



Charles E. Merkelz

December 19, 1921 - September 16, 2019

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After 97 well-lived years, Charles E. Merkelz passed away peacefully on September 16, 2019. Born in 1921, of immigrant parents, he had a typical Depression-era working-class upbringing: everything was scarce, nothing was wasted. Scrounge. Scrimp. Fix. Save. And above all: Work. Work harder & smarter than everyone else. As a teenager, Charles worked odd jobs to help out, bicycled the Illinois countryside with friends when he could get away. Always on the go, his work ethic and drive served him well throughout his life. At age 20, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps, serving at the air base at Hondo, Texas. At 21 he met his beloved wife, Olga, in San Antonio, at a USO Valentine's Day Dance. They married 18 months later, moving up to Illinois after war's end. Charles found work in maintenance at an Admiral Radio assembly plant, a job he absolutely loved, being the "natural engineer" he was: setting up production lines, building custom jigs, repairing tools & equipment. Contracting polio at age 28 did not slow him down for long: barely able to walk, he moved back to a warmer climate (San Antonio) and found work selling mops door-to-door, to exercise his weakened legs. One year later, he started work as an electrician at Kelly AFB, transferred to Material Management, eventually retiring from Kelly at age 55 with nearly 30 years combined service. Being "retired" did not mean he stopped working, though.

Charlie had started running ten years earlier, and made handcrafted trophies for some of the local runs. His hobby became a small business and he continued designing & making awards for another 20 years. Charlie was a charter member of the San Antonio Road Runners, and founder of San Antonio's oldest continuous running event, the Fiesta Mission Run. An accomplished runner himself, he competed in countless 5 & 10K runs & completed 17 marathons by age 60, more often than not winning his age group. He slowed down a little in his later 60's & 70's, less running and working, more time traveling with Olga, visiting family, hiking & camping in State & National Parks, sightseeing Disneyworld, Mexico, Europe. Charles wrote: "Life goes on after 75, but now we can just relax, and watch, and help our children... Looking back I am very satisfied with my life... I think my life was governed by Divine Providence or just plain luck. Either way, I am thankful."

Family & friends are invited to attend visiting hours on Sunday, September 29th from 2-6 p.m., at Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, 1700 S.E. Military Dr, San Antonio. Graveside service will be held the following day, at 1 p.m. at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

In lieu of Flowers you may make a donation in Charles' name in support of Texans for State Parks.

Instead of flowers, the family suggests making an In Memoriam donation in support of Texans for State Parks; just follow the link below:

<https://texansstateparks.org/get-involved/#supporttabs|1>

For personal acknowledgement, you may sign the online guestbook at www.missionparks.com in the obituary section.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **29**. 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, Cemeteries & Crematories
1700 SE Military Dr
San Antonio, TX 78214
(210) 924-4242
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Graveside Service

SEP **30**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery
1520 Harry Wurzbach
San Antonio, TX 78209

Tribute Wall



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Charles E. Merkelz.* ”



September 28, 2019 at 10:06 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album* ”



Robert M - September 26, 2019 at 02:52 PM



“ *5 files added to the album Memories Album* ”



Robert M - September 26, 2019 at 02:50 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Charles E. Merkelz.



September 24, 2019 at 09:40 PM



“ On behalf of Dan & Rhea Merkelz, Art & Dorothy Merkelz and Ed Merkelz we offer our sincere sympathies and prayers in the loss of your Dad. He was very good to us as boys growing up in Illinois and will be dearly missed. We made a donation of \$300.00 to the Texas State Parks but did not see anywhere we could say it was in your Dad's name. Must have done something wrong but we wanted y'all to know we had done that.

Dorothy Merkelz - September 22, 2019 at 03:44 PM



“ On behalf of the residents and staff of The Village at Incarnate Word, I offer our sincere sympathy to the Merkelz family on the loss of your beloved Charlie. It was our privilege to have him living in our community for more than three years. He was such a caring gentleman. May God grant each of you peace of heart, knowing, that Charlie has reached his final destination.

Sr. Shirley Vaughn - September 21, 2019 at 11:52 PM