Dr. Charles Avery Blackman

Clan Obidiah

Dr. Charles Blackman died August 1, 2023 at Stoneleigh Hospice in Lansing, Michigan, just prior to his 98th birthday. He was an active member of TMF and history enthusiast.

Charles was born to Dorothy Rude Munson and Dr. Charles Leon Blackman (Clan Obidiah) in Maine on August 22, 1925. The family moved to Columbus, Ohio when he was a young boy.When Charles was ready for college, he declined attending the large Ohio State campus for one with a smaller teacher/student ratio. He received his A.B. in 1946 from the University of Olivet in Olivet, Michigan.

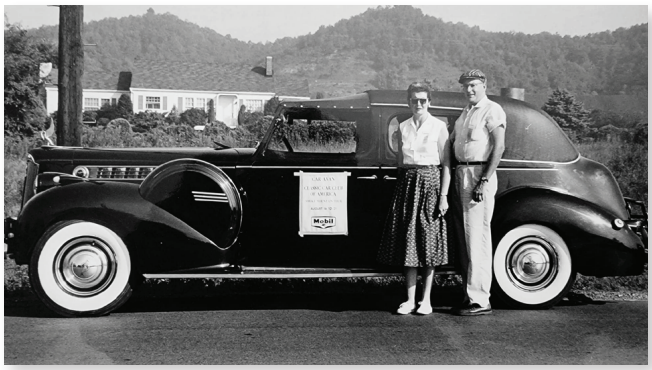
He went on to receive his M.A. and Ph.D. from Ohio State. In 1956, he began teaching at Michigan State University College of Education where he would spend his career after a brief time teaching in North Muskegon and Holland, MI. Charles became a nationally recognized authority on curriculum development.



In 1957, he married Margaret Alice Vesey, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Leslie Vesey of Fremont, Ohio. Margaret was equally accomplished. She received her B.A. and B.S. from Bowling Green State University and her M.S. and Ph.D. from Ohio State. She had served previously as a teacher of mathematics and as the Ohio State Assistant Chairman, Division of Appointments, College of Education at Ohio State. She then served 18 years as the Managing Editor, Centennial Review at Michigan State.

He has made significant contributions, ranging from volunteering with the American Friends Service Committee for displaced persons to involvement with the Urban League in Muskegon. Additionally, he served on the Okemos School Board and played a role in the Community and Engagement Ministry Committee at the People's Church in East Lansing.

Charles lived a very full life, but still found time for yet another passion—cars of all kind—particularly Packards. And always an achiever, he became an international expert on Packards.



1940 Packard 180 Custom Super Eight 180
All-Weather Cabriolet by Rollson

At an early age, Charles Blackman's fondness for automobiles began with the gift of a $25 Model T from his parents. His love for all autos grew.

His collection of automobiles at times reached over twenty vehicles, before settling down to 9 later in life. His first Packard, a 1940 Custom Super Eight 180 All-Weather Cabriolet by Rollson, was purchased in 1955 and still remains in the collection. He was a well-known and respected Packard authority with a lifetime of accumulated knowledge. He was highly sought after for his accurate information, advice and an expert on Packard body production figures. Charles was active in many automobile clubs over the years. He was a very early member of the Classic Car Club of America and took his various cars over the years on CCCA Caravans and to the Grand Classic shows.

Charles served on the collections committee of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum for more than 20 years, serving the museum with distinction. He would later donate his 1938 Packard Twelve Convertible Victoria to the museum. Other cars were donated to car museums over his lifetime.

In 1998 Charles was a founding signer of the Articles of Incorporation that established the Motor Cities National Heritage Area Partnership. He continued to serve Motor Cities as part of the heritage area's Lansing Stewardship Community, including a role as a board member at the R. E. Olds Museum of Transportation in Lansing.

His greatest automotive passion was unquestionably the Packard marque. Charles became a member of The Packard Club (Packard Automobile Classics, Inc.) very early on, and later became a Charter Member of the Club's Motor City Packards Region. Over the span of more than 50 years he amassed a large volume of research data that reconstructed Packard's body

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Dr. Blackman was instrumental in the 1992 creation of the America's Packard Museum in Dayton, Ohio, and the museum featured one of his personal Packards as part of its inaugural display. He went on to serve on the museum's board and their Leadership Council for over 25 years, with 10 years as Chairman.

Dr. Margaret Blackman passed away in 2003 at the age of 80. Charles remarried to Rev. Dr. Peggy Miller Riethmiller, a fellow professor at MSU and ordained as a Congregational Christian Churches minister. She passed away in 2010.

Always a giving man, a tragic event allowed Charles to up his philantrhopic game in 2005, when his cousin Clarence Gregory, a chemist for General Electric, passed away. Charles inherited enough money to begin searching in earnest for venues for his donations.

Charles and Peggy became of one of three donors that gave to the construction of the Charles A. Blackman and Peggy Riethmiller Blackman Arts Center at the University of Olivet. He donated his great grandfather's 1792 desk to the Fifth Maine Museum. His mother's Trefethen side had resided on House and Peaks Islands in Maine prior to moving to the Midwest. OSU received one of his beloved Packards - one owned previously by Ann Dodge, widow of Horace Dodge!

Perhaps a fitting capstone of Charles' well-lived life came just a few weeks before his passing. His son Wes and partner Bill drove Charles' final restoration, a 1941 Packard 160 Business Coupe, a total of 1,400 miles from Lansing, Michigan, to West Palm Beach, Florida, after attending the Concours D'Elegance at Copshaholm in South Bend, Indiana. At the show, it received their premier level LaVine Award: Spirit of the Hobby. The award honors those who have demonstrated dedication and passion to the classic car hobby through preservation, restoration, and participation in saving our automotