toast contest which provided him the honor to present the Toast at the Elks Memorial Service.

Chuck's interest in Youth Activities continued into District and State Committees and their leadership. He directed the Youth Scholarship Program, Community Service Program and New Lodge Development Committee. He was elected Texas Elks State Association Vice-President in 1980, serving as TESA President in 1983-84, following which his Lodge bestowed Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his distinguished service to Elkdom.

In 1981, Bro. Charles was appointed District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler by Grand Exalted Ruler Raymond V. Arnold. Under the leadership of Texas Sponsor, Hon. Willis C. McDonald, Bro. Charles was appointed to the Grand Lodge State Associations Committee in 1985 and then served a four-year term on the Grand Lodge Membership Committee in 1986. In 1990, he served on the Lodge Activities Committee of the Grand Lodge and was then nominated and elected to the Board of Grand Trustees for a four-year term.

Bro. Williams has retired from Rockwell International Corporation to devote his time to the Order of Elks. He and his wife Janet are members of the First Christian Church and have made their home in Plano, Texas.