



Charles Lee "Charlie" Wilkins

AUG 14, 1938 - JUN 27, 2025



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Charles Lee "Charlie" Wilkins

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Charles Lee Wilkins "Charlie", age 86, passed away peacefully on June 27, 2025, after a short illness in Fayetteville, AR, surrounded by the love of his family. He will be deeply missed.

Charlie was born on August 14, 1938 in Los Angeles, California, where he spent his early life. He earned a B.S. degree in Chemistry from Chapman College in 1961, a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Oregon in 1966, and performed postdoctoral research at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1966 to 1967. Charlie went on to hold professorships at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the University of California, Riverside, where he was promoted to Distinguished Professor in 1997 after serving as Chairman of the Department of Chemistry from 1982 to 1989 and as Associate Dean of the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences from 1994 to 1997. In 1998, he was recruited as a Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He retired from the University of Arkansas in 2022 as Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

Charlie made pivotal contributions to the fields of analytical chemistry and mass spectrometry that achieved regional, national and international recognition, and his graduate students and postdoctoral associates at all three universities have gone on to prominent careers in academia and industry. He also left a legacy of establishing core facilities that significantly transformed research capabilities at those institutions. He received the Arkansas Alumni Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award for Research in 2003 and the University of Arkansas Master Researcher Award in 2005. From the American Chemical Society (ACS), he received the Tolman Medal in 1994 for his contributions to chemistry, the Franklin and Field Award for Outstanding Achievement in Mass Spectrometry in 1997 (ACS's highest award in that field), the



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Division of Analytical Chemistry Award in Chemical Instrumentation in 2013, and the Southwest Region Award in 2015. He was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1996 and a Fellow of the ACS in 2010. He was dedicated to service through many leadership roles in professional scientific societies and editorial boards, most recently as Chief Editor of the International Journal of Analytical Chemistry.

Charlie's thoughtfulness was cherished by his biological and scientific families alike. He was beloved for his steadfast belief in people, whose careers and life paths were often profoundly reshaped through his mentorship. Driven by a selfless spirit, he tirelessly advocated for causes for the greater good, consistently finding creative ways to navigate challenges that would have deterred others. He had a gift for impactful spontaneity, arriving unexpectedly to offer support or ease burdens, leaving an indelible mark on those he encountered. He will continue to inspire us through his enduring memory. His enthusiasm for fine food, good wine, lighthearted humor, and engaging conversation will be fondly remembered.

He was preceded in death by his father Richard Wilkins, mother Lenore Mandt McKean, sister Janet Kay Freeman, and brothers Dane Thomas Wilkins and Creighton Elliot Wilkins.

He is survived by his loving wife Ingrid Fritsch, also a Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Arkansas, their children Evelyn Mayrose Sholomon and Eric Fritsch Wilkins; son from Charlie's first marriage Mark Randall Wilkins, Mark's wife Nancy Jean Linford, and their children Emma Jordan Linford Wilkins and Patrik Aaron Linford Wilkins; mother-in-law Regina Fritsch; brother Kit Randolph Wilkins, his wife Rosemary Orendorff, and their daughter Kathryn Rose Wilkins; sister-in-law Elise Nicole Wilkins and her children Sasha Claire Wilkins, Jessica Dawn Osborn, and Jordan Dean Osborn; and brother-in-law Jack Freeman and his children Debbie Kay Freeman and Fred Mark Freeman.



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Charlie was a devoted supporter of KUAF public radio. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to KUAF in his memory online at <https://supportKUAF.com> or by mail to 9 S. School Ave., Fayetteville AR, 72701. A public memorial service will be held at 10:00 am on August 1, 2025 at Nelson-Berna Funeral Home of Fayetteville, 4520 N Crossover Rd. His remains will be laid to rest in a private service for family at Fairview Memorial Gardens that afternoon.




