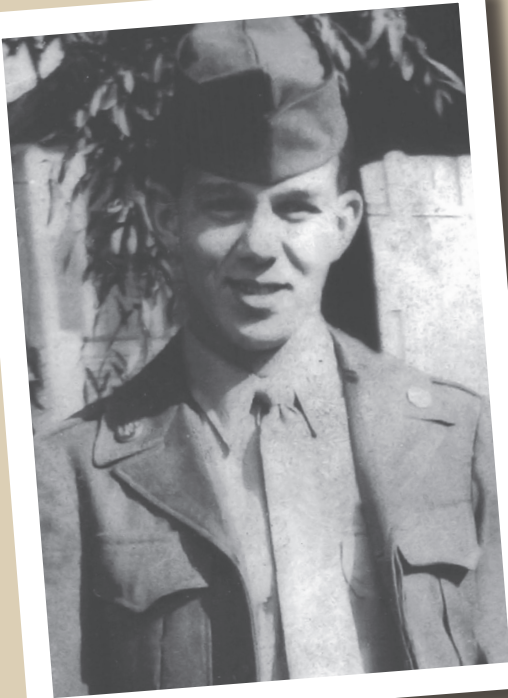




# LIVING LEGACY



## CHARLES R. THOMPSON

Born: July 21, 1928  
Korean War  
Army  
Served: 1946-1948



Charles R. "Charlie" Thompson was born in Portsmouth, OH on July 21, 1928 as the second of three sons to parents Edgar Louis Thompson and Lucile Rebecca Milstead Thompson. Growing up in Portsmouth was very enjoyable as the town thrived upon two major industries: Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel and the Norfolk & Western Railroad. Charlie's father worked at the local steel mill. His paternal grandfather was an engineer for the Norfolk and Western Railroad. Charlie recalls, "I was close in age to my brothers so we had one another for companionship. My father used to take us to the movies frequently. I was very close to my maternal grandmother, Nancy Louella Smalley Milstead. It was said that as a small child I was very frightened of thunderstorms and could be found in my grandmother's arms being held and rocked to allay my fears of the storm. My childhood was ideal until the year I turned thirteen. That's when my parents decided to send me to Indianapolis that summer to live with my Aunt Aletha and Uncle Claire. And I didn't know why. I just thought it was neat that I was getting a summer vacation."

"My cousin, Mary Rouch, who was three years older than me, traveled to Indianapolis with me. A railroad engineer, Gil Waldis, volunteered to drive us from Portsmouth to Indianapolis in his automobile. Mother packed a lunch – and off we went. To Mary's dismay she discovered about half way to our destination that I had already devoured the sandwiches. She also discovered that a thirteen year old boy eats a lot of food when I promptly asked, 'When are we stopping to eat?'" Charlie laughingly explains. "That summer we went swimming and boating on Lake James almost every day. I got so sunburned on one day that my aunt put vinegar and water on my back. It burned so badly that I screamed out, 'Jesus Christ!' Little did I know that the minister was in the next room. My aunt was mortified at my inappropriate language."

Charlie's antics in Indianapolis that fateful summer of his thirteenth year continued. Mary and Charlie went out on a john boat one day and didn't come back until after dark. The relatives were searching frantically for them when they finally returned. One day while swimming in the local pool, Charlie dove into the deep end and discovered a dead boy. "The boy was about ten years old. I went immediately to get the life guard, but the boy was already dead," Charlie recalls. On another occasion, a friend in Indianapolis received a new bicycle for his birthday. He promptly offered Charlie a ride and Charlie eagerly accepted yelling over his shoulder as he sped away, "I'll be back in a flash with the trash!" Charlie soon wrecked the bike and broke the wheel. He and his friend got into a fight over the wrecked bike with such fury that the adults got a hose out and sprayed them to stop the fight.

Deciding that Charlie needed more structure in his life, his aunt and uncle got him a job at the local Drugstore working at the soda fountain. Charlie explains, "The soda fountain had both inside service and outside curb service. I remember one day a car load of people all ordered sodas and when I delivered them to the car, they pulled out and left without paying. I was naïve and didn't believe that people would do something like that." Charlie says he had to quit working at the soda fountain when his face broke out in pimples from drinking too many sodas and eating too many sweets on the job.

