



Charles Harrell "Grumps" Thornberry

October 20, 1934 - November 7, 2024

Charles Harrell "Grumps" Thornberry, 90, died peacefully November 7, 2024 surrounded by family in Simpsonville, KY.

Charlie was born at the old Jewish Hospital in Louisville, Ky on October 20, 1934, the only child of Charles Wilber and Alma (Horrell) Thornberry. He grew up in the Elliott Park and 23rd and Broadway Baptist Church neighborhood.

He was married 50 years to his childhood sweetheart, the former Eva Gaither, who he had known since 1939. Eva predeceased him in June 2013.

Charlie was a Christian and a member of the 23rd and Broadway Baptist church and later attended Southeast Christian Church.

Charlie was retired from General Motors Corp, where he worked for more than 36 years, primarily as a supervisor in the parts department. He later worked 10 years for Bachman Chevrolet in Louisville.

Charlie was an avid runner since 1985 and competed in many local races, including mini marathons into his mid-70s. Charlie was seen daily running in south Louisville's Windsor Forest, Iroquois Park or on Southern Parkway.

Charlie was a lifelong dedicated fan of University of Kentucky football and basketball. He also loved baseball, both as a player, coach and a fan. He rooted for the Chicago Cubs, St. Louis Cardinals and most recently, the Cincinnati Reds. His favorite player who he often spoke of was Ted Williams, or "Teddy Ballgame," as he would call him.

Charlie also loved horse racing. He was a student of the sport. He knew the owners, the teams, the trainers, the jockeys and the history better than most.

He and Eva attended several Kentucky Derbys at Churchill Downs. And on most days in the final years of his life, Charlie could be found in front of his large iMac, watching races from multiple tracks.

Charlie graduated from Manual High School in 1952 and was a member of the school's Alumni Association. He also attended the University of Louisville. As a youth he went to the old F.T. Salisbury Elementary School and Western Junior High School.

Charlie served in the U.S. Army. He also was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, Grayson County Historical Society and Kentucky Historical Society.

He was an inspiration to many and as one of his longtime neighbors said, "the world just seemed to be a better place with him in it."

Charlie is survived by two children, Kim Colaizzi (Ernie), of Daytona Beach, Fla., and Kelly (Paul) Neumeyer of Simpsonville, Ky. A third child, Mark Thornberry of Louisville, predeceased him in October, 2024.

Charlie also is survived by six grandchildren, Ashley Moore (Jim), Bradley Thornberry, Jon Thornberry (Whitney), Clay Upchurch (Brittany), Taylor Upchurch (Katlyn) and Landon Upchurch. A granddaughter, Brittainy Miller predeceased him. He also is survived by five great grandchildren.

Charlie was affectionately known as "Grumps," a name his grandchildren called him in their early years.

The family would like to thank the exceptional care Charlie received from the Veterans Administration, CareTenders Louisville, and Hosparus Health of Louisville.

Visitation will take place from 10 a.m. to noon with a funeral service to follow on Friday, Nov. 15, at Owen Funeral Home 9318 Taylorsville Road, Jeffersontown, KY. Grave committal with military honors and burial will follow at Memorial Gardens West, 4400 Dixie Highway, 40216 Louisville.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to remember Charlie may consider donations to the Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy - <https://kychaplaincy.org/> Or to Hosparus Health - <https://hosparushealth.org/>

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

2 Timothy 4:7-8

Cemetery Details

Louisville Memorial Gardens West

4400 Dixie Hwy
Louisville , KY 40216

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 15. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Owen Funeral Home-Jeffersontown
9318 Taylorsville Road
Louisville, KY 40299
(502) 266-9655

Service

NOV 15. 12:00 PM (ET)

Owen Funeral Home-Jeffersontown
9318 Taylorsville Road
Louisville, KY 40299
(502) 266-9655

Tribute Wall

MC

“ Charlie was a wonderful person. He and Eva were part of a lunch group that we had for years. My husband and I (My husband passed away in 2021) looked forward to our Wednesday lunches and our conversations with Charlie and Eva. He will be greatly missed.

Mary Clark

Mary Clark - November 12, 2024 at 08:59 PM

LC

My late husband and I met Eva and Charles on a day outing / I believe Martha vineyard - we rented a car together - we continued to send Xmas letters dnd then he told me of his wife's passing - I'm putting my Xmas letter addresses with update and notice that he passed / wonderful people - my prayers to all
Of you

Linds Carlson - November 30, 2024 at 01:57 PM

JB

“ Charlie was a very good friend. I so enjoyed having lunch with him and Eva before she passed away. I looked forward to talking with him on the phone after he was unable to get out and around. I will surely miss him. God bless you Charlie, you were a wonderful friend and will be missed.

Judy Burkhalter - November 12, 2024 at 04:06 PM

JB

“ Judy Burkhalter lit a candle in memory of Charles Harrell "Grumps" Thornberry



Judy Burkhalter - November 12, 2024 at 04:05 PM



“ *Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Charles Harrell "Grumps" Thornberry.*



November 11, 2024 at 03:19 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Charles Harrell "Grumps" Thornberry.*

November 11, 2024 at 03:19 PM