Events

Charles Lee "Charlie" Wilkins

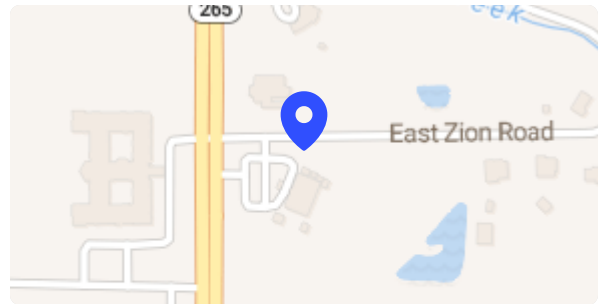
AUG 14, 1938 - JUN 27, 2025

Memorial Service

 **Friday**, August 1, 2025

 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CT

 **Nelson-Berna of Fayetteville**
4520 N. Crossover Rd., Fayetteville AR 72703





Tribute Wall

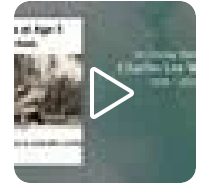
Charles Lee "Charlie" Wilkins

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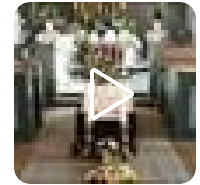
Berna Funeral Homes shared a **Video**.

July 31 at 11:37 AM



Berna Funeral Homes shared a **Webcast Video**.

July 29 at 10:36 AM



Miguel Ábrego Tello posted:

One of the most remarkable qualities of Dr. Wilkins was his unwavering commitment to fairness. He consistently stood up for students who were being treated unjustly, always advocating for what was right—no matter the circumstances. It is a trait I will carry with me for the rest of my life, along with the deep respect for scientific knowledge that he exemplified during the time I knew him.

August 1 at 9:37 AM



Orwa Houshia November 24 at 1:17 AM

He was a good man. you willbe missed Dr. Wilkins. AJ



Feng Wang posted:

Charlie was an exceptional colleague and a tremendous asset to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. His impact on the field is widely recognized, extending far beyond this campus; I often hear his name spoken with admiration when I visit other universities and mention my affiliation with UAF. Remarkably, even in his eighties, he continues to visit the department on weekends, generously providing his own funds to maintain instruments. Charlie was a devoted scientist who pursued excellence in his field, a commitment he maintained until his final years.

July 27 at 10:40 PM



Tribute Wall

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CH

Colin Heyes posted:

Charlie was internationally famous for his work on Fourier Transform Mass Spectrometry and won many awards in his long and distinguished career. He was instrumental in setting up the Statewide mass spectrometry facility at the university of Arkansas. I will remember him as a warm, friendly and supportive senior colleague who was always there to advise me as a junior faculty member setting up my lab and writing my first research proposals when I arrived here in 2008. One of the first events that I attended when I started was a symposium to honor his 70th birthday, where I got to meet a number of his former students, mentees and collaborators. It was immediately clear to me how impactful he had been to many others. Once I was established, we discussed triboluminescence and wrote grant proposals to combine fluorescence and mass spectrometry to study the phenomenon. More recently, once I became chair and although he had just retired, he was still there to offer advice based on his own experiences as a chair and associate dean at UC-Riverside. I went to numerous dinners with him over the years as we hosted departmental seminar speakers and was always entertained and enthralled by his stories.

July 24 at 3:30 AM

FM

Francis Millett posted:

I first met Distinguished Professor Charles Wilkins when he joined our University of Arkansas Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry in 1998. Charlie played a key role in the development of our department. He was a pioneer in the field of Mass Spectrometry and developed the first Fourier Transform Mass Spectrometer. He received the 1997 ACS Franklin and Field Award for Outstanding Achievement in Mass Spectrometry, and many other awards. Professor Wilkins established the University of Arkansas Statewide Mass Spectrometry Facility in 1999 which continues to play an essential role in research at the University of Arkansas and throughout the State. Charles Wilkins played a key role in writing the NIH research proposal for the NIH COBRE Center for Protein Structure and Function which was established in 2000 and resulted in hiring sixteen outstanding new faculty members and brought in more than 28 million dollars to the University of Arkansas. I have greatly enjoyed working with Charlie at the University of Arkansas for the past 27 years. Francis Millett