When Charlie returned to Portsmouth at the end of that summer, he was devastated by the family news. He discovered that his parents had divorced. His father had made a mistake and had an affair with another woman. Once his mother discovered the affair, her family was adamant that she divorce him. So she did. Charlie was stunned and heart-broken. "Back then, you never heard of divorce. I blamed my father and was encouraged not to have anything to do with him by my mother's family. So I wouldn't let my father come near me for many, many years afterwards. I regret that fact to this day. But that's what happened. Things were never the same after my parents divorced."

Since Charlie's mother had no formal training, in order to make a living, she began to take in elderly women and care for them. "Uncle Clarence asked mother to take care of his ill mother for \$20 a month. That was the start of mother taking in elderly women. We had three elderly women living with us at any given time. We had to rearrange our bedrooms so that the largest bedroom was for the elderly ladies. My mother and I slept in the kitchen on a roll-away bed. We three boys helped take care of these women. We helped feed them, dress them, bathe them, change them, and take them out on the porch to sit in the swing on nice days. One woman thought she was married to Charles DE Gaulle and would repeatedly cry out for him saying, 'Gaulley, Gaulley, Gaulley.' One elderly woman liked to run away. On one occasion, I found



Charlie with his two brothers,  
James and Louis, in 1947.

her hiding down in a telephone post hole. These women became an extended part of our family and were like extra grandmothers to us boys. I feel my mother had the first nursing home in America. She did what she had to do to make a living for our family. She was a grand person and she relied on me the most of us three boys.”

Charlie graduated from Portsmouth High School as a member of the class of 1946. He had an aunt and uncle, Ruth and Clarence Rauch. “Uncle Clarence was a stern, tight-fisted German. But he took me to town one day near my graduation date and bought me a new suit. I’ll never forget his kindness as we didn’t have any money for such luxuries as new suits.”

“My friends and I didn’t have any plans for the future and there were no jobs because all the veterans were returning from World War II. So six or seven of my buddies and I decided to enlist into the military. Some went to the Marines, and I wanted to go to the Navy because of my brother James who had served in WWII. But I failed the Navy physical due to an irregular heartbeat. So I joined the Army. In those days, if you were a warm body, the Army would take you. If we enlisted for 1.5 years we were given a promise of a paid college education once we had served. The Army needed replacement soldiers to staff the occupation of Japan and Korea. So to get a job, I enlisted in the Army,” Charlie explains.

On August 13, 1946, Charlie reported to Fort Hayes near Columbus, OH. He was sent to Fort Knox for Basic Training. “I met all kinds of people in basic training. Men who were totally different from those I’d known back in Portsmouth. One man wouldn’t bathe and when he got so bad after days of not bathing, the other men took action and dragged him into the shower for a “G.I. Bath” with a horse brush. After that incident, he bathed regularly,” Charlie recalls.

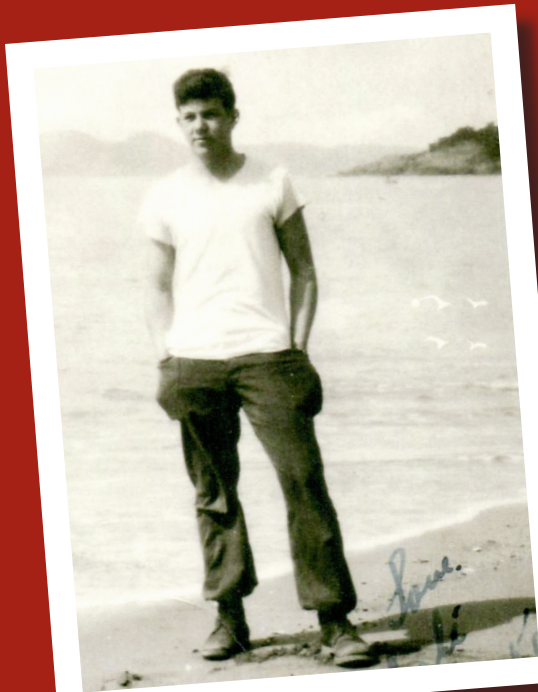
“I also had a good friend named Joey. Joey was a very small person and I don’t know how he passed the entrance physical. He had to work very hard to make it through basic training, but he succeeded.”

Once Basic Training was completed, Charlie was given the orders: “Delay in Route” and classified as ‘Repo Depo.’ This meant that he was a replacement soldier and was to go home and wait for further orders. Charlie waited at home in Portsmouth for about thirty days and then was ordered to report to Camp Stoneman at Pittsburg, CA. “I was standing on the dock in Pittsburg,



Charlie leaving for duty in Korea, October of 1946.  
Pictured right with his beloved grandmother.





Charlie in Busan, South Korea.


CA looking into my duffle bag when someone slapped me on the back of my head. It was an acquaintance I'd known from Portsmouth, Myron "Willie" Williams. Willie was somewhat of a shyster and I felt the Army was digging pretty low to have taken him. But we were both from the same home town and decided to have a few beers together. We both were sent to Korea, but on separate ships. Willie went to Taegu and I ended up in Busan (Pusan)."

Charlie shipped out at Oakland, CA and arrived at Yokohama, Japan before being shipped to Kyoto, Japan. He was now a member of the 6th Infantry Division. From Japan he went to South Korea to perform guard duty for the occupation of South Korea. Charlie remembers, "The shore was so shallow near Inchon, Korea that they could not build a port for the ships to land. Inchon was near Seoul, Korea."

Charlie continues, "That winter of 1946-47 was so cold we slept with our clothes on as we lay on our bunks in the barracks. It was a very bleak, dismal, dirty place. The Japanese had occupied South Korea during WWII and had shown no mercy for the people or their land. We were at Camp Wiggins at the southeastern tip of South Korea near Po Hang. It bordered the Korea Strait and was very close to Japan. The people lived a very primitive life in absolute squalor."

Charlie had taken an interest in learning how to cook. So once he was in Korea, he embarked upon learning this skill. He served at Taegu for several months and once he was sent to Busan, he successfully completed his formal lessons in cooking. Now instead of performing Guard Duty, Charlie was a full-fledged cook and assigned as the 2nd Cook. The 1st Cook and Mess Sergeant would get up at 3:00 a.m. to start breakfast. Charlie recalls, "We would take turns getting up early and getting things started so the other two could sleep in a little. We had eggs that were frozen and were over 20 years old. The ground beef we were given to use was as hard as a brick. We did all that we could to make it edible. One day we made pancakes but forgot to put in the baking powder. The pancakes were flat as could be and the men wadded them up and threw them at us. We felt we deserved this as the pancakes were terrible."

Charlie tells the following story to demonstrate the plight of the children in South Korea. "We served the food to the G.I.s on trays. Once the men had eaten, they took the trays over to the three large barrels we had rigged-up for washing the trays. You dipped the tray into the first barrel of very hot water and that is where the scraps of food that remained on the tray were deposited. Then the men dipped the tray into the second and third barrels to complete the wash cycle. All at once we began to notice that during the night, the food scraps that had been floating on the surface of the first wash barrel were gone. Over time we came to realize that about thirty Korean children who were living in an abandoned underground



bomb shelter had fabricated a net so that they could come out at night and dip the food scraps off the top of the water in the wash barrel. We tried to feed the children, but they were so afraid they would not come out.”

Charlie continues, “We also visited the girls’ orphanage near our camp that was run by the nuns at the Immaculate Conception Convent. Almost every Sunday, several of us G.I.s would go to the convent and take food and candy for the children. We played games with them such as ‘round the mulberry bush.’ These children had lost everything and I’ve never forgotten the lives they had to live. I remember it with a heavy heart to this day.”

To prepare coffee for the troops, Charlie had to rise at 3:00 a.m. and fill the tall cylindrical containers with water to boil. Then he would sprinkle about three bowls of coffee grounds on top of the boiling water and place a lid over it, shutting off the heat. He let the coffee simmer for a while and then took a container of cold water to pour over the top of the coffee. This had the effect of settling the coffee grounds to the bottom of the cylindrical container as the cold water dropped to the bottom.

Charlie recalls that their mess hall burned to the ground one winter day due to a faulty stove. He and the other cooks had to make a makeshift grill and oven to prepare the food. He remembers, “It was so cold – you were cooking, baking and freezing all at the same time.”



***“Being in the military at just barely eighteen years old, I met people from every walk of life. I saw people who had their land destroyed and who had lost everything. It made me have more empathy for those who did not have anything, and made me appreciate more what I had. I never forgot that lesson. It will stay with me the rest of my life.”***



“I remember meeting a young Korean woman on the beach. I was eighteen and she was probably thirty. She was very beautiful and I enjoyed talking with her. I also recall a beautiful building in Busan that had once housed a Japanese General while the Japanese occupied the area. Charlie recalls the building as having very hot baths that were very welcomed by the American G.I.s.

When asked what he learned from being in the military, Charlie responds, “Being in the military at just barely eighteen years old, I met people from every walk of life. I saw people who had their land destroyed and who had lost everything. It made me have more empathy for those who did not have anything, and made me appreciate more what I had. I never forgot that lesson. It will stay with me the rest of my life.”



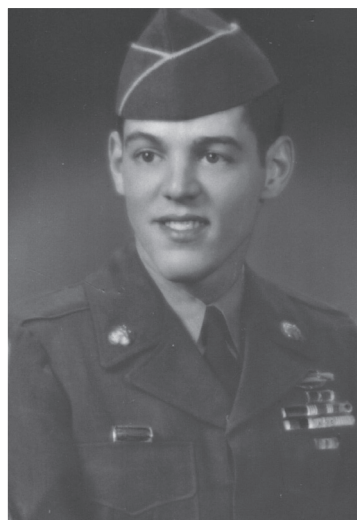
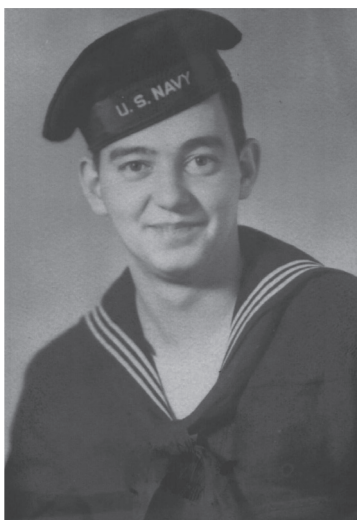
Charlie was honorably discharged in January, 1948 at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, CA. For service to his country, Charlie had been awarded the following medals: World War II Victory Medal and Army of Occupation Medal - Japan. He remembers, "The Golden Gate Bridge was beautiful when I was leaving the country on my way to Korea. But when returning home from Korea and seeing it again – that was the most beautiful sight I've ever seen! The Army gave me my discharge pay and a train ticket to Columbus, OH. I took the train from Columbus to Portsmouth and the railroad was located very close to my home. So when I got off the train, I only had a very short distance to walk. We had a great time visiting when I got home. I was so glad to see my mother. Unfortunately, she died just three years later in 1951 at the young age of 48."

Charlie is very proud of his two brothers who also served in the military. Oldest brother, James, served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He died in an auto accident at the age of forty. The youngest brother, Louis, served in the Army in the illustrious 1st Cavalry during the Korean War and was involved in several major battles. Charlie explains, "Louis was injured when he was hit by a hand grenade while serving in Korea. He received the Purple Heart and several other medals and awards. He came home after his service in Korea, but suffered from both his physical and psychological wounds from his battles in Korea for the remainder of his life. He died several years ago from cancer."

Receiving \$300 per month after he was discharged from the Army, due to having served overseas, as well as receiving his military subsistence, Charlie enrolled at the University of Dayton to begin taking courses towards his college degree. "In high school, I had taken shop classes instead of college prep courses. So I found that I wasn't prepared for the college work. So I only stayed for one semester. However, I excelled in one area – speech. I always got the highest marks in speech and when I did an improvisation about my

life in the Army, I received an A. Since college wasn't working for me, I decided that I wanted an apprenticeship as a machinist. With both a steel and railroad industry located in Portsmouth, I felt that was the right course of action for me to take. But there were just no jobs to be had in those industries in the late 1940's."

