

# Charles Robert "Charlie" Rutherford

February 14, 1929 - May 11, 2024



Charles Robert "Charlie" Rutherford, a man of faith and immeasurable kindness, passed away peacefully at home in Grosse Pointe Park, MI, on May 11, 2024, at the age of 95. Born in Toledo, OH, on February 14, 1929, Charlie was a beacon of friendship and selflessness throughout his remarkable life. His legacy was forged by his unwavering faith; his commitment to family, church and country; and a career that bridged the realms of engineering, law and military service.

Growing up on Toledo's east side, Charlie was the 8th of 10 children and the last to pass. He attended Good Shepherd Catholic School, which was across the street from his family's three-bedroom house at 539 Clark Street. He attended Morrison R. Waite High School, playing sports and working as a roofer, railroad worker, and most proudly as batboy with the Toledo Mud Hens. Some 50 years after graduation,

Waite honored him with an alumnus of the year award.

Charlie graduated early to enlist in the U.S. Army towards the end of World War II, where he visited Japan and later served in the Army of Occupation in Korea as a military policeman. When he finished his enlistment, he took advantage of the GI Bill to enroll at the University of Detroit. He joined the campus ROTC and earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1953.

While working as an engineer, Charlie also taught engineering at U-D during the day, while in the evening attending U-D Law School (receiving an alumnus of the year award 60 years after his 1957 graduation). He found time to attend Bill McGowan's Umpire School in Florida and became a certified professional baseball umpire, working minor league baseball games in the Midwest. Charlie also enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserves and served as a Judge Advocate General. In 1985, he retired as a Full Bird Colonel, shortly after receiving the Legion of Merit honor, awarded for outstanding service and seventh in the order of precedence of all U.S. military awards.

Through a venerable, six-decade legal career, Charlie practiced Intellectual Property Law, most recently as a partner with Dykema Gossett. His leadership extended to multiple professional associations. He served as a president of the Detroit Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, and as a member, president, and chair of multiple sections of the State Bar of Michigan. He was a fellow for the American Bar Association and the Michigan State Bar Foundation, where he also served as a trustee and past president.

Beyond his professional life, Charlie's civic engagement and cultural contributions were profound. A life member of the NAACP, he held pivotal roles in organizations such as the Legal Aid and Defenders Association, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, and the Detroit Rotary Club. He was a founding board member of Loyola High School in

Detroit and a charter member of the President's Cabinet at the University of Detroit Mercy.

His commitment to enhancing the lives of others was unwavering, an endeavor he undertook with his beloved wife, Patricia Mary Rutherford, by his side. An avid Detroit Tigers fan, he was even more so a fan of the University of Detroit Mercy Titans Men's Basketball team. He was a Titans season ticket holder for more than 70 years, likely a UDM record and maybe even for the NCAA.

Charlie's family was the cornerstone of his life. Besides his devoted wife, he is survived by his loving son, John Anthony Rutherford, and predeceased by his beloved son, Charles R. Rutherford Jr. His role as a husband, father, and friend was characterized by an unfailing friendliness and selflessness that inspired all who knew him.

As someone who found solace and strength in his faith, Charlie relished singing in the church choir at St. Clare of Montefalco and was an active member of the Archdiocese of Detroit's Cardinal's Club. His life was a testament to the sentiment expressed by St. Francis of Assisi: "For it is in giving that we receive." Charlie's legacy embodies this principle, as his life was truly about giving to others.

Charlie Rutherford was not merely a man of achievements and titles; he was a symbol of integrity, a mentor to many, and a friend to all. His legacy, etched in the countless lives and institutions he touched, will continue to inspire generations to come.

Visitation will take place Monday, June 3rd from 4-8pm at Chas. Verheyden, Inc., 16300 Mack Ave., Grosse Pointe Park. Funeral Tuesday, June 4th; Instate 12 Noon until the time of Mass, 1:00pm, at Ss. Peter and Paul Jesuit Church, 629 E. Jefferson, Detroit. Committal service with military honors, Wednesday, June 5th, 1:00pm, at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Detroit.

### **Funeral and Honors:**

#### Public Viewing

Monday, June 3, 2024  
4:00PM - 8:00PM  
Chas. Verheyden, Inc.  
16300 Mack Avenue Grosse Pointe  
Park, MI 48230

#### Mass

Tuesday, June 4, 2024  
1:00PM - 2:30PM  
Ss. Peter and Paul Jesuit Church  
629 E. Jefferson Detroit, MI 48226

#### Instate

Tuesday, June 4, 2024  
12:00PM - 1:00PM  
Ss. Peter and Paul Jesuit Church  
629 E. Jefferson Detroit, MI 48226

#### Gravesite

Wednesday, June 5, 2024  
1:00PM - 1:30PM  
Mt. Olivet Cemetery  
17100 Van Dyke Detroit, MI 48235  
Committal / Entombment Service with  
Military Honors