

Carroll County Times

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Obituary for Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009

Smelser, Charles H. 'Bus' 'Charlie'

Charles H. 'Bus' 'Charlie' Smelser, 88, of near Unionville

Sen. Charles H. "Bus" "Charlie" Smelser, 88, of near Unionville, died Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009, at his home.

Born July 4, 1920, in Uniontown, he was the son of the late Charles H. Smelser Sr. and Grace Devilbiss Smelser. He was the husband of Betty Krueger Smelser, his wife of 62 years.

He attended Carroll County public schools, graduating from New Windsor High School in 1937. Having worked on his grandfather's farm as a youth and enjoying the land and farming, he studied agronomy at the University of Maryland, College Park, and received his bachelor's degree in 1942. He was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and Omicron Delta Kappa Honorary Society.

When the U.S. entered World War II, he enlisted in the Army Air Force as a pilot and flew 35 bombing missions from England in B-17's and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters. After the war he flew humanitarian missions over Europe, dropping food and other supplies.

Returning from the war, he married and worked for a short time for his father-in-law in cosmetic manufacturing in New York. In 1947 he returned to Maryland and began dairy farming on his wife's family farm until 1976. As a conservative Democrat, he began his political career in 1955, first being elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and serving there until 1963. In 1967, he was elected to the state Senate, where he served until 1995, a 28-year career.

Upon his retirement from politics, his colleagues awarded him the First Citizen of Maryland Award and presented it to him on the floor of the Senate. As a senator, he was a member of the following committees: budget and taxation, executive nominations, rules, legislative policy and joint committee on administrative, executive and legislative review, to name a few.

He was also the Senate chairman of the joint subcommittee on the State's Capital Program. Throughout his career in the legislature, he worked to procure funds for projects such as the purchase of Rose Hill Manor, the Schifferstadt Museum and the underground wiring of Market Street in Frederick and Main Street in Emmitsburg.

In addition to his political work, he served as a director and later president of the New Windsor State Bank, retiring in 1997. He also served on the board of directors of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, was a former member of the Frederick County Farm Bureau, past president of the Capitol Milk Producers Cooperative Inc. and past president of the Libertytown-Unionville Lions Club. He was a member of Lingore United Methodist Church.

Surviving, in addition to his wife, are daughter and son-in-law Barbara S. and Eric Gammeter, of New Market; son and daughter-in-law Bernard C. and Patricia Smelser, of near Libertytown; granddaughter and spouse Lisa and Andy Giacco; great-grandsons Andrew and Anthony Giacco; sister and brother-in-law Mary Lee and Chris Matthews, of New Market; and nephews Paul M., Chris H. and J. Scott Matthews.

A funeral service will be held at 1:30 p.m. Monday at Hartzler Funeral Home, 11802 Liberty Road, Libertytown, with the Rev. David A. Coakley, his pastor, officiating. Private interment will be in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Frederick.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. Sunday at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to the Hospice of Frederick County, P.O. Box 1799, Frederick, MD 21702; or to Carroll Hospice, 292 Stoner Ave., Westminster, MD 21157.

Online condolences may be made at www.hartzlerfuneralhome.com.