Charlie obtained employment as a surveyor with Ohio Consolidated Telephone. He worked at this job for the next 2-3 years surveying the rural areas of eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia. Charlie explains, "We were surveying for the installation of the party lines for



Left: Charlie's oldest brother, Jim. Navy, WWII  
Right: Charlie's youngest brother, Louis. Army, Korean War

the rural customers. I wasn't used to the ethnic names that were in the Wheeling area and had trouble understanding the various dialects that were spoken: Polish, Italian, Hungarian, etc. One day I asked a woman for her name and she said, 'Yosetta Moffa'. I thought she said, 'you said a mouth full'. We worked to get people signed up and I found the people of the Wheeling area to be warm and friendly. I remember the switchboard operators working in a very large room with fifty or so women working at the same time. When I'd walk into the room, they would whistle at me like some men whistled at a beautiful woman to let me know that I was the only man around. I guess this would be harassment these days, but I was fine with it and felt they were just kidding me."

During this time, Charlie was asked to go to a local dance by a friend. Charlie's current girlfriend, Nancy, was away at school, so Charlie started to decline the offer. The friend promptly said, "Why don't you ask Judy Pratt?" Since Charlie and Judy had graduated from high school together, Charlie felt comfortable in asking her to be his date for the one event as Judy was engaged to someone else at the time. Judy agreed to go with Charlie. Charlie explains, "We hit it off really well and in 1950, I proposed to and married Judith Clayton Pratt. My Aunt Ruth and Uncle Clarence Rauch served as our witnesses."

Charlie remembers having a severe sore throat in 1951 around the time his mother died. "I went to the doctor and he said I needed my tonsils removed. He asked me what I was doing around noon, and I told him I was available. So he had me come into his office and he numbed my throat a little and cut and pulled my tonsils out right there in the office and sent me home. That wouldn't happen like that these days," Charlie laughs.

Charlie's brother, James, was an X-ray technician at Portsmouth's Mercy Hospital. He asked Charlie if he would like to be an X-ray technician and Charlie was willing. So Charlie entered into the one year program under Dr. Felton at Cincinnati General Hospital to complete the program. After one year, Charlie was working at Portsmouth's General Hospital as the head X-ray Technician. Charlie worked there for the next ten years.

Charlie and Judy began having their three sons during these same ten years: Chris in 1953, Kevin in 1956 and Tim in 1959. Charlie had achieved the highest salary cap for his job's pay grade at the Portsmouth General Hospital, and he was getting discouraged at the lack of opportunity for advancement. Especially with three small sons to raise. It was at this time that Buck Burton, District Attorney for Scioto County,



Charlie and Judy's  
wedding day in 1950.



OH asked Charlie if he was interested in changing careers. Buck knew a man who owned a shoe company and he was interested in having Charlie work for him.

Charlie became the buyer, manager, and broker for the shoe company and L.S. Good & Co. He established excellent relationships with other major department stores such as Horne's and Stone and Thomas. Charlie would manage the shoe departments assuring that they had the latest styles in all the various sizes. His job was very stressful as he was always the middle man working between the base stores and the corporate shoe company. On one occasion, he was caught in an unnerving legal battle between L.S. Good and the corporate shoe company. Charlie had to anticipate which shoes would sell well and when to pull certain styles from the inventory. Charlie made a good living performing this work for L.S. Good & Co., but it meant that his family had to move frequently from city to city. Over the years, the Charlie Thompson family moved to: Charleston, WV; Huntington, WV; Winston-Salem, NC; Greensboro, NC; and finally, to Wheeling, WV in 1966. His three sons attended Triadelphia High School with his youngest son, Tim, graduating in the first class from Wheeling Park High School.



Charlie and his three sons:  
Chris, Kevin and Tim in 1963.

Life in Wheeling was good with the three boys active in their school activities and Charlie managing a prosperous shoe business. Judy had previously graduated from Miami University at Oxford with a BA in Home Economics. Once she moved to Wheeling, she contacted West Liberty State College and proceeded to successfully complete the requirements to obtain her teaching certificate. Judy now taught a first grade class. Charlie had quit the shoe business in the early 1970's and through a good friend of Judy's, Polly Schreiber, obtained a position with Bernhardt's Clothing Store in Wheeling selling men's clothing.

