



## Charles Davis(Charlie) Rankin

June 2, 1925 - January 8, 2016

Charles Davis (Charlie) Rankin died Friday, January 8, 2016, at his home in Boerne, Texas from the effects of emphysema. He was 90 years old.

Born June 2, 1925 to Winnie Lee (Davis) and Charles Duncan Rankin in Dallas, Texas, he was graduated from high school there in 1943. He enlisted in the navy and served as a boiler tender on the USS Takanis Bay (CVE-89). His ship was one of the first to dock at postwar Japan, and they brought back hundreds of American soldiers who had fought the Japanese. The Takanis Bay was one of those smaller carriers which the United States made by the dozens during the war.

After mustering out of the Navy in late 1945, he headed to College Station and Texas A & M College, where he was graduated with an animal husbandry degree in January, 1950, complements of the G.I. Bill. His real love, though, was rodeo, and he was a member of the Aggie rodeo team. He said he paid for his 'extras' at college by winning a 'purse' at the rodeos. While at A & M Charlie met Sue Evelyn Moore at the Bandera Stompede, courted her and married her on September 21, 1950.

Charlie said the need for a national organization to govern college rodeo was apparent to him and to fellow cowboys. So, on January 30, 1949, the NIRA--the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association was established, with Rankin elected the first student president. The NIRA was student-created and student-led, and it is still the college rodeo governing body today.

After graduating A & M, Charlie became the first NIRA Executive Manager, a

job he held only months before he was called back into service during the Korean War. After Korea, he worked in Eden, in West Texas, as an agent for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. After awhile, he tried his hand at selling insurance in Dallas, but realized that was not for him. He started doing a program of agricultural news and markets on WACO Radio, in Waco. The owners of KRGV Radio in Weslaco offered him a job as farm broadcaster not long after, and he moved his family to the Rio Grande Valley.

Charlie started doing an early morning radio program on KRGV. KRGV then added a noontime radio and television program, and the Charlie Rankin farm program was heard and seen in many Valley homes.

He continued at KRGV until leaving in 1967 to form his own company, Voice of Valley Agriculture, and his early and noontime farm reports continued on KURV Radio in Edinburg, KBOR Radio in Brownsville and eventually KELT-FM in Harlingen. In 1984, Charlie and other investors bought KURV Radio from Lloyd Hawkins and he operated the station and did his farm program until retiring in 1990. He also partnered with June Brann to start South Texas AgriNEWS and wrote a column entitled 'Behind the Chutes.'

Charlie never lost his interest in rodeo, helping organize the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Alumni Association and was elected 2007 NIRA Alumnus of the Year, something of which he was very proud. He garnered many awards in the agriculture community, both in the Valley and statewide, over the years.

Honors and positions of leadership in agriculture include: President of the Valley A&M Club in 1956, Chairman of the Valley Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Committee in 1960, President of the Rio Grande Valley Beef Syndicate in 1960, member of the Valley Chamber's Agriculture Weather Committee from 1963-1968, member Texas A&M Agriculture Advisory Committee 1960-1961, lay member for four years on the local State Bar Grievance Committee.

Charlie not only wrote about and spoke about agriculture on radio and television, he got involved in it. He and partners owned citrus groves north of

Weslaco and northwest of Mission over the years. He furthered that involvement with service on boards of industry organizations. He served on the Texas Citrus Mutual (TCM) Board of Directors from 1983 to 1991, was TCM President 1983-1984, was a member of the Texas A&I Citrus Center Advisory Committee and was President 1985-1986.

His involvement in the citrus industry led to his selection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to attend a citrus symposium in China along with Dr. Dick Hensz of the A&I Citrus Center and 12 citrus scientists from California and Florida.

In 1988, fellow citrus lovers honored him by electing him King Citrus of the Texas Citrus Fiesta, an accolade he relished.

Not only was Charlie a broadcaster and a citrus farmer, he was something of an amateur historian, at least as South Texas history was concerned. From 1978 to 1984 he served on the Hidalgo County Historical Commission and was on the board of the Hidalgo County Historical Museum (now the Museum of South Texas History) 1982 to 1989. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Texas Ranger Association Foundation in Waco.

