

Charles Quentin Mateer

(February 19, 1922 - December 16, 2008)

 Charles Quentin Mateer, 86, Custer, died Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008, at the Custer Regional Senior Care Center after a short period of declining health.



Chuck was born Feb. 19, 1922, in Rapid City, the son of Stanley and Lucile (Guyer) Mateer, and was raised in the Hermosa/Custer area. As a freckle-faced 5-year-old boy with bright red hair, he was picked from the crowd of townspeople by Grace Coolidge to stand by her for a photo shoot during President Calvin Coolidge's visit to the Custer State Park Game Lodge in 1927. He graduated from Custer High School in 1939. After briefly attending SDSU in Brookings, he served in the Army Air Corps during WWII and was a decorated combat pilot, commanding Custer's Last Stand, a B-24 bomber that flew missions over Norway, Germany, France and Czechoslovakia. After his military service, he attended SDSU, the University of Missouri and the SD School of Mines and Technology. He served as the assistant city engineer in Hot Springs, where he met his future wife, Olive Ann Nicholls. They were married July 31, 1948, in Butte, Mont., and raised four children, Kay, Chrisann, Curt and Karen, during their lives together. Chuck was with the State of South Dakota from 1948–1958, working for the SD Aeronautics Commission as assistant state airport engineer and as the state pilot for Governors George T. Mickelson and Sigurd Anderson. He also served as director of the Korean Veterans Bonus Program and the director of the state's Social Security Program.

The family moved to Belle Fourche in 1958, where Chuck worked as superintendent of utilities and city engineer. He later worked in private industry, and then returned to his position as director of public works for Belle Fourche from 1978 until his retirement in 1984.

Chuck was associated with state government in many areas. He was appointed to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission for eight years, serving as chairman from 1973–74. He served six years on the governor's Advisory Commission for Public Lands and was state president of the Water Works Association in 1966. In 1969, the National Water Works Association honored him for his distinguished service to the industry.

Chuck was active in service and fraternal organizations for many years. He was a life member of the Elks Club and was a life member of the Shrine, serving as potentate of Naja Temple in 1973. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and the Scottish and York Rites of Freemasonry and was deeply committed to the work of these fraternal organizations. He started his membership in the Lions Club in 1947 in Hot Springs and served as the charter president of the Pierre Lions Club in 1951, this being the last state capital in the U.S. to form a Lions Club. He was active on the SD Board of Directors of the Easter Seals Society and also spent 10 years on the Board of Directors for the Black Hills Playhouse.

In 1985, he was appointed Sergeant at Arms in the South Dakota State Legislature and, upon the retirement of Representative G.F. Mortimer, ran for and served three terms as a state representative. Additionally, he served for 10 years on an advisory group to the Small Business

Administration as a volunteer working with small business entrepreneurs. He was active with the senior citizens organizations in Belle Fourche and Custer and was a longtime member and past vestryman of St. James Episcopal Church in Belle Fourche.

In addition to his military service, Chuck was a longtime aviator and flew planes until the mid-1980s. In 1996, he was inducted into the SD Aviation Hall of Fame. His flight instructor, O.J. Fett, who became a lifelong friend, said that Chuck was most natural pilot he had ever met. Family and friends remember Chuck's personalized flying tours of the Black Hills and the surrounding area. Chuck was known for his keen sense of humor, his abiding love of South Dakota and his creative culinary skills, including, according to his daughter Chrisann, the best chili she ever tasted, cooked on a camping stove on the tailgate of a Ford station wagon in the middle of Yellowstone National Park. (She unfortunately also remembers his worst batch of chili, concocted of refrigerator leftovers and then scorched.)

After the death of Olive Ann in 1987, Chuck married Wilma Loken of Custer in 1998. The two spent 10 happy years together traveling, visiting family and friends throughout the country, and participating in church and community activities in Custer.

He leaves behind many wonderful friends and his family, including his wife, Wilma Loken, and her five children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He also leaves his daughter, Chrisann Mateer of Belle Fourche; his son and daughter-in-law, Curt and Kathi Mateer of Broomfield, Colo.; his daughter and son-in-law, Karen Mateer and Terry Metz of Rumford, R.I.; his son-in-law, Richard DuBois; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one niece; and four nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents; two brothers and a sister; his first wife, Olive Ann, in 1987; and his eldest daughter, Kay Mateer DuBois, in 2003.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 22, at the Custer Lutheran Fellowship Church (Hwy 16A, 3 miles east of Custer).

In addition to the memorial service on Monday, Masonic services will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18, at the Custer City Masonic Lodge, 220 N. 6th St. in Custer.

Memorials may be directed to the Travel Fund, Naja Shriners Hospital Division, P.O. Box 7893, Rapid City, SD 57709-7893, or the charity of your choice.

Arrangements are being handled by McColley's Chapel of the Hills in Custer. Written condolences can be made at www.mccolleyschapels.com.