

Chuck Judd Memorial – Literary Club June 8, 2015

Charles M. Judd was one of our giants. At any time you can look around the room and pick out one or two of our number who somehow qualify for this special status. You would find him sitting at the front table, always early, sipping his glass of Chardonnay and talking with Robert Smith. Chuck was a member for 45 years, more than a quarter of our Club's existence. During that time he gave thirty papers including his Presidential address in 1994. Along the way, well into his 70's he successfully made the transition from typewriter to computer. However, the community recognition of his special nature was not a result of papers or 'clubability', but rather an appreciation over time of his character and the life he lived. He was quiet man, self effacing and always considerate of others.

He gave his last paper at the age of 96, certainly making him the oldest presenter in recent memory, and possibly the oldest in club history. Perhaps our historian knows. The final paper entitled *Blank Verse* was a collection of stories and observations. One contained the line, "and is so typical of my lovable Jean."

Chuck and Jean were married for 69 years. They met one summer when Chuck, a Yale undergraduate was serving as staff at a fancy resort. A friend asked Chuck to keep an eye on his girl and teach her to sail. Chuck did both. They teased about her being an older woman and an east coast transplant. The title of one paper illustrates how clearly they were meant for one another – *I don't think I ever really asked her*. They raised three children of whom they were very proud. Many of Chuck's stories revolved around children and grandchildren.

Their joy in one another's company was a treasure they shared with many. Watching them together on a church committee or being their guest at a meal [Chuck was the cook] or out at the Country Club was a treat. Jean was fluent in French and many of their travels were to France for that reason. In the last years of Jean's life, recognizing she wasn't able to keep up her end of a social engagement, she frequently asked, "Am I OK Chucky?" He would respond with obvious affection, "You're just fine Jeanie,"

Chuck was one of our bow tie wearers. There is no record of his ever appearing in a four in hand tie. He was also helpful to those of us who arrived at the annual meeting with bow tie askew. "Just close your eyes and tie it like your shoestring." was his expert advice. The bow tie and an insistence on putting hot sauce in any soup were among his personal idiosyncrasies. He maintained a busy social schedule until the very last. A week before his death he made a lunch date for the following week. It had to be pushed out seven days to find a day which was not already set aside for bridge, his weekly writing group, music live and the Community Forum at Christ Church, all important parts of his life. He attended church services regularly. Much like his final year or so at the Club, he needed assistance, but welcomed it and viewed his helpers as valuable colleagues

One of the continuing elements of Chuck's retirement was his role on the board of the Stephen H. Wilder Foundation. This local foundation makes grants for local good government initiatives and research. For years, Chuck shared office space downtown with fellow board and Literary Club member, Morse Johnson. Combined with their many other local interests in the arts and Charter Committee, it became an 'office of good works.'

One of Chuck's accomplishments was his role in the election of the VIII Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio. Chuck was named to the search committee which presented four candidates to the convention. His choice, Herbert Thompson Jr. was elected. Some years later Chuck was very pleased to be Herb Thompson's principal sponsor to membership in the Club.

His concern of those less fortunate, and particularly for persons who suffered because of the color of their skin was a driving force in his daily life. He was an unabashed liberal. The titles of some of his papers reflect this topic:

- On the future of hope
- Why Poverty?
- Why do all societies have Poor People?
- A personal Perspective on Racial Relations in Cincinnati

Over the years Chuck sent many 'letters to the editor' at the Enquirer expressing his opinions on many public issues. It is a fact, that not one was ever published.

Chuck came to these concerns through experience and commitment. He credited his time on the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee with opening his eyes to racism in our city. It "changed my life.... My conscience changed and made me worry that society was treating some people, those who were different from me by color and class as second class citizens." Bear in mind this was in the 1950's more than a decade before the Civil Rights Act.! His work with the Committee led to a lifelong friendship with fellow Charterite, Ted Berry. Chuck would meet Councilman Berry at City Hall to have lunch because there was no restaurant near City Hall which would welcome the Councilman!

He translated his concerns when he led others of like mind in the formation of a new nonprofit organization, Housing Opportunities Made Equal. {HOME} This pioneering organization took on the task of fighting housing discrimination in all its many forms, from challenging realtors and mortgage lenders about neighborhood red lining to assisting a single parent find a decent place to rent when some landlords wouldn't rent to tenants with children. The work includes using 'testers' to prove how different applicants were treated differently and as a last resort, going to court. The work of HOME has become so successful and widely recognized that most of their time today is spent in counseling tenants and landlords and in mediation activities.

Chuck and his twin brother were born in Oak Park, Illinois. He went to Yale and married a pretty Easterner, then came to Cincinnati where he and Jean raised their family. He was a modest man who loved music and writing. He worked for a better, kinder, fairer community. And along the way, he became a giant who comforted, inspired and drew others to follow his lead.

At the end of the year, Chuck's church, Christ Church Cathedral publishes an Advent booklet of thoughts and prayers written by parishioners. In December of 2014, after his death the page for December 24 was one of Chuck's poems penned on an earlier Christmas Day. He began by lamenting that despite all the Christmas day fun around him, he deeply missed Jean. Then he reflected on those who loved him and supper that night at the table of friends. He closed with this verse:

"I am thought of
In so many ways
A piece of candy and a poem
To read should keep me happy"

Edward Burdell, David Edmundson, Fredrick McGavran, Committee members, with contributions by Robert Dorsey and William Woods