Judy became ill in 1976 and Charlie was concerned about her health. He encouraged her to go to the doctor and find out what was wrong. Judy never told Charlie the seriousness of her illness so Charlie did not realize how ill she really was. He explains, “She was in the hospital for tests and came home. I thought all was well and she was on the mend. Some friends had cooked dinner for us to welcome Judy home. She took one bite of the dinner and vomited. Back to the hospital we went. It turned out that Judy had ovarian cancer that had metastasized to the colon. But she had hidden that fact from me and the boys. She told her doctor she didn’t want us to know. It was a shock as she died so very quickly. It was only three months from the time she became ill until her death. I remember on July 4, 1976, our country’s bicentennial, all the church bells were to ring at the same time to announce our country’s 200th birthday.



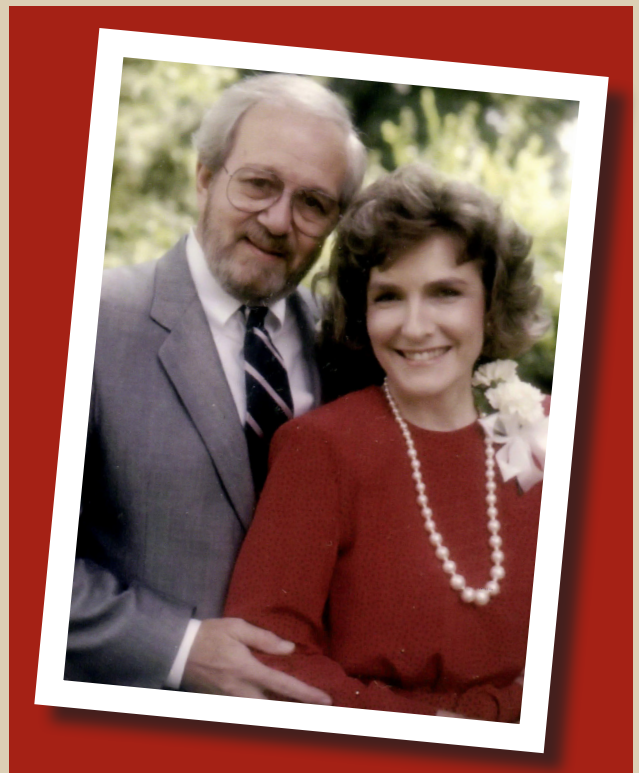
After the bells ceased ringing, the nurses told me to go home and get some rest – so I did. I was called back to the hospital a few hours later and Judy died – it was July 5, 1976. She is buried at a cemetery in her beloved Portsmouth, OH. We had been married for twenty-five years.”

Charlie was now left to continue raising his three sons. The boys were devastated as they never realized how ill their mother had been and Charlie had not had time to prepare them for their mother’s death since he himself had not known the seriousness of Judy’s illness. “My sons were bewildered and in shock. Chris was now attending school at the Virginia Seminary to become an Episcopalian Priest, Kevin was in college and Tim was to be a senior at Wheeling Park high school. They mourned the loss of their mother very deeply,” Charlie recalls.

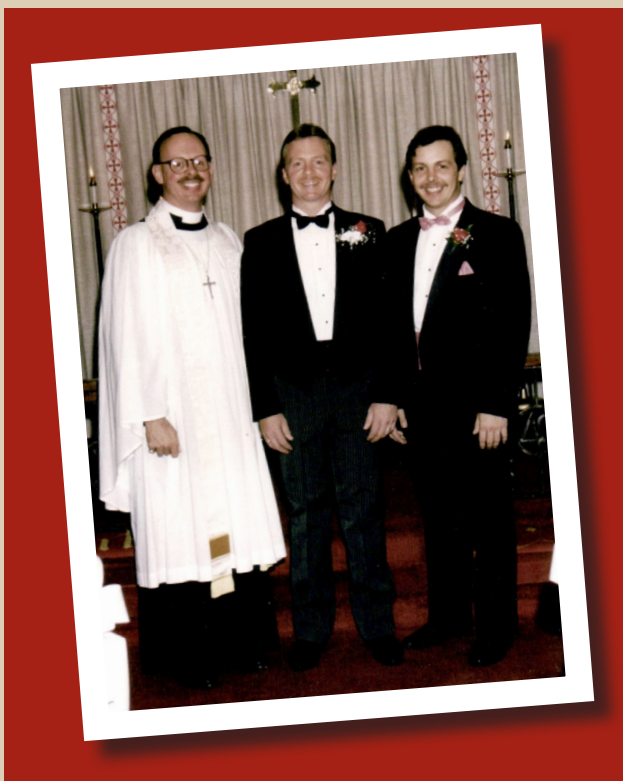
In 1977, Tim Thompson was a senior at Wheeling Park High School and was very active in the Drama Club. The end of the school year Thespian’s banquet was coming up. Tim talked with a school friend, Susie Nelson, who was also in the Drama Club. Both agreed and plotted that their parents should attend the Thespian’s banquet and meet one another. Charlie had been a widower for almost a year and Susie’s mother, Anne, had been divorced for five years. So the two parents went to the Thespian banquet with their children. Anne had only a few moments to eat as it was a Monday evening and the stores in Wheeling were open until 9:00 p.m. Anne had only one hour for her dinner break as she had to return to her job at Horne’s in Wheeling where she served as a buyer. As she started to leave the dinner, Charlie came outside to introduce himself. They spoke for only a few moments before Anne had to leave for work. Anne recalls, “Charlie was so bashful, naïve and nervous. I found these traits so endearing. I thought he’d call me the next day, but he didn’t. It took him a week!”