July 17 at 3:30 PM



Tribute Wall

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CI

Carl Ijames posted:

My condolences to the Wilkins family. I first met Dr. Wilkins in July, 1981 when I began my PhD studies at UC Riverside. Back then the smog was bad enough that often you could not see Box Springs Mountain, a soaring peak of about 1500 feet and only two or three miles away from our lab. I was always impressed that every day at lunchtime I would see Dr. Wilkins out for his daily run no matter how thick the air was. That steady determination was visible in all of the projects that he tackled, and was a valuable life lesson for someone who as an undergraduate considered anything that needed more than two all-nighters a near-impossible task. As one of the many students you supported and taught, thank you. Carl Ijames

July 17 at 1:12 PM

ET

Evgenia Tisdale posted:

Dr Wilkins (I could never bring myself to call him Charlie) was my PhD mentor. He welcomed me in his lab when I first came to UofA for a summer exchange program with limited command of spoken English. He was very supportive throughout my stay, cementing my decision to come back and pursue PhD track in his lab. I will always remember his dry humor that would come out unexpectedly and delight you as well as his tenacity and scientific rigor. He set a high bar for his students, but that made me to push myself further and strive to do better, which is what I carry with me to this day. He was a great mentor to me and I will always remember my time with him with deep gratitude.

July 16 at 6:12 PM

E2

Evgenia Tisdale (Phd Class Of 2013) sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Wilkins family.

July 16 at 5:44 PM



PF

Prabhu Arumugam & Family sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Wilkins family.

July 16 at 10:10 AM





Tribute Wall

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SH

Shirin Hesan posted:

When I was applying to Ph.D. programs in the U.S., I reached out to many faculty members in different universities, but I'll never forget the kind and encouraging response I received from Dr. Charles Wilkins at the University of Arkansas. He replied quickly, shared helpful information about the application process, and made me feel welcomed. That email played a key role in my decision to apply here, and I'm now pursuing my Ph.D. in chemistry thanks to that first connection. I later had the honor of taking his courses and having him on my committee. Dr. Wilkins was a brilliant scientist and a truly kind person. I'll always remember his support and the impact he had on my journey.

July 14 at 10:07 AM

BS

Blake Sterling posted:

I only met Charlie a few times, but from the times I did, Charlie was always a kind and patient man. When Ingrid's research lab went to the ACS conference in the spring of 2025, Charlie was there as well. He had rented a scooter to ride around the conference center and I remember him telling me about it. He said "look at how fast it goes" and I thought he was going to race me right then and there. He was smiling the whole time. I'm glad I got the chance to see him still be a kid. My heart goes out to his family and friends. Always stay young.

July 12 at 9:24 PM

AE

Ali A. Ensafi posted:

I met Charlise in 2007 through Professor Fritsch. Charlize was one of the pioneers of chemistry, a brilliant and distinguished scientist, with a noble and unique personality that I never felt deprived of being friends with. He had a calm and loving personality. His memory is cherished and her name is immortal cherished and his name is immortal..

July 12 at 2:14 PM



Media

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Berna Funeral Homes shared a Video.

July 31 at 11:37 AM

**Charlie at Age 5
(1944)**

*In Loving Memory
Charles Lee Wilkins
1938 ~ 2025*

ing for future trips to scientific confer

The video player thumbnail features a dark green background. On the left, there is a white-bordered image of a young boy, Charlie, sitting in a toy airplane. Above the image, the text reads "Charlie at Age 5 (1944)". Below the image, there is a small signature "Aug. 1944" and the start of a sentence "ing for future trips to scientific confer". On the right side of the thumbnail, the text "In Loving Memory Charles Lee Wilkins 1938 ~ 2025" is displayed in a white, elegant font. A white play button icon is centered over the green background.



Media

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Berna Funeral Homes shared a **Webcast Video**.

July 29 at 10:36 AM



Orwa Houshia November 24 at 1:21 AM

My condolences to Dr. Fritsch. he was a brilliant man. much love Doc from AJ.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Charles by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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