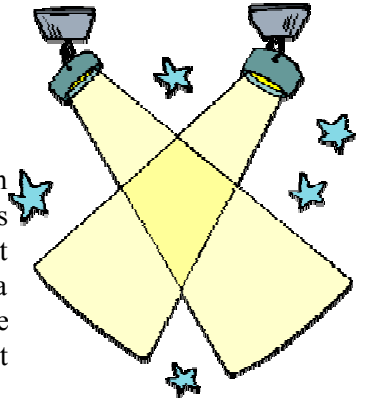


Member Spotlight

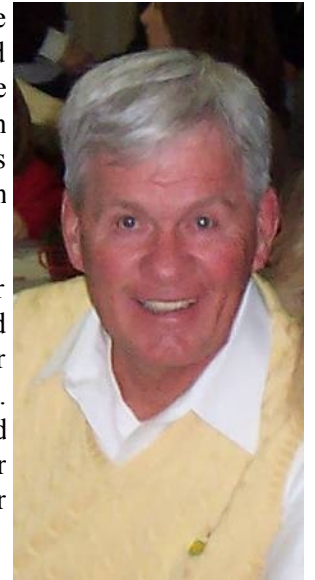
Charlie Connell

It all began for this aviator when the stork dropped him off at Grady Hospital in Atlanta on September 1, 1940. He was the firstborn of Charles and Louise Connell and, along with his younger sister, Ludie, would spend his childhood in and around the Atlanta area, primarily at Little Five Points. Charlie graduated from Bass High School in 1959, where he was a standout football player, playing for Coach Bill Yost, the inspiration for the book and movie "Remember the Titans". Charlie still gets together regularly with former classmates whether it be to participate in golf matches in the mountains or just to relive memories of yesteryear.



After graduating from high school, his yearn for adventure led him to the West Coast where he would spend about a year in California picking up odd jobs and enjoying life. The glamour and glitz of the carefree life soon wore off, however, and reality brought him back to Georgia. He would continue his education by attending a technical school, where he obtained a degree in electronics. His job with a bowling company actually reassigned him to the CSRA, which is where he met a pretty blonde, Jackie, who would become his bride and the mother of children Greg & Karyn.

Subject to the bowling company's going defunct (no fault of his, mind you!), he went to work for Olin Corporation for a short time prior to going into business for himself. In the interim he had established a friendship with another member of our club - Frank Christian - who played a major role in influencing Charlie's life. Frank was in the photography business as well as being a pilot. Through Frank's encouragement, Charlie opened up a Color Lab business, where he would receive a comfortable living for approximately 20 years. Fortunately, just prior to newer technology, digitizing photography, Charlie was able to go into HVAC/Appliance Repair business with son Greg.



The many hours spent working in the Color Lab business had taken a toll on family life, however, and a divorce led to bachelor life for a few years before meeting and acquiring current wife, Sheila, and daughter Kimberly. Between the couple they are proud grandparents of Makenzie, Tanner, Brandon, Emily, Justin, Kayla and Dylan. In the early 90s (after 30-40 years) Charlie and sister Ludie discovered another brother in the family, Marshall. This led to a family reunion where they now have a close bond with Marshall and wife Terry.

Charlie's interest in aviation stems from his childhood. However, his acquaintance/friendship with Al Patton added fuel to the fire. He and little son Greg would spend many hours in Patton's backyard working on homebuilts. Al would go on to instruct both Charlie and Greg in obtaining their pilots' licenses. Charlie was actually one of EAA172's initial members and has been the donor of many resources to the club - from monetary to "hard" labor. His experience in building airplanes made him instrumental in building the Thorp T-18 club airplane in the early 70's. He and Al Patton were also 50/50 partners and built the Pitts S-1C during that time. He also did a lot of work helping Al built his Rose Parakeet and in helping many other members, including Moe Waldrop and Ben Covington, with their airplane projects.

His pilot rating is: private pilot, single engine, land. He currently flies an RV8A, which he built. He has flown numerous airplanes (including the B17) and with his passion for flight would attempt to fly any for which he had the opportunity, with first choice probably being the P40!

Charlie enjoys being an EAA172 member and listening to war stories from the elder aviators. But, his proudest aviation accomplishments, bar none, would be his son Greg's achievements in that arena, whether it's from watching him perform in air shows, observing his instrument flying skills or going on trips with him in his RV-10.

When not enjoying aviation events, Charlie is diversified in his activities - playing golf with good friends at Mt. Vintage or espousing his passionate conservative views in efforts to "take our country back"!