



Charles Mitchell

April 4, 1941 - March 8, 2008

Charles Mitchell, 66, of Livermore, passed away Saturday, March 8, 2008. A memorial service will be held at 3:00 on Friday, March 14, at Plymouth Congregational Church, 916 W. Prospect Road, Fort Collins. Charlie was born April 14, 1941, in Newark, New Jersey, to William A. and Ruth Cobbey Mitchell. He grew up in Jacksonville, New Jersey, as the second oldest of seven children. Charlie attended Boonton High School, where he became a National Merit Scholar, co-captain of the football team, and a two-time State Champion Pole Vaulter. He attended Princeton University, where he earned his BS, MS and Ph.D degrees, graduating in Aerospace and Mechanical Sciences in 1967. While there, he broke University and Ivy League records in pole vaulting, and qualified for the NCAA Track and Field Championships. After graduation, Charlie moved to Fort Collins, where he became a Professor in the Colorado State University Mechanical Engineering Department. His courses included aeronautics, combustion, and statistical thermodynamics. His research incorporated liquid rocket combustion stability, alternative energy development and toxic emission reduction from internal combustion engines. He authored over 75 technical articles, received the Dean's Council Outstanding Faculty Award, and was invited to lecture in China and the Netherlands. In addition to being a rocket scientist, Charlie served as a volunteer pole vault coach to the CSU track and field team. He spent much of his free time working with his wife as a forest steward, restoring and managing the native pine forests on their ranch in Larimer County. He and Veta were selected as the Colorado Outstanding Tree Farmers in 2006. A loving husband, father, brother, uncle, coach, and teacher, Charlie lived his life with passion. He enjoyed mountain climbing, running, biking, camping, skiing, literature, and Ram football. Charlie constantly inspired those who knew him with his wit, courage, curiosity, and enthusiasm. Charlie is survived by his wife, Veta; his children, Charles Michael Mitchell, Darla Joanne Harrah, and Lynne Aquarius Mitchell; his brothers, Bill, Mike, John, and Steve, and his sisters, Cheryl and Jan. He is beloved by his many family members, students and friends whose lives he has touched. He will be dearly missed. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to The American Heart Association, or the charity of your choice, in care of Goes Funeral Care, 3665 Canal Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524.

Comments



“ I think our dads roomed together in college. I have a drawing that my Dad found on the back of their closet door. It is a sketch of a woman with a baby. That's all I know. - Courtney Morgan-Greene

Courtney Morgan-Greene - December 27, 2019 at 03:33 PM



“ I am deeply sorry to hear of your loss. Mr. Mitchell was a man beyond men whose brilliance was only surpassed by his genuine care, concern and spirit towards others. I must admit when I think of all the times I was with Darla and her family, I have nothing but happy memories and laughter. I quickly went to one solid memory of a conversation Darla and I had with her dad about the reasons not to bring kids into this world..and his response was "if you do not, what would happen? You need the good to out weigh the bad". This has always stayed with me. I think this to be the way in which his world view was maintained...a man whose brilliance left me a bit intimidated when playing games, but whose kindness and gentle side always struck a balance. Then I chuckle some as I think of how he and Veta weathered schemes Darla and I created along our journey..Mr. Mitchell never moved away and stood to be taller and stronger then the giant redwoods even when patience was tried. I am fortunate to have met such a man. I am more fortunate to have learned from him of life and paths to take that match who you are not what other's think you should be.

Legacy is an interesting thought right now, and what I know is Mr. Mitchell's legacy lives through those whose life he touched. Specifically Darla..the spirit of moving through life because of how it makes sense to you, teaching and sharing with other's whose life gets bumpy along the way..is what I believe put a smile on her father's face every day and night.

I don't think there is any other greater gift to your children when legacy is lived because of lessons been taught.

My thoughts and heartfelt sadness is with the Mitchell family. I am sure there are no words to describe the void, but the memories and teachings live a life time.

Please know I am thinking of you all.

