



Charles M. Rayala, Jr.

December 22, 1934 - November 27, 2023

Charles M. Rayala, Jr. entered into eternal life on Monday, November 27, 2023. Charles “Charlie” was born on December 22, 1934 in Bessemer, Michigan to Charles Sr. and Lillian (nee Nissila) Rayala. He was the eldest of 9 children.

In 1955, Charlie enlisted in the Army and served with the 3rd Cavalry in Germany. After serving his country, Charlie purchased Little Star Garage in Manitowish Waters and shortly after, married his wife of 65 years, Hester Organist. Charles and Hester had 5 children, Chuck (Jeanine), Brian (Rene), Gene, Jackie (Mike Michaelis) and Roger.

Charlie was the first Fire “Chief” of Manitowish Waters and served in that position for 27 years. He was also involved with the rescue squad and was instrumental in the construction of the Fire Company’s new building at the time; which now serves as the town’s youth center. Charlie also served as a Fire Warden for over 50 years.

He served on the Vilas County Board for 32 years and had served as County Board Chairman. For several years, he headed the Highway Commission Board for the county and was also involved in the Mental Health Board. Charlie was a Town Supervisor for Manitowish Waters and eventually was elected Town Chairman.

Outside of his local achievements, Charlie was a proud lifetime member of the American Legion and National Rifle Association. Charlie also became a President of the local Lions Club and was very proud to be a part of that organization.

He held a strong devotion to his community and was extremely proud of his Finnish heritage. Most everyone in the Northwoods came to know Charlie, whether it was through Little Star Garage, snowplowing or the many boards, committees or organizations he served on. Charlie had compassion for anyone who was down and out and needed a helping hand. This was a trait that presented itself numerous times over the years.

Charles preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Lillian; brother, Mike; sister-in-law, Sherry and step grandson, Zeke Jonas. He is survived by his siblings, Don (Janice), Audrey, Jerry (Paula), Martin, Carolyn (Bob Kovar), Bonnie and Tari (Pat Kohlin). He is survived by his wife, Hester and 5 children and their spouses. He is further survived by his grandchildren, Ty (Becky), Travis (Katie), Chelsey (Nick), Shelby (Jordan) and Monica (Nick); step grandchildren, Brittany (Matt Schultz), Zach Jonas (Kandace), Lyndsey Jonas and Natalie (Matt Ritchie); and numerous great grandchildren.

Charlie leaves behind a legacy of community service. He led by example on how to care and help others. For this reason, the family asks that in lieu of flowers or gifts, that anyone would direct their generosity to the Manitowish Waters Fire Company or to the Manitowish Waters Sno-Skeeters, two organizations that Charlie was proud to be a part of.

Visitation will be from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM on Saturday, December 9, 2023 at Bolger Funeral Home – Woodruff Chapel. A Memorial Service will be at 1:00 PM, followed by inurnment and Military Honors at Pinelawn Cemetery in

Manitowish Waters.

Cemetery Details

Pinelawn Cemetery

Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 9. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Bolger Cremation & Funeral Services - Woodruff Chapel
1212 First Avenue
(mailing address P.O. Box 40, Woodruff WI 54568)
Woodruff, WI 54568
(715) 356-6006
bolgerfuneral@gmail.com
<https://www.bolgerfuneral.com>

Memorial Service

DEC 9. 1:00 PM (CT)

Bolger Cremation & Funeral Services - Woodruff Chapel
1212 First Avenue
(mailing address P.O. Box 40, Woodruff WI 54568)
Woodruff, WI 54568
(715) 356-6006
bolgerfuneral@gmail.com
<https://www.bolgerfuneral.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Chuck and Jeanine and all the Rayala family, Sorry for your loss, although I didnt know him he sounded like a Great Man and you are following in his footsteps. From the towing community near and far it is individuals like this that desrve our highest respect. Sincerly Dave and Donna Whealon*

Dave Whealon - December 09, 2023 at 09:07 AM



“ *Michelle (Maynard) McCalligan*

To the entire Rayala family, I am so sorry to hear of Charlie's passing. I will miss seeing his head peek out of the office. I always enjoyed his quick wit, smile, & stories. What a great guy. They broke the mold with him.

God bless you Charlie. ❤️

Michelle (Maynard) McCalligan - December 08, 2023 at 02:51 PM



“ *Our sincere condolences to the Rayala family in the loss of Charlie. I was fortunate to have been involved in the volunteer fire service in Eagle River when Charlie was the chief in Manitowish Waters. Our paths crossed many times and I found him to be someone to respect and to learn from. He was a natural leader. They don't make them like him anymore. He will be missed by many. Your family is undoubtedly very proud of him and all he was. Again, our sympathies.*

Pat and Lori Weber - December 06, 2023 at 08:33 PM

WT

“ Sorry to hear of Charlie’s passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Rayala family. God Bless, Bill & Marsha

William Testin - December 05, 2023 at 10:54 AM

WF

“ My deepest condolences to the Rayala family and all who knew and loved Charlie. Such a great man within our community.

Wendy T Feiereisen - December 05, 2023 at 12:29 AM

SB

“ My deepest sympathy to my brother in law Chuck and the entire Rayala family. May his memories bring a smile.

Sandy Brewer - December 04, 2023 at 05:46 PM

NR

“ Sending my love and sympathy to Rayala family. Nick Ross - AAA Field Representative

Nicholas Ross - December 04, 2023 at 08:08 AM

DE

“ My deepest heartfelt sympathy to the Rayala Family, especially my AAA provider pal, Chuck. Thoughts and prayers are with you. Debbie K at AAA

Debbie - December 01, 2023 at 12:56 PM

LP

“ Our community would not have been what it is without his dedicated service. He gave us all many fond memories and is truly missed. Many prayers to the family.

Lorrie Pohl-Hojnacki - December 01, 2023 at 12:07 PM



“ So sorry to hear about Charlie - was always a nice person to my family. My sympathies to the family. Susan Tamburrino-Kort

Sue Kort - December 01, 2023 at 08:47 AM



“ Was very saddened to hear of Charlie's passing. My sympathies to the entire Rayala family as he will be dearly missed. As previous owner of the Village Soda Grill and serving as Town Supervisor in the 70's, Charlie became a mentor of mine as I could always rely on him for his advice on both business and town issues which was invaluable to me. Many discussions over coffee at the old VSG. Rest in peace my old friend.

Patrick Murphy - December 01, 2023 at 08:09 AM



“ Charlie and I go way back with the Fire Co. I don't know how I ever got the gotcha. Every time I would see him he would saw hi gotcha. Will be truly missed, always had a smile and full of tall tales. RIP ❤️

Deb Skrobot - November 30, 2023 at 01:51 PM



“ One of the best BS'ers I ever met, I called him the governor, he always put a smile on my face, they don't make guys like that anymore!

John Donovan - November 30, 2023 at 12:21 PM

JK

“ Charlie was always on the bright side whenever I saw him! He will be missed by so many. Special thoughts and prayers are with family and friends.

Jo Ann Klug - November 30, 2023 at 11:42 AM

TW

“ My condolences to the family. What a good community minded Icon for Manitowish Waters.

Tom Wipperfurth - November 30, 2023 at 08:34 AM

SB

“ Charlie spent a lifetime of service and contributed so much to the community of Manitowish Waters. My sympathy and thoughts and prayers are extended to all of his family. susie bauer

SUSAN BAUER - November 30, 2023 at 07:35 AM