



Dr. Charles J. Gross, Jr.

August 13, 1931 - July 24, 2019

Coleman Funeral Home of Oxford

Dr. Charles J. Gross, Jr. moved to the realm of the ancients while peacefully resting at his home in Oxford, Mississippi on July 24, 2019. He was born and raised in Medford, Massachusetts and would have been 88 on August 13th. Student. Teacher. Colleague. Friend. Kindling and fostering these relationships with others were simultaneously his life's work and greatest joy.

Charles' early years were not fruitful academically and he found himself catching up on book reports instead of enjoying the languid summer days, or meeting in the dean's office at Tufts College where he was an undergraduate to discuss lackluster freshman grades. When he was able to ditch biology and mathematics and study only foreign languages (French, Spanish, Latin, Greek), school had a new meaning for him. Many times in his teaching years he would inspire struggling students with his own story of failure. Charles went on to earn his PhD. in Classics from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1960. He taught in numerous high schools and colleges, including the Berkshire School and the University of Mississippi, during his 50+ years in the classroom.

Charles lived a self-directed, simple life, acquiring few possessions but many friends. Even books purchased for classes were given away to anyone who

wanted them. Other than teaching or taking a class (and he audited at least one per semester at Ole Miss over nearly two decades), a meal with friends or a trip to the movies were some of his favorite pastimes. Charles would often check the dessert menu first before deciding “how big” a main course he would order. Once, he ordered a brownie sundae while everyone else ordered their entrées, accompanied with cackle and a grin directed towards the five-year-old at the table! When it came to movies, Charles could tell you all of the titles and actors from the late 1930s to the present day. Charles was also a college basketball fan, however, he enjoyed watching the coaches more than the players. Must have been the teacher in him. In his youth, Charles was an avid golfer and not only played but also caddied, coached and enjoyed watching professional golf on TV. At one point, Charles built a putting green in his parents’ backyard, which was not appreciated.

Each Sunday, Charles faithfully attended Catholic Mass. Going to church with him was fun because you knew three things would happen. First, he would peruse the readings at the start, and offer a bit of humorous commentary or a chuckle on the side. During the service, he would pull out his pocket-watch, a gift from a student, at the beginning and again at the end of the homily. A raised eyebrow meant it went on far too long. Finally, he did not mind exiting immediately after communion, en route to an eating establishment.

Because Charles felt that he learned so much in his life, especially when he was teaching, he wanted to capture it in a memoir. You can get a free download of “A Thousand Laughs (A Teacher’s Story)” which includes many more details than this format affords by emailing kleinerkuh@hotmail.com. *Ars longa brevis vita*.

Charles was preceded in death by his parents, Charles J. Gross, Sr. and Doris Beatrice Mara Gross, and by his brother Richard Gross. He is survived by his sister, Paula Gross Gray of Sun Lakes, Arizona, and by several nieces and

nephews. Arrangements for a memorial mass and modest reception in Oxford are in the works for a later date. Please contact Coleman Funeral Home for information.

We invite you to contribute in Charles' name to The Berkshire School in Sheffield, Massachusetts.

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

SEP 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
403 University Ave
Oxford, MS 38655

Tribute Wall

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“*Doc*” as we call him will be sorely missed by all of us. I attended Berkshire from 1984- 1987 and Doc was one of the resident, faculty in our dorm. The things I remember most about Doc were his compassion, caring nature and warm smile. He was also like a father figure to me and a friend. I could always rely on Doc to lend a thoughtful ear to whatever I wanted to discuss with him.

We were a pretty wild group and we certainly got into our fair share of trouble. For the most part Doc would just smile assuming we were not too out of control. He might give an occasional, "that enough guys" but he seemed to understand we were just letting off steam.

I also remember him smoking cigars all the time. I see the photo on his obituary show him smoking a cigar. In fact, I cannot remember him ever not smoking a cigar so the photo is very appropriate.

When I think back on my schooling, there are definitely some teachers and mentors who I was fortunate to have known. I absolutely count Doc in that group. It makes me sad to hear of his passing but I am certain that Doc is in a better place.... probably smoking a cigar !

I want to send All my prayers and best wishes to Doc's family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.

*Bill Patterson
Class of 1987 - Berkshire*

Bill Patterson - July 31, 2019 at 12:58 PM