“I hardly got to talk to Anne that night, but I thought she was absolutely gorgeous and very nice. I wanted to see her again, but it took me a week to get the courage to call her. When I called her it was a Saturday and I called her at work near closing time of 5:00 p.m. as I felt if the conversation went wrong, I could use the store’s closure as an excuse to end the conversation. I asked her out for that evening, but she said she already had plans. So I asked her about a movie for the next evening, Sunday, and she said, yes. We saw the Paul Newman movie, ‘The Sting.’ I proposed after one month, and she said, ‘Yes.’ But we didn’t get married for five more years.” Charlie explains.

Elizabeth Anne Randolph Nelson was a buyer for Horne’s Department Stores and later for Stone and Thomas. She worked long hours and was required to travel to New York City one week a month to purchase clothing. Anne and Charlie dated for five years. Anne remembers, “We would meet at lunchtime and take long walks through



Charlie and Anne in 1987.



Charlie's three sons:  
Chris, Kevin and Tim

Wheeling walking hand-in-hand. We enjoyed being together so much. We wed on March 5, 1982. It was a wedding long awaited that almost didn't happen."

Charlie's son, Chris, as an Episcopal Priest, was to perform the wedding ceremony. He and his wife, Mary Jo, were expecting their first child together (Mary Jo had two children from a previous marriage). Charlie recalls, "We were to be married at Oglebay Park and had all the plans made. Chris called and said we'd better plan the marriage ceremony for Ripley, WV where he lived as Mary Jo was within three weeks of her due date. So we changed our plans and moved all our family and friends to Ripley to have the wedding. When we arrived in Ripley, we found that Mary Jo had gone into labor and she and Chris were in Charleston, WV at the hospital. Chris called and said Bishop Atkinson of the WV Episcopal Church lived in Ripley and he would perform our wedding ceremony since Chris was unable to do so. After the wedding ceremony was over, I received a phone call from Chris that my first grandchild had been born: Lucy – Lucile Rebecca Thompson. She was also

the first girl born in my family for over two generations and she had been born on Anne's and my wedding day – March 5, 1982! It was a very, very happy day!"

Charlie and Anne went on their honeymoon to New York City as part of Anne's monthly buying trip for Stone and Thomas. Anne recalls, "Bernie Chaus was one of the New York clothing vendors I dealt with for Stone and Thomas. He graciously gave Charlie and me two tickets to see the new Broadway show 'Phantom of the Opera' as a wedding gift. We had tickets near the front center to a show that was sold out week after week. It was a special gift making our honeymoon all the more memorable."

After returning from one vacation, Charlie learned that Berhardt's Store had burned down and he was out of a job. He quickly obtained a job at Crone's Men's Clothing Store using his salesman skills learned over his long career. Charlie retired at the age of 62. However, he took over the household doing all the shopping and cooking as Anne continued her career – ten years at Hornes and fifteen years at Stone and Thomas as a buyer. Anne then accepted a job in Knoxville, TN as a buyer for Proffitt's. Since Charlie had retired, he moved with her to Tennessee for five years. They moved back to Wheeling and Anne continued working at Wesbanco in the Securities Department for eight more years and then part time at her daughter's insurance company.

