



Jack Charles Wilson

December 17, 1928 - March 31, 2021

Jack was born in 1928, the son of a union steelworker and his no-nonsense wife in Waterloo, Iowa. They were doting, demanding, devout Methodist parents, and he fulfilled their expectations quite well; straight A's, baseball player, lifeguard, Sea Scout, always employed, with a good-looking, fun-loving red-headed girlfriend from across town, Marilyn, the daughter of a tough union meatcutter and his wife. He joined the Navy and, upon discharge, married Marilyn Redmon "Red" he always called her—in 1948. The GI Bill sent him to college at Iowa State, the first in his family to graduate. After grad school, he received a Ph.D in mathematics from Case Institute in Cleveland. By the time they handed him the sheepskin he was Dad to four kids. While adding two more, he bounced around from college to college, like all young professors-in-training, until, in 1967, he landed at Asheville Biltmore College—now UNCA—where he remained until he retired in 1995 after teaching math to thousands of students.

When he wasn't bouncing grandbabies on his knee, he was a tireless community volunteer and active member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. A proud lefty Democrat, Jack was generous with his love, his time, his checkbook and his opinions.

Mark, John, Matt, Gretchen and Heidi, will miss him deeply, will miss his wisdom, his understanding, his impossible standards, and his skill as a mechanic. All of them, plus his sixteen grandchildren, and nine great-

grandchildren, plus his beloved caregiver, Dorothy, will miss the strength of his truth, the softness of his heart, the warmth of his love. After passing peacefully on March 31st, 2021, Marilyn and Becky have now welcomed him home. He hated the thought of hungry children and would ask you to remember him by donating to Manna Food Bank, <https://plannedgiving.mannafoodbank.org/memorials-and-tribute-gifts>.

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care is serving the family and messages may be sent to them at www.morrisfamilycare.com.

Cemetery Details

Western Carolina State Veteran's Cemetery

Old US Hwy. 70
Black Mountain, NC 28711

Tribute Wall



“ *Jack Charles Wilson*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *My husband (Charles Dutcher) and I are planning a trip to NC in April. I remembered that he had a cousin Jack who lived somewhere there and who had been a professor. I did some searches and found his and Marilyn's obituary. I knew I found the right obituary when I read the description of Leah. ❤️. We are sorry to hear of Jack and Marilyn's passing. We lost touch after they moved from Ankeny, but Clara did keep us updated at times. Charlie's whole family has passed—Karla was the latest to pass—in December.*

Peace and Condolences from Charlie and Terry Dutcher. We now live in Reedville, VA most of the time.

Charles and Terry Dutcher - February 20, 2022 at 08:40 AM

MR

“ Jack Wilson was my colleague at UNCA from when I joined the faculty in 1978 fresh out of grad school with a doctorate in physics until Jack retired in 1995. As I write this tribute, I have two more weeks to my own retirement at the end of June 2021. UNCA was very small back in the older days with physicists and mathematicians often hanging out together. Around 1980 I distinctly remember attending a math seminar of Jack and I was in awe of his ability to explain mathematics with beautiful simplicity, a Mozart of mathematics teaching. He inspired me to aim for his demonstrated level of excellence in my physics teaching.

At some point Jack and I were both Chairs, he of Math and me of Physics. I approached him one day to plan our scheduling of classes together since students had to take both physics and math courses at the same time. Jack was delighted and said it was the first time there was close interdepartmental planning. We set aside times for physics and math courses so that student schedules would not have conflicts.

Another time I learned that Jack was critical of the Dirac delta function found in quantum mechanics books. Jack did not like a function defined to be zero everywhere except at $x = 0$, where the function was suddenly infinite. Jack's approval was very important to me. So I brought a mathematical physics reference book to Jack and asked if I could use Gaussian functions that became taller and narrower to discuss the Dirac delta function in quantum mechanics. Jack said yes since Gaussians were continuous and well-behaved functions. I was excited. This encounter shows Jack's insight and also superb collegiality. I could walk into Jack's office anytime and he would smile at me, put aside whatever he was doing, and talk to me. He was a great role model.

Jack also drove a motorcycle to school and I would often see him drive up, park, remove his helmet, and enter Rhoades Hall, where we had our offices. One day we were chatting about cars and Jack said he was taking a two-year program at AB Tech to become a car

mechanic. I was stunned. I quickly asked do they know you have a Ph.D. in mathematics and are a UNCA professor. He said no. Jack was humble and he wanted to be just one of the students learning automobile mechanics and not treated in any special way.

I missed Jack when he retired in 1995, after being his colleague for the greater part of two decades. The last time his name came up was when I was on an Asheville tour bus. As the driver passed near UNCA he mentioned that his dad had taught mathematics there. I quickly asked from the back of bus who the teacher was. He said Jack Wilson. I told Jack's son that I was a young professor in 1978 learning to be a college professor and Jack was my hero!

Michael Ruiz

UNCA Professor of Physics (1978-2021)

www.mjtruiz.com

Michael Ruiz - June 16, 2021 at 11:32 AM

DK

“ My first teaching job was at UNCA from 1987-1989. Jack Wilson had a profound influence on my life. When I got to UNCA they had six remedial math courses below the level of 9th grade math. First course was at the level of 6th grade math. I approached Jack and he agreed that a university should not be doing this. We petitioned the governance system but were only successful in eliminating 3 of the six courses (some faculty's employment depended on these courses so they fought us). Afterwards, Jack told me it is never wrong to fight for what is right - no matter the outcome - even if you lose every time. I eventually ended up at Eckerd College (originally Florida Presbyterian) where Jack had been a founding faculty member. I carried his standards throughout my teaching career - to expect the highest level of performance in students, to maintain standards, and to never suffer foolishness. I think I did this because of Jack and because of this I thought of him often. My deepest condolences to the family. Sending positive thoughts your way.
David Kerr (kerr@eckerd.edu)

David Kerr - May 31, 2021 at 09:36 AM

CF

“ Mr. Wilson was a favorite customer when I worked for Bank of America. Always good for making me smile and what I remember most about him is his love for his wife and children. He once told me he loved babies. Such a kind generous man. Although I had not seen him since my retirement, it makes me quite sad to learn of his passing.

Cindy Fuller - April 07, 2021 at 07:44 AM

JS

“ I will truly miss this man! I've been blessed to help him over the past two years. I will miss his wisdom and laughter and his genuine concern about my well being. Rip Jack.

Jennifer Settle - April 06, 2021 at 07:18 PM

HC

Jennifer what a treasure you have been to me and my family and of course to our Dad. Thank you so so much for the kindness and care you blessed him with ❤️❤️❤️❤️

Heidi Cartwright - April 07, 2021 at 04:03 PM

CC

“*In the years when Jack was homebound, I used to visit and bring communion to him about once a month. It was such a joy to see him and hear the many stories he would relate about his life and career. I will miss his cheerful attitude and his warm hospitality. Connie Chaplin*

Connie Chaplin - April 05, 2021 at 09:10 PM