

Chuck Hattersley 1923-2017

By Robin Hattersley

Charles Marshall Hattersley was born in 1923 in Burma (now Myanmar) to Baptist missionary parents, the family returning to the U.S. in 1924. Most of Chuck's formative years were spent in Pasadena, CA, where his father was a professor at Pasadena City College. As a young adult, Chuck attended UC Berkeley (paid for by the G.I. bill), where he obtained a degree in economics and was a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

Throughout his life, three things remained constant for Chuck: his love of music, his love of travel, and his love for family.

One of Chuck's fondest memories as a child was of him standing in church between his parents singing hymns. His father would sing bass, his mother would sing alto and he would sing the melody or some other part of the chord. That's where he learned how to improvise harmony, a talent he would someday pass on to all of his children.

Years later, with a family of his own, Chuck would serenade his wife Ruth and their three kids every night, playing the piano by ear and singing jazz standards. At birthday celebrations in the Hattersley home, Chuck would find just the right key for the song "Happy Birthday," and then the family would sing it in five-part a cappella harmony. The Neighborhood Church also benefited from Chuck's musical talents; he sang in the church choir for 25 years. He and Ruth started the 9 o'clock service choir. The first time that "choir" performed, it consisted of four members: Chuck, Ruth and two of their three children.

Chuck loved to explore America. After serving in the U.S. military during World War II, based in Germany for what he would sarcastically call "three glorious years," Chuck requested discharge at Fort Dix, NJ, so he could hitchhike his way across the country. It took him two weeks and 47 rides to get back home to Pasadena.

As a husband and father, Chuck carried on the travelling tradition with Ruth and their kids, camping with them all over the West. When he retired in 1986, he and Ruth bought a pickup truck and trailer so they could embark on months-long sojourns across North America. His book *Over and Under, Around and Through* features stories about his and his family's sometimes hair-raising adventures, as well as a number entertaining anecdotes reaching back into his childhood.

Throughout his life experiences, family played an integral role. Much of Chuck's personal and professional success was due to the love and support of Ruth, his wife of nearly 60 years. They met in 1956 while both were working for Sears Roebuck in Chicago. Chuck had been transferred from Pasadena to the company's headquarters, where he was later promoted to a national buyer for automotive lines. The couple married in 1957 and soon had three children — Mark, Dave and Robin. In 1969, the entire family took another two-week road trip, this time for a permanent move from Chicago to Rancho Palos Verdes, all the while singing "California Here We Come" and other tunes... in five-part a cappella harmony of course!

Throughout his life, Chuck was supportive of his children, whether it was when helping Mark build a Cub Scout Pinewood Derby car, coaching Dave's baseball team after a long day of work, or patiently debating politics with Robin at the dinner table. When he became a grandfather, he cherished visiting with his four grandchildren — Joshua, Jessica, Marshall and Michelle.

One of Chuck's biggest sacrifices for his family was commuting 43 miles each way to work as VP of marketing for Covercraft in Northridge. He endured the exhausting commute from Palos Verdes for a decade so that Mark, Dave and Robin wouldn't have to change schools when he changed careers. Also, he and Ruth didn't want to leave their beloved Neighborhood Church.

After he retired, Chuck joined the Point Vicente Interpretive Center where he served as editor of PVIC's newsletter for 18 years. He played the piano and led the Christmas sing-alongs at their holiday celebrations, just like he did for so many family and social gatherings over the years.

Needless to say, Chuck's 93 years on this earth were filled with many blessings and acts of service... too many to mention here. Now that he has moved on to greater glory, we suspect he is embarking on new, exciting road trips with a band of angels singing in the car with him.