

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Charles Richard DeVane
1931-2022
Presbytery of St. Augustine
October 4, 2022

Charles Richard DeVane passed away on August 31, 2022 at the age of ninety in Auburn, Alabama. Chuck was born in Elba, AL and spent his formative years in Clayton, AL. He was a distinguished student and a three-sport letterman in high school. He had an appointment to the United States Naval Academy but could not enroll due to a "color perception deficiency." He instead enrolled at Alabama Polytechnic Institute where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering, followed by a stint in the United States Army Corps of Engineers. While in the Army he met and married Betty Watkins.

Chuck described his youth as very ecumenical, attending Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian church youth groups. While in college at Auburn he attended the First Presbyterian Church and became a student of John Leith, who would later teach theology for many years at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. Chuck said he was profoundly influenced by Leith.

For most of his adult life Chuck was employed in the heavy equipment industry, working in Indiana, Michigan, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. He and Betty had four children: John, Denise, Angela, and Tom. Chuck was a dedicated lay person in Presbyterian churches during these years. He was ordained as an elder and utilized his gifts by serving alongside pastors in hospital visitation and other kinds of outreach to people. This opened the door for a calling to ministry, which was further energized by his love of theology. Along the way he became a Stephen Minister, a confirmation of his pastoral gifts. In 1985 he began a long journey to ordination by enrolling in Memphis Theological Seminary, taking classes while working full time. He earned his seminary degree in 1991.

Chuck then retired from Clark Equipment Company to pursue his calling in ministry. He was ordained by St. Andrew Presbytery on May 7, 1995 and became pastor of San Mateo Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of St. Augustine. He went on to serve Prospect Presbyterian Church in Meridian, MS, and Ramsay Memorial Presbyterian Church in Alabama. In 2010 he decided to return to Florida for retirement and found a home off Yelvington Road in East Palatka, not far from San Mateo. He described this as "the little house at the end of the hard road." He became the Pastor of Visitation at First Presbyterian Church in Palatka. He loved to visit and saw this as the

focal point of his entire ministry. He served formally in this role until 2018 but continued to informally call on people in the church.

Chuck DeVane was an Eagle Scout, a Rotarian (a Paul Harris Fellow), and a Mason. He was a member of the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, and a chaplain with the Mississippi Firefighter Burn Center. He had a pilot license and enjoyed flying. He claimed to have been a good golfer, which I received with some skepticism.

He was beloved for his gregarious personality, winsome sense of humor, conscientious care for people, and deep commitment to the ministry of the church. He made friends easily and nurtured those friendships in a natural fashion. He was a gifted preacher and writer who brought humor and comfort to the people he served. I once jokingly asked him how a mechanical engineer from Auburn could be such a literary figure.

Chuck recently moved back to his beloved Auburn to be closer to family as his health declined. Even as he was living in a health care facility, I easily imagine him roaming the halls, looking to make a pastoral call on anyone who needed some company. He was just that kind of person. He was a joy to have as a friend and a pastor. He is missed.

We thank Rev. Cliff Lyda, Interim Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Palatka, for writing this memorial resolution, including the first person reflections that add a special touch.

Thanks be to God for this marvelous and humble servant of Jesus Christ!