Kellie

Kellie Arme - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Dr. Mitchell is undoubtedly one of the greatest teachers and influences in my life. As my professor at Colorado State, I remember sitting in awe during his lectures. The wealth of knowledge that he possessed always amazed me, and the poise and comfort that he expressed it with is unsurpassed by any educator I have known. I would make a point to stop by Dr. Mitchell's office every week, if not to ask about a difficult combustion homework problem (which they all were), just to be in his presence, pick up any nuggets of information that he had, and to hear his contagious laugh. Many thanks to Dr. Mitchell for being a great influence on my life as an engineer and hopefully some day a professor. I send my deepest condolences to his family.

Daniel Sweeney - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I was very sorry to hear of Charlie's passing through one of my former students who recently joined his department at CSU (Prof. A. Marchese). I remember Charlie well as one of the senior PhD candidate "mentors" when I arrived for my graduate years in 1966. In those years spent mostly on the Forrester Campus, the graduate community in the Aerospace and Mechanical Sciences Dept. was very close knit. Charlie has many old friends from those days, and although I have not seen him in many years, I know that the camaraderie we all experienced was a positive influence on our lives and careers. Again, my sincere condolences.

Frederick L Dryer - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ To the Mitchell family:
Susan and I are very sorry for your loss. He has left us so unexpectedly, that it is difficult to fully express our sense of sadness in his passing. Charlie was a dear colleague, and I always enjoyed our conversations. We wrote a few papers together, and I relied on him to get the explanations correct ! He and I also shared an interest in track and field, and enjoyed talking about pole vaulting and marathons. If there is anything Susan and I can do to help, please let us know.

Allan and Susan Kirkpatrick

Allan Kirkpatrick - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Charlie - I am sorry to hear you have lost your dad. It used to be that 66 sounded sooo old, but as we ourselves are in our 40's, 66 sounds and is pretty darn young. Many of us will be facing the loss of our parents and it's a difficult and new phase of life. Know you're not alone and please call or email if you need a friend. After losing my brother last year, I know the pain can strike at the most odd times and songs can bring tears and grief has many phases that go on for months. I read your dad's obituary and he certainly led a brilliant life full of activity, learning and activism and made an impact on many people. Good for him! I wish you and your family peace and love at this sad time.

Your friend,
Suzy Renchy

March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Charlie was the best friend I could ever hope to have.

Byron and Donna Winn - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I am saddened to learn of Charlie's death. Our common Princeton aerospace roots led us to academic careers that assured periodic meetings, mostly at technical meetings. I regret that we did not have the opportunity to share our love of all things outdoors.

With my sincere condolences to his family.

Bob Sawyer
(Professor, University of California at Berkeley)

Bob Sawyer - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Dr. Mitchell was always such a calm gentle teacher. Extremely humble yet extremely knowledgeable, he helped lay the thermo foundation for my job today, he helped me help others. His work lives on. Our prayers are with the family. God Be with you.

Elisa Guzman - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Veta, our hearts are so sad for you and all of Charlie's family. He was such a brilliant, funny, humble man, and he loved you so very much!
They say the best gift a man can give his kids is by how much he loved his wife. Well, he left a great legacy to his kids.
We hope your wonderful memories will give you peace in the days, weeks, and years ahead.
Mary Ann & Dewayne

Dewayne & Mary Ann Findley - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Charlie Mitchell enriched my life in important ways. He was my friend and could always be relied upon for sound advice. He was the only person in the College with whom I could have a serious conversation about chemical thermodynamics on a meaningful level. He was the only person in the College with whom I could consult about teaching the applications of statistical thermodynamics. He was the only person in the College with whom I felt totally comfortable speaking with about heart disease that affected us both. Charlie was a man of high principles, and I never in 41 years knew of him giving any less than his best effort to every task on which he embarked. I admired the respect that he showed student athletes and his commitment to their success, both on the field and in the classroom. He was a great family man, and he loved living in Colorado. He wrote well and with amazing clarity and conciseness. He handled adversity with grace and dignity. He could have retired, but he chose not to because he loved his work and felt appreciated by the students whom he served so well. He was also much admired by his colleagues who recognized and valued his commitment to excellence. I shall miss him terribly, but my life is richer because he was a part of it.

