



Charles Edward Finsley

May 19, 1938 - May 15, 2014

Charles E. Finsley entered the gates of Heaven on the wings of a celestial-bound Pterosaurs (winged reptile) - into the arms of God - on Thursday 15 May 2014 in Dallas, Texas, just 4 days shy of his 76th birthday. Chuck had metastatic Prostate Cancer, which he fought toe-to-toe until the end. Chuck died the way he lived, with gentleness and composure.

Charles Edward "Chuck" Finsley was born on Thursday, 19 May 1938, in Springfield, Ohio, to Edward M. Finsley and Hazel B. Campbell Finsley. He was the proud Great-Grandson of Civil War Veteran, Isaac Elbridge Blauvelt, about whom Chuck published a book containing his Great-Grandfather's letters composed on the battlefield.

Chuck grew-up in Springfield, Ohio, and graduated from Springfield High School in 1956. He attended Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and graduated in 1960 from Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, where he earned his BS in Sociology & Anthropology. He earned his Master's Degree in Secondary Education & Geology/Geography at the University of North Texas in 1964, plus additional work in Geology & Education at SMU, UTD, and UNT. Chuck was honored to receive an Associate Professorship at Duke University in 1961.

Chuck was first introduced to the field of "History" in 1954, where he worked

at the Clark County Historical Society Museum, Springfield, Ohio, 1954-1960. He was the Curator of the Museum, with a special interest in Archeology. Chuck fondly called the museum "The Clark County Histerical Society." Each summer, Chuck would host a CCHS exhibit at the Clark County State Fair for 2 weeks. In the summer of 1961, Chuck worked at the Illinois State Museum Archeological Excavation.

Chuck taught Earth Science classes and led numerous tours to The Big Bend, The Big Thicket, and other places for Brookhaven Community College in Dallas, and SMU. He led innumerable trips to West Texas for The Dallas Museum of Natural History, focusing on rocks, fossils, invertebrates and Texas dinosaurs. He organized and participated in Summer Youth Programs at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, and he supervised joint Field Ecology Classes with DISD for credit. Chuck's influence on students while at the Museum of Natural History, Brookhaven College, and SMU inspired approximately 100 former students to earn degrees in Natural History and Science careers! According to Chuck himself, this was his proudest legacy.

Chuck was a regular guest on local news and children's programs (both radio and television) including "Mr. Peppermint" and "Bill Kelly's Children's Hour" for over 30 years. Chuck co-hosted a nature program (with his wife Rosa) on KERA in Dallas called "Round About." He was the editor of The Dallas Natural Science Association Quarterly from 1970-1975, and he was a frequent speaker in classrooms, at social groups, nursing homes, city organizations, church gatherings, libraries, Gem and Mineral Clubs, Civil War gatherings, family reunions, and the annual "National Fossil Day" at UNT. Additionally, Chuck loved attending and speaking at "Fossilmania" each Fall in Glen Rose, TX. Even when he was ill, last October 2013, he managed to speak at this event.

Chuck's photographic endeavors included multi-media presentations about

the "Natural Areas of Texas," 1975-1980; Three Dimensional Dinosaur Presentations, 1988-1989; and classes in "Nature Photography." He photographed 600 different fossils for his book, A Field Guide to Fossils of Texas and took 125 photos for his book, Dinosaurs of Texas. He was an innovative pioneer in 3-D photography.

Charles Edward "Chuck" Finsley worked at the Dallas Museum of Natural History for 34 years (1961-1995.) While at the Museum, he occupied the positions of Curator of Education, Curator of Botany, General Curator, Interim Director, and Curator of Earth Sciences (rocks, minerals, and fossils.)

In his tenure at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, Chuck excavated many fossil specimens, many of which are currently displayed at the Perot Museum of Natural History, Dallas. He was responsible for unearthing the Trinity Mammoth, 1965; several large Cretaceous fish, 1972-1983; and the Heath Mosasaur, 1979. He oversaw the preparation of the Wise County Tenontosaurus dinosaur, 1987-1989; the Fate, Texas giant sea turtle, 1990; and a number of noteworthy invertebrate fossils. Chuck organized, designed, and prepared the "Texas Giants Exhibit" a major display of Texas geological and paleontological specimens at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, 1990.

He was rightfully proud of many large collections he obtained for the Dallas Museum of Natural History, enjoyed by fossil enthusiasts today. They included The Crane Fossil Collection; The Langston Texas Tectite Collection; The Humphries Mineral Collection; the McIver Agate Collection; the Davis Fossil Collection; and many individual collections of gems and minerals donated by various individuals

Charles Edward "Chuck" Finsley was a giant in the field of Paleontology. He was a Charter Member of the Dallas Paleontological Society, which he and

others began with volunteers who prepared and reconstructed the Trinity Mammoth. Furthermore, he was an esteemed member of The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. Chuck continues to be honored annually by the Dallas Paleontological Society via "The Charles E. Finsley Paleontological Lecture Series," at Brookhaven College.