Charlie's other household duties now included taking care of the pets. Anne explains, "We had a golden retriever named Kate who was the single pup in her litter. She was a wonderful dog and we loved her

dearly. She became pregnant and Charlie served as the mid-wife by delivering Kate's thirteen pups. He did an amazing job and all thirteen pups lived."

One of Charlie's fondest memories is when he reconciled with his father. "My father was in his eighties and I was in my sixties. We hadn't talked for many, many years since my parents had divorced. We'd just found out that my youngest brother, Louis, had terminal cancer. Anne and I went to visit my father and his second wife, Imogene. Dad was so pleased to see me. We spent a lovely afternoon together. Dad and Imogene showed us photo albums of our family from years ago. We remained close after that visit and Dad died at age 94. I'm sorry it took me so long to see him and to let him back into my life."

Charlie's family has grown considerably over the years. Oldest son, Chris and his wife Mary Jo live in Lewisburg, WV and have Elizabeth and Jay from Mary Jo's first marriage. Charlie's first grandchild is their daughter, Lucy. Lucy has two sons: Branch and Trace. Middle son, Kevin, and his wife Marie live in McMechen, WV and they have a daughter, Sara. Youngest son, Tim, is married to Rachael and they live in Wheeling, WV and have a daughter, Gracie.

Anne brought her family into the Thompson fold on that blessed wedding day in 1982. Son Jeff Nelson is married to Deb and they live in Pittsburgh, PA. Daughter, Susan Nelson Paine is married to David and they also live in Pittsburgh. Susie has one child, Zach and a grandson, Alex. Daughter, Gayle Nelson Seidler is married to Don and they live in Wheeling. They have two children: Ben and Chris. Ben has a child named Claire. Daughter, Diane Nelson lives in Wheeling and has two children: Sam and Erin. Sam has two daughters: Bailey and Adelin.

In his retirement years, Charlie became an avid reader of history and especially enjoyed the Tony Hillerman books about the Southwest American Indians. "When I was younger, I enjoyed tennis. But as I aged, I turned more to reading. I also like Netflix as Anne and I enjoy English movies and mysteries."

## Kevin's wedding day

Pictured from  
left to right:  
Lucy, Chris, Mary  
Jo, Marie, Kevin,  
Anne, Charlie and  
Tim.





To celebrate Charlie's eightieth birthday, the family held a party in Portsmouth, OH. Charlie recalls, "We stayed at a Bed and Breakfast that was a house that had been built by my maternal great-grandfather, Creed Milstead. Chris and his wife, Mary Jo, stayed in the home as well. Great-grandfather Milstead was a river boat pilot on the Ohio River. He was somewhat of an entrepreneur as he was also a carpenter and built several homes in Portsmouth. For a while, he served as Portsmouth's mayor. I'm also proud of my paternal grandfather, Jefferson Franklin Thompson. Grandfather Thompson was from Wales and was a railroad engineer for the Norfolk and Western. He also expanded his livelihood by operating a millinery shop in Portsmouth. It was really amazing to get to stay in one of great-grandfather Milstead's homes for my 80th birthday and visit my old home town where I had so many memories." Anne chimes in proudly, "Charlie is so beloved in Portsmouth that there were 75 – 100 people attending his party. It was a wonderful tribute to a wonderful man."

When asked about how he would advise a young person to live a good life, Charlie reflects and responds, "When my sons married and began to have their children, upon each birth of each grandchild, I would say, 'God has blessed you with this child. Make sure you treat it kindly and raise it with love and guidance. This child is the greatest blessing you will receive. Stay on the straight and narrow path of what is right and take time to seek all that is good in life. Family is what matters most.'"

Charlie recently celebrated his 85th birthday, July 21, 2013, with Anne and his sons and grandchildren by his side enjoying a quiet day with him. Charlie's thoughts are shared as he stands in the twilight of his life, "I was so blessed to have been married to two amazing, loving women. I love my country, my family and friends, and all the wonderful gifts and joy I've received during my very blessed life – CHEERS!"

(Written July, 2013)



*Valley Hospice*  
*Caring. Living. Healing.*



Charlie and Anne