



## Charles C. Blackwell Jr.

November 25, 1933 - November 6, 2025

Obituary for Charles Clarence Blackwell, Jr.

Charles Clarence Blackwell, Jr., Ph.D., passed from this world on November 6, 2025, less than three weeks shy of his 92nd birthday.

Charles was born on November 25, 1933, in Harrison County, TX, the youngest son of Charles Clarence Blackwell, Sr. and Lillie Belle Hartsfield Blackwell. He grew up on a family farm in neighboring Wood County, TX, with his brother, William, and sisters Virginia Belle (Thompson) and Charlie Ruth (Bullington).

Charles credited Virginia, who was 10 years his senior, for exposing him to cultural events as a boy and expanding his already strong thirst for knowledge. His first employment off the farm was as an oil field worker near Buras, LA, which helped with expenses as a student at Rice Institute (now Rice University) in Houston, TX. It was while studying at Rice that Charles met his first wife, Nancy Felice Smith Blackwell, to whom he was married on October 7, 1956, in Houston.

Charles and Nancy had three children: William Edward (Ward), born 1961 in Tucson; Andria Lee (Andi), born 1963 in Tucson; and Charles Eric (Eric) born 1964 in Las Cruces, NM. Charles and Nancy divorced in 1975.

Rice awarded Charles a B.A. in Liberal Arts in 1955 and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering the following year. He subsequently earned an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX,

and a Ph. D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Prior to earning his final degree, Charles was employed as an engineer at General Dynamics in Ft. Worth, TX, where his work included contributing to the development of the Convair B-58 Hustler, the world's first supersonic strategic bomber aircraft. This was followed by a long career in academia. While pursuing his doctorate, he was an instructor at the University of Arizona and then an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM. After obtaining his Ph.D. in 1966, Charles accepted a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) where he would remain for 24 years while raising his family.

Though he very much enjoyed teaching and developing the curriculum for his graduate engineering students, Charles was also a committed researcher. Throughout his adult life, both while in academia and afterward, his work was published in numerous scientific/technical journals and presented at conferences across the country and internationally. In all, more than 70 papers and textbook chapters that he authored or co-authored were published, the last in 2020 when he was 87 years old.

A frequent co-author of his published works was Charles' second wife, Ann Jicha Lowes Blackwell, whom he met while both were at UTA in the engineering department. They married in 1976 and were inseparable – even sharing an office for most of their years together. Beginning with a summer spent as guest faculty at the University of California Berkeley in 1984, Charles and Ann became enamored with the advanced technological and engineering community in the Bay Area. Eventually, this led them both to NASA's Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley where they both worked on control of life support systems for space travel, including space stations and potential human colonies on other worlds. This included stints for Charles with NASA contractors, The Bionetics Corporation and Lockheed Martin.

Ann passed away on September 9, 2011, from complications related to

Parkinson's Disease. In the last few years prior to her death, Charles supported and cared for Ann as much as possible – even giving up full-time employment to devote more time to Ann's care and allow her to fulfill her desire to continue her work for as long as possible. For several years, he operated on a part-time basis his own consulting firm for the application of mathematical resources and computer technology to the development of dynamic systems.

Not long after Ann's passing, Charles moved to Boulder, CO, near where his daughter lived, in order to be closer to family. Among other things, this allowed for more frequent family jam sessions in which Charles enjoyed strumming his guitar. He would relocate two more times over the next decade for similar reasons and end up spending his last days in Lower Allen Township, PA, where he endeared himself to the staff and residents of The Woods at Cedar Run assisted living.

Charles was preceded in death by all his siblings and both his wives. He is survived by his three children; two stepchildren: Leslie Lowes Bicay of Altadena, CA, and Jeff Lowes of Ft. Worth, TX; and seven grandchildren: Meagan Blackwell, Madison (Blackwell) McDonald, Audrey Blackwell, Alyssa Readmond, Curtis Readmond, Sophie Blackwell, and Philip Blackwell.

In accordance with Charles' wishes, no memorial service is planned. The family suggests that, in lieu of flowers, those who feel so inclined may make a donation in Charles' name to the Southern Poverty Law Center or St. Jude's Children's Hospital, two of the organizations to which Charles provided support for many years.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Michael Korch and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Charles C. Blackwell Jr..*



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**Michael Korch and Family** - November 12, 2025 at 06:54 PM

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“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



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**Ward Blackwell** - November 12, 2025 at 12:32 PM



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**Musselman Funeral Home & Cremation Services Inc.** - November 12, 2025 at 04:52 AM