Chuck was the author of A Field Guide to Fossils of Texas, Gulf Publishing Co.; Discover Texas Dinosaurs, Gulf Publishing Co.; and Hannah's Letters, the Civil War Letters of Isaac E. Blauvelt, Friends and Other Suitors, Kings Creek Press.

Chuck enjoyed travelling. He and his wife led tours to many European countries, China, Japan, Mexico, Canada and most of the 50 United States. He recorded his travels photographically, and often presented "shows" to friends and family.

Chuck was loved by all who knew him. He was kind and unassuming. He always took time to answer questions for children and adults alike about rocks, fossils, minerals, gems, plants, or "anything with dirt on it." Dear to his heart was an eagerness to advance the love of Paleontology, with emphasis on the fossils of Texas. During his tenure at the D.M.N.H., Chuck confirmed to everyone that the North Texas area had a rich legacy of invertebrates through dinosaurs. He was generous with his time, possessions, compliments, and witticisms. Chuck had a multi-faceted personality, insatiable curiosity, and great sense of wit and humor.

Chuck was a lifelong Christian, having retained his "membership" to Lagonda Avenue Evangelical United Brethren Church, Springfield, Ohio, where he grew-up, even after the denomination dissolved and the church building was sold! For the past 50 years, he has enjoyed worshipping regularly with his family and friends at The First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster, TX.

Charles Edward "Chuck" Finsley was preceded in death by his parents; his dear friends, Bob Baird and Bob Pyle; his mother and father-in-law; his nephew, Curtis Clark; numerous aunts and uncles, including William Paul Campbell - from whom he received his Great-Grandfather's Civil War letters.

The family wishes to thank Dr. John Cox of Texas Oncology, for his attentive and compassionate care from the beginning until the end. We appreciate the unlimited kindness of the remarkable nurses and staff of Texas Oncology - Methodist Central and Charlton locations; Methodist Central Hospital - 7 Schenkel Tower; and Grace Presbyterian Village - 2 Anderson. We wish to extend extra-special thanks to Walt and Isabel Davis, Evelyn Luciani, and Phyllis Eason, who stood steadfastly beside Chuck and cared for him throughout his illness.

We are grateful for the unwavering support of countless friends and family who encouraged us daily with constant prayers. Your thoughtfulness sustained us throughout this journey. Our utmost appreciation goes to Dr. Richard Selby, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster, TX, for his numerous visits, prayers, phone calls, and support to the entire family.

Chuck is survived by his wife, best friend, travelling companion, and partner for 50 years, Rosa Clark Finsley; beloved son Gregory Scott Finsley of California; his sister and her husband, Suzi and Bill Gibbons of Richardson; three special nephews, Eddie Gibbons of Plano; Don Clark, Jr. of California; Casper Clark and wife, Janet, of Oregon; sister-in-law, Pat Clark and great-niece, Samantha Clark, of Kemp, TX; plus numerous Blauvelt, Campbell, and Weber cousins.

Visitation will be Monday evening at Byrum Funeral Home, 425 N Dallas Ave, Lancaster, TX 75146, from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

Chuck's funeral service will be held Tuesday, 2:00 pm, First Presbyterian Church Lancaster, 301 E. First Street, Lancaster, TX 75146, Dr. Richard W. Selby officiating. Graveside services will be held at 4:00pm - Kemp Cemetery, Kaufman County, TX. Serving as pallbearers will be Bill Gibbons, Eddie Gibbons, Don Clark, Jr. Casper Clark, Rocky Manning, Stephan Godzecki, Walt Davis, and Jon Ahrens. Serving as honorary pallbearers will be Pat Hanna, Bill Lowe, and Jim Burns.

Flowers are welcome; or contributions in Chuck's memory may be sent to The Dallas Paleontological Society's "Charles Finsley Lecture Series," P.O. Box 223846 Dallas, Texas 75222-3846; or to The First Presbyterian Church of Lancaster.

A "Memorial Celebration" of Chuck's life will be scheduled and announced at a later date.

Cemetery Details

Kemp Cemetery

Kemp, TX

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAY **20**. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church
301 E. 1st St.
Lancaster, TX

Tribute Wall

SF

“ My fondest memory of Mr. Finsley was the day that he and Greg and I went looking for fossils.. The teachings and thoughts that were put into the day looking @ rocks ,but with such a gentle,kind,intelligent and sweet perspective,my heart was completely touched.. God bless you and your family Greg..A beautiful man with genuine beautiful character that you are a reflection of..... My love....

Sherry Fontaine - May 20, 2014 at 04:08 PM

CK

“ Mr. Finsley was an inspirational teacher and I enjoyed learning from him during my Master Naturalist training.

Connie Koval - May 20, 2014 at 11:20 AM

JT

“ Jon, Carolyn, Kate, Will & Hans Ahrens, Duncan Cooper & team purchased the Secret Garden Basket for the family of Charles Edward Finsley.