"Charlie Rankin was the biggest supporter the Texas Aggie Rodeo Team has ever had. He never forgot about us and was always willing to help." That praise from Dr. Al Wagner, the Aggie Rodeo Team sponsor sums up Dad's love of the sport. He was All-Around Cowboy at the 1947 Aggie rodeo, champion bareback bronc rider at the 1st NIRA Texas A&I rodeo in Kingsville in 1949 and was a Texas A&M team member at the 1st College National Finals rodeo at the San Francisco Cow Palace in 1949.

In 1985, wife Sue died of pancreatic cancer, and in 1988 Charlie married a high school friend,

Billie Marie Tolbirt. Billie made Charlie very happy and she continues to live at Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs. Her children, Gayle Eason and Randall Tolbirt, and their spouses, Bill and Tannah, became a second family, and he was enveloped in love by them, their children and grandchildren.

Charlie was an outgoing man who loved his family, his God, his country and Texas A&M. Possessed of much patience, he was a caring grandfather. He rarely raised his voice or spoke harshly about anyone.

He is survived by a daughter, Susan, of Dallas, and grand daughter, Alexandra Amanda; a son, Davis Rankin and wife Shan, grandsons Marshall and Duncan; step daughter Gayle Tolbirt Eason and husband Bill; stepson Randall Tolbirt and wife Tannah. He is also survived by grandchildren Tod Eason, Christine Eason Raymond and husband Chris Raymond, Tammy Tolbirt and Shana Tolbirt. His great grandchildren are Jordan Gonzales, Logan Gonzales, Avery Falcon, Trenton Falcon, Jackson Ames, Jack Raymond and Lily Eason.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, January 16, at 11 am at Kreidler Funeral Home, 314 N. 10th Street, McAllen, Texas, with a reception following at Grace Presbyterian Church at 4701 N. 29th Street (the northwest corner of Buddy Owens Drive (3 mile line) and N. 29th Street).

The family will hold a visitation Friday from 6--8 pm at Kreidler's.

A private burial for family at Roselawn Cemetery will precede the funeral service.

On Monday, January 18, a midday memorial service will be held at the Morningside Ministries Menger House, where he lived.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to honor his memory may make a donation to The Museum of South Texas History (MOSTH), 200 N. Closner Blvd., Edinburg, Texas, 78541; Texas Aggie Rodeo, P.O. Box 12074, College Station, Texas, 77842 or Morningside Ministries Covenant Fund, 700 Babcock, San Antonio, Texas, 78201.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN **15**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Kreidler Funeral Home, Inc.  
314 N 10th St.  
McAllen, TX 78501  
(956) 686-0234  
kreidler@sbcglobal.net  
<http://www.kreidlerfuneralhome.com/index.html>

## Funeral Service

JAN **16**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Kreidler Funeral Home, Inc.  
314 N 10th St.  
McAllen, TX 78501  
(956) 686-0234  
kreidler@sbcglobal.net  
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# Tribute Wall



“ *Charles Davis(Charlie) Rankin*

October 08, 2023 at 09:43 PM



“ *Charles Davis(Charlie) Rankin*

November 29, 2022 at 06:40 AM



“ *Hello Susan and Davis. I'm so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. I had not heard, until the recent Aggie Muster. I have GREAT memories of you father and Mother. They were both so close to the Sims family. Your parents were great people. I would love to talk to y'all one day. My phone number is 210-771-8774. God bless!!*

**Bob Sims** - April 26, 2016 at 07:58 AM



“ *To Davis, Susan and family's: As you know Charlie was a very special friend to me and Aggie Rodeo. We stayed in constant contact with each other so I could keep him updated on how the Aggie rodeo team was doing. I will miss his calls and emails. Dr. AL*

**Al Wagner** - January 19, 2016 at 10:21 AM



“ *Myles Beeching lit a candle in memory of Charles Davis(Charlie) Rankin*



**Myles Beeching** - January 15, 2016 at 08:10 AM

TC

“ *The District and Associate Judges of Dallas County purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Charles Davis(Charlie) Rankin.*



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**The District and Associate Judges of Dallas County -**  
January 14, 2016 at 05:26 PM