Harry Edwards - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Veta and family,
I was greatly saddened to hear of Charlie's passing. My heart goes out to you and your family during this difficult time. I will miss Charlie. He was a great man and I feel fortunate to have known him. You all are in my thoughts and prayers. I pray that with time your sorrow will lessen and the special memories of Charlie will dominate your thoughts.
Sincerely,
John C. Smith
Your Red Mountain Road Neighbor and friend!

John C Smith - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Charlie-a real gentleman, soft spoken, friendly to all, never a sour word, esay smile, honest, 100% SMART!, professional, no agendas, just straight, true Charlie. We will miss your grace and calming presence---

Now I find out--Football??, Pole Vault??

Princeton and Ivy League records???

Green as the trees he nurtures. Lord, here comes a good one!

We didn't get enough time with you, Charlie, your footprints are our treasures.

Jim Nestlerode

Jim Nestlerode - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I first met Coach Mitchell in the late summer of 1997, my freshman year at CSU. I was an 18 year old freshman on the track team coming in to be a Pole Vaulter and Decathlete. I spent the next five years under Coach Mitchell's wing. I can not express how much he has meant to my life. As a coach, he was outstanding. He developed me to a point were I was fortunate enough to break the CSU pole vault record. But more important, he taught me what it takes to be a great person. We spent countless hours sitting on the pole vault mats talking about life. He led by example and willingly shared his wisdom of what it takes not only to be an outstanding man and an absolute wonderful human being. I remember my very last track meet in college. We were in San Diego and the meet was just finishing up and I was talking with Coach Mitchell. I was thanking him for everything that he had done for me over the years. My thanks was not pertaining to the many things that he did for my athletic career, but rather for my life. I remember I said to him "when I am faced with difficult decisions or life changing events I look to the people that I respect most in my life and people that I want to emulate to give me direction. Over the last few years, this has been my parents and you". This statement is true even today. I often find myself thinking back to the wisdom he shared with me back on the pole vault pits of CSU. I am a better person because I had him in my life.

Coach, you will be sorely missed and thank you for helping make my life what is it today. You have been truly loved.

Matthew Smoldt

Matthew Smoldt - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ I first met Charlie when we worked on related combustion stability contracts with the Air Force 20 years ago. Since then we have maintained an excellent professional relationship and grew to be friends. I have always respected his work and his insights. In addition, I very much appreciate the capability and preparation of his students who work in my group at Pratt and Whitney Rocketdyne.

I will miss Charlie very much. Our family is praying for him and his family.

Robert Jensen - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Mike:
Charlie was one of the first people Dede and I met when visiting Colorado State University in the winter of 1968. For three decades we were next door office mates in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, sharing an extra professional interest in literature. He brought me a copy of Mistry's "A Fine Balance" when I was in the hospital a few years ago, knowing my interest in Indian culture. He was an articulate and highly cultured man with wide ranging interests. He was highly respected by his students. His work on resonance in rocket engines continues to have relevance today as the new generation of space transports are in their design phases.

Dede:

We are sad beyond words at the shocking news of Charlie's death. It is numbing and incomprehensibly tragic. He had a generous heart and an insightful mind.

Mike and I stood on our balcony last night, watching the sunset and talking about what an outstanding person he was. One in a million!

I keep thinking about the last time I saw them both together. It was last summer at Donna and Byron's anniversary party. I remember seeing one of the party photos of Charlie and Veta holding hands as they stood under a trellis of flowers. They were smiling and looking into each others' eyes and I thought at the time about how content they seemed. That is a happy vision to keep in mind.

We must all remember:

Yesterday is history

Tomorrow is a mystery

Today is a gift (E. Roosevelt)

Our thoughts and sympathy are with Veta and family.

With love,

Dede and Mike Histan

Mike and Dede Histan - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ charlie will always be remembered for the great opportunity he gave me. he had an inane ability to see past the thorns to the rose.

bill espander - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ Will always remember you close to our hearts. Right along side of your wonderful father, Bill. Veta will always be watched here by so many that love her. You know that she is in good hands, until you meet again.
Here's to the Band Played On.
Love Elaine

Elaine Reed - March 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM