



Charles A Knowles

November 15, 1926 - January 2, 2020

Knowles, Charles Allen, age 93, of Shelby Shores, passed away January 2, 2020. The visitation will be from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday, January 6, 2020 at First Baptist Church of Columbiana. The funeral service will follow at 11:00 a.m. at the church with Dr. Mike Miller officiating. Burial will follow at the Alabama National Cemetery. Bolton Funeral Home is directing.

He was born on November 15, 1926 in Birmingham, Alabama to Sam and Adelaide Knowles. He grew up in Spring Creek, a farming community in Shelby County where he attended Calera High School. On May 10, 1943 he enlisted in the Army Reserve at the age of 17. Upon his graduation in 1944 he was assigned to the United States Army Specialist Training Reserve Program and remained in training until his Army discharge on March 7, 1947. He then enrolled in Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now known as Auburn University. He graduated in 1949 and went to work teaching Vocational Agriculture in Manchester, Tennessee.

He began his educational service in Shelby County as a vocational agriculture teacher at Thompson High School in 1951, and was named principal there in 1967. During this time, he also became a charter member of the first Army National Guard Unit in Shelby County, remaining active in the Guard until 1986 when he retired as a Full Colonel.

In 1971, he became the first director of the Shelby County Area Vocational Center in Columbiana where he developed initial programming and curriculum for what is now the College and Career Center that still trains students for the

growing workforce of Shelby County.

In 1978 he was elected as Shelby County's School Superintendent, during what many believe was one of the most critical periods in the county's history. Shelby County was experiencing a significant growth in population from 38,298 in 1970 to 66,298 in 1980. Based on his experiences as a strategic and logistics planner in the National Guard, Knowles provided the leadership to restructure the inner workings of the school system. During his one term, he built the bridge from the old to the new way of doing the business of schools. He retired from public education following his term in office.

Mr. Knowles is preceded in death by his son: Charles Douglas Knowles; and brother: Lewis Raymond Knowles. He is survived by his loving wife: Carolyn Barton Knowles; daughters: Melissa K. Nannini (Alan) and Amy Jo Roberts (Lindsey); stepson: Joe Davidson; grandchildren: Joseph and Margaret Davidson, Laura Barlow (Kevin), and Anna Nannini; and great grandsons: Al and Louis Barlow.

Please sign online condolences at www.boltonfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Alabama National Cemetery

3133 Hwy 119
Montevallo, AL 35115

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 6. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Columbiana
208 N Main St.
Columbiana, AL 35051

Funeral Service

JAN 6. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Columbiana
208 N Main St.
Columbiana, AL 35051

Tribute Wall

SD

“ *Samford Athletics Department purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Charles A Knowles.*



Samford Athletics Department - January 06, 2020 at 08:12 AM

HM

“ *Mr. Knowles was a great principle at THS. He seem to always be supportive and understanding even when we didn't deserve it. My heart and prayers go out to Carolyn and the family. I was glad to see him at our last class reunion.*

Henry McQueen - January 05, 2020 at 05:31 PM

PS

“ *Charles Knowles was my Ag teacher. On his way home from his Alaskan trip he and Carolyn stopped by our place in Dawson, MN. I gave him a tour of the farm and had a wonderful visit with them. Sending our sincere sympathies and pray for God's peace during this time. Paul and Henrietta Smitherman*

Paul & Henrietta Smitherman - January 04, 2020 at 08:27 PM



“ *What a great and true American Hero. Retired Army Colonel and true leader for our High School during some very challenging times. I learned so much from being with him, especially on how to treat and respect everyone, to helping those in need, and to value life. My thoughts and prayers to his family and friends. Many of us in the Class of '71 remember him being straight with Stanley Oliver, helping him to mature into the great man, husband and friend that Stanley become to be. I especially remember how he handled the integration challenge our senior year, which to me was his legacy to Thompson HS. And then, after not attending many class reunions, he thought so much of our senior class that he came to our 25th reunion!! May he and the family know how much they are in all of our thoughts and prayers. Here's a "Salute" to you, Colonel Knowles.*

Gordon Sumner - January 04, 2020 at 10:48 AM

BF

“ *With love and prayers for all the family, Barbara and Buddy Freeman*

Barbara & Buddy Freeman - January 04, 2020 at 10:11 AM

BE

“ *We have lost a truly good man who did so much for Shelby County. Chuck was a worthy and loyal friend
Butch Ellis*

butch Ellis - January 04, 2020 at 09:08 AM

FG

“ *Mr. Knowles was my Ag. teacher when I went to Thompson. He was one teacher that I always had the greatest respect for. Rest in peace Mr. Knowles.*

F. E. (Gene) Game - January 03, 2020 at 11:57 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Charles A Knowles.*



January 03, 2020 at 10:33 PM



“ *Sincere sympathies are sent by all our Johnson family....Roland, Sharon, Donna and Aaron. Mr. Knowles couldn't always tell which child matched which name so he always called Donna and me "one of those Johnson girls." He was kind to all of us during his tenure as our principal while I also had the privilege of teaching at Thompson Elementary School during his term as superintendent. He will be missed by all those who knew him.*

Sharon J Orr - January 03, 2020 at 09:42 PM



“ *How precious are those years we shared with you Mr Knowles and Ms Davidson Knowles. You instilled in us values, you touched so many, many lives. The memory of those High School Years will always be fond memories. In my opinion we all had the best growing up years. We all respected you both and you will forever be remembered with smiles on our faces and love and respect in our hearts. Our hearts are broken because you had to leave Mr Knowles. Fly High and Rest in Peace. Love and Prayers Ms Davidson Knowles. May your heart feel the precious peace, grace, mercy and love our Lord so freely provides. God Bless you.*

Marsha Thompson - January 03, 2020 at 09:31 PM

RW

“ *Mr. Knowles was fair man to all and had everyone’s well being and growth in his thoughts at all times. He will be missed. Ronny Whitley Class of 69*

ronny whitley - January 03, 2020 at 06:52 PM

KP

“ *I’m praying for the family, Mr Knowles was my principal I truly respected him as a mentor and man of honor. He will be missed by many!!*

Kay Butler Parker - January 03, 2020 at 06:32 PM

VS

“ *Carolyn, I was so sorry to hear about Charles. I remember how happy i was to see the 2 of you at the reunion of the class of 1971. God bless you and your family!*

Vicki Schutter - January 03, 2020 at 03:21 PM

GW

“ *Mr Knowles was a very special person. He was my principal Class of 1965. He and Carolyn attended all our class reunions which we were always glad to see them and he remembered us all. RIP Mr Knowles*

Gail Hitt Wheat - January 03, 2020 at 01:19 PM

TA

My sincere condolences for the loss of Mr. Knowles. He was a great principal And truly cared about all his students. I am so glad you both were able to attend our 50th reunion for our class of 1968. I was really special to have a short visit with him let him know he was remembered and appreciated. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Teresa (Broadhead) Alvis

Teresa Alvis - January 03, 2020 at 03:20 PM

JD

Mr. Knowles was one of the finest men I've ever known. He touched many, many lives in a positive way.

Jessie Dunnaway - January 03, 2020 at 05:21 PM

AG

We're Sorry To Hear That, We're Praying For The Family;

Alonzo & Debra Green - January 03, 2020 at 05:36 PM