

CHARLES HENRY HARTMAN - MY MENTOR, MY FRIEND, MY BROTHER,

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THOSE OF US WHO KNEW CHARLES WERE BLESSED FOR HE WAS ALWAYS SUCH A POSITIVE EXAMPLE. CHARLES WAS STRONG IN HIS BELIEFS AND STUCK TO THEM. WHATEVER HE DID, WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL HE DID IT IN A BIG WAY AND ALWAYS FIRST CLASS. CHARLES WAS A FRIEND TO EVERYONE WHO KNEW HIM. HE ALWAYS MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO TAKE ON NEW PROJECTS AND TO EXPAND ON THEM IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE GOALS OF ROTARY (SERVICE ABOVE SELF). CHARLES, TO THOSE WHO KNEW HIM, WAS A MOST OPTIMISTIC PERSON, NOT JUST AN IDLE DREAMER BUT A TRUE VISIONARY, A MAN WHO DID NOT ACCEPT LIMITS; HE WAS HONEST IN ALL HE SAID AND DID, HAD A SHARP MIND, WAS STUBBORN, HE HAD A SENSE OF HUMOR, HE WAS FOCUSED, HE WAS A MAN OF GREAT LOGIC AND COMMON SENSE, HE WAS VERY DEPENDABLE WITH NO "AIRS", AND MOST OF ALL HE WAS DEVOTED TO HIS WIFE, JENNIE LOU AND TO HIS FAMILY.

I FIRST MET CHARLES AT ROTARY IN 1983. MY PARTICIPATION IN ROTARY WAS LIMITED AT THAT TIME - IN FACT I BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT I HAD JOINED A LUNCHEON CLUB, CHARLES WAS PRESIDENT OF THE SPACE CENTER ROTARY HE IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCED ME TO TWO ROTARIANS AND I FOUND MYSELF BUSY ON THEIR COMMITTEES. HE ALSO SAW TO IT THAT AL JOWID HAD ME FRYING FISH ALL DAY AT THE SHRIMPOREE FUNDRAISER. I STILL HAVE BURN MARKS ON MY ARMS FROM THE SPLATTER OF HOT OIL CHARLES TOLD ME NOT TO WAIT FOR THE CLUB TO GET ME INVOLVED IN A COMMUNITY SERVICE. HE SAID THAT IF I SAW A NEED IN THE COMMUNITY I SHOULD FORM A COMMITTEE AND FILL THAT NEED. SINCE THAT DAY I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FOLLOW HIS ADVICE.

CHARLES WAS A DEEP THINKER WITH GREAT COMPASSION, A LEADER, AND A DOER WITH GREAT FORESIGHT. HE WAS A STICKLER ON SEEING THAT HIS PROJECTS WERE ALWAYS WORTHWHILE AND FIRST CLASS. CHARLES TRUELY BELIEVED IN THE SPIRIT OF ROTARY, "SERVICE ABOVE SELF".

CHARLES HAD MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY AND HUMANITY. I ASKED OWEN (GLENN) MORRIS, BILLY RAY SMITH AND BOB WREN, THREE VERY CLOSE AND DEAR FRIENDS OF CHARLES FOR THEIR INPUT FOR MY SPEAKING TODAY..

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BILLY RAY SMITH RECALLS:

WHEN OWEN MORRIS CONCEIVED OF THE IDEA TO HOLD AN ANNUAL DINNER TO HONOR SOMEONE WHO HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPLORATION OF OUTER SPACE HE TALKED TO CHARLES. CHARLES TOOK THAT IDEA, ASSEMBLED A TEAM AND CREATED THE PRESTIGIOUS ROTARY NATION AWARD FOR SPACE ACHIEVEMENT. BILLY RAY SMITH WAS ON THAT TEAM AS LEGAL ADVISOR AND WAS CONSTANTLY AMAZED BY HOW CHARLES ADDED HIS TENACITY TO OWEN'S IDEA AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT WHAT OTHERS WOULD CALL "PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS TO THE POSSIBLE". TO CHARLES ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING WORTHWHILE WAS POSSIBLE. RNASA, NOW IN IT'S 15th YEAR WAS CHAIRED BY CHARLES FOR THE FOR THE FIRST 12 YEARS

WITH AL JOWID (ANOTHER ROTARIAN), THE IDEA OF BRINGING CHILDREN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO THIS AREA FOR PLASTIC SURGERY AND TREATMENT FOR BIRTH DEFECTS AND OTHER INJURIES WAS CONCEIVED IN THE FORMATION OF THE ROTARY WORLD HEALTH FOUNDATION. WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF RAY KHOURY AND THE SUPPORT OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY AT ST. JOHN HOSPITAL AND THE MIRACLES PERFORMED BY DR. ABDEL FUSTOK, PLASTIC SURGEON, MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN

CHANGED, NOT ONLY FOR THE CHILDREN WHO WERE PATIENTS BUT FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THE UNBELIEVABLE, BEAUTIFUL CHANGES IN THESE CHILDREN. WHEN AL JOWID BECAME ILL AND PASSED AWAY, THE PROJECT COULD HAVE DIED WITH HIM. BUT CHARLES WOULD NOT ALLOW A PROGRAM SO WORTHY AND SO LIFE CHANGING TO END. CHARLES TOOK OVER AND MADE SURE THAT ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR THE CHILDREN AND THEIR GUARDIANS TO ARRIVE AT CLEAR LAKE AND TO HAVE LODGING, FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE FOR THEM SO THAT DR. FUSTOK AND HIS ASSISTANTS COULD PERFORM THEIR MIRACLES. FOR CHARLES THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT THIS SERVICE MUST SURVIVE.

CHARLES HAD THE DREAM OF A SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER IN THE CLEAR LAKE AREA; ONE THAT WOULD SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND ALSO HAVE ROOM FOR A PERMANENT MEETING PLACE FOR THE SPACE CENTER ROTARY CLUB. AFTER MANY MEETINGS WITH COMMISSIONER FONTENO AND THE ROTARY LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE, CHARLES' DREAM WAS NEARLY REALIZED BUT UNFORTUNATELY POWERS BEYOND HIS CONTROL OR INFLUENCE CHANGED THE PLAN AND THE OUTCOME, ALTHOUGH THE CENTER WAS BUILT AND THE SENIOR GROUPS AND THE COMMUNITY ENJOY ITS BENEFITS TODAY.

CHARLES WAS AMONG THOSE VISIONARIES THAT CONCEIVED OF THE FORMATION OF A ROTARY ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION THAT WOULD COLLECT DONATIONS OF MONEY AND PROPERTY, THE INCOME FROM WHICH COULD BE USED TO FUND PROJECTS FAR BEYOND THE SCOPE MANAGABLE BY THE ROTARY CLUB'S ANNUAL FUND RAISERS. AS A FOUNDING TRUSTEE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE, CHARLES CONTINUED TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO THINK OF THE COMMUNITY, THINK BIG AND THINK FIRST CLASS. NO IDEA WAS TOO LARGE, NO PROJECT TOO BOLD, NO DREAM IMPOSSIBLE FOR CHARLES. THE ONLY TIME CHARLES SEEMED

IMPATIENT WAS WHEN OTHERS TRIED TO CONTAIN HIS VISION OF WHAT ROTARIANS CAN ACCOMPLISH.

SO WHO IS CHARLES HARTMAN??

BILLY RAY SMITH SPEAKS FOR ALL OF US WHO KNEW CHARLES WHEN HE TOLD ME: SO YOU ASK ME WHO IS THIS CHARLIE I AM SO FOND OF AND SO BLESSED TO HAVE KNOWN? HE IS CHARLES HARTMAN, HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER, WORLD WAR 2 BOMBER PILOT, CITIZEN, SERVANT, ROTARIAN, A MAN WHO LIVED THE MOTTO "SERVICE ABOVE SELF". CHARLIE WAS A GIVER NEVER A TAKER; CHARLIE WAS MY MENTOR AND MY MODEL FROM THAT DAY IN JUNE 1974 WHEN I MET HIM AT HIS MEN'S CLOTHING STORE TO BE INDOCTRINATED IN MY IDEALS OF ROTARY. I HAVE TRUELY BEEN BLESSED TO HAVE KNOWN AND BEEN A FRIEND OF CHARLIE; FOR THAT REASON MY LIFE HAS BEEN CHANGED. BUT A RISK OF FRIENDSHIP IS THAT SOMEDAY YOU WILL LOSE IT AND THAT LOSS WILL HURT VERY DEEPLY. THE HURT WILL BE DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO THE CLOSENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP. CHARLIE WILL BE MISSED BY MANY AND THERE IS AN EMPTINESS INSIDE OF ME THAT CANNOT BE FILLED BECAUSE CHARLIE IS GONE. MY COMFORT IS IN THE ASSURANCE THAT CHARLIE IS MOBILIZING THE TROOPS IN HEAVEN WHERE GOD'S VISIONS WILL FURTHER INSPIRE CHARLIE.

THIS IS ONLY A SHADOW OF CHARLES ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I HAVE NOT TOUCHED ON HIS SERVICE AS A BOMBER PILOT DURING WORLD WAR 2, OR HIS MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES IN ROTARY AND IN THE MANY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH HE SERVED.

SO LONG DEAR FRIEND UNTIL WE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN AT THAT GREAT ROTARY MEETING IN THE SKY. I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL FIND YOUR REWARD EMBRACED IN THE LOVING WINGS OF OUR LORD.