Jon, Carolyn, Kate, Will & Hans Ahrens, Duncan Cooper & team - May 20, 2014 at 09:15 AM

TR

“ Chuck will be dearly missed by all who ever met him .He had a way with words, I could listen to him all day long. He made any subject more interesting.

Terry Roe, charter member of the D.P.S.

Terry Roe - May 19, 2014 at 08:54 PM

JS

“ I was a proud student of Mr Finsley in the Field Ecology program thru DISD. The great curators there inspired me to attend TX A&M studying wildlife and fishery science. I am now the President of the biggest private fly fishing club in America. Chuck influenced me beyond measure, funniest and kindest man I ever knew. I loved him dearly, he helped shape my life. God bless Prof. Finsley.

jimmy Stogner - May 19, 2014 at 07:47 PM

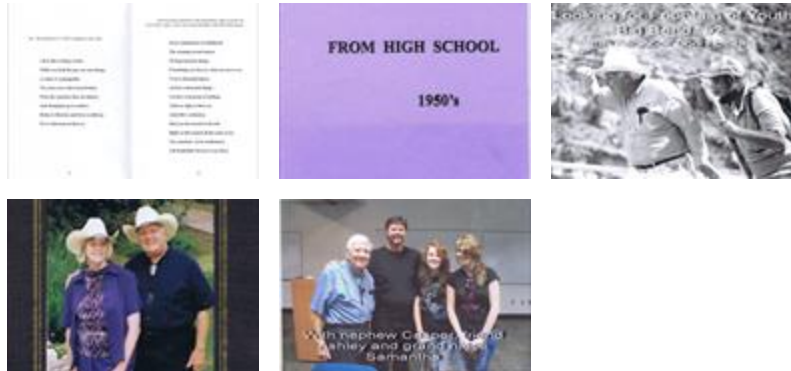
LS

“ Oh, Rosa, how could we possibly come up with enough good and fun things to say about Chuck and you, the "team" who shared the knowledge of our tours and made our memories of France, Italy and West Texas so wonderful. I will never forget Chuck's rendition of Pacos Bill but then that is the era and songs that I grew up with. I don't want that part of my life to die off so must keep Chuck in my mind always. Remember you are loved by so many friends and family and that we fall into both catagories.

Lynda Symes - May 19, 2014 at 12:04 PM

RF

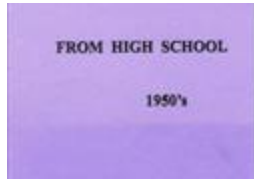
“ 20 files added to the album New Album Name



rosa finsley - May 19, 2014 at 10:28 AM

RF

“ 21 files added to the tribute wall



rosa finsley - May 19, 2014 at 10:18 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Charles Edward Finsley.



May 18, 2014 at 09:14 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Charles Edward Finsley.



May 18, 2014 at 08:57 PM

SH

“ Oh Charles, you will be missed on this earth. I'm sure you will be digging in Heaven too, God willing. I just cannot say enough of your energetic willingness to help the Cedar Hill Historic Museum and Cedar Hill Historical Society. You came any time we asked and was always a real charmer.

I read the obit in the Dallas Morning News, half a page or better of all you have done but failed to see how you wrote the first chapter of our Cedar Hill History book which was published in 2001. Your writing was so instrumental to our heritage, telling us of all the flowers, bears, trees, pottery, escarpment, bones from creatures that lived here millions of years ago, and of course the Indians who left all those tracks for us (you) to find and tell us all about it. I edited the book, and worked on it 2 1/2 years to pull it all together to help everyone to know the heritage and character of this wonderful little town. You let us know how it all began, as long as you could go back in time.

My tribute to you is "Thank you Charles, for leaving us so much knowledge.

You keep digging in Heaven, and teach the little children up there how to become "Little Diggers".

Love you and thanks again for all you have done for Cedar Hill.

Shirley Hendricks

Shirley Hendricks - May 18, 2014 at 05:11 PM

SG

Chuck's sister, Suzi, here. I composed my brother's obit. Sincere apologies for omitting Chuck's Cedar Hill History contributions. Thank you for adding it to his legacy of accomplishments!

Suzi Gibbons - May 19, 2014 at 10:17 PM

Marla Smith

“ Marla Smith purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Charles Edward Finsley.



Marla Smith - May 18, 2014 at 11:09 AM

DC

“ 1 file added to the album



don clark - May 18, 2014 at 10:13 AM

DC

“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



don clark - May 18, 2014 at 10:10 AM

Marla Smith

“ Chuck you are now in the presence of the Lord and with all our family that has gone before us. We will see you again and until then we will hold you close in our hearts.
Loving prayers for you all from the Weber-Smith household.
Love you! Cousin Bob Weber & Marla Smith

Marla Smith - May 18, 2014 at 09:50 AM

SF

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Suzi Finsley-Gibbons - May 17, 2014 at 07:32 AM

 Marla Smith

Looks just like his Daddy. You will be missed my cousin.

Marla Smith - May 18, 2014 at 10:11 AM



“ *Blooming Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Charles Edward Finsley.*



May 16, 2014 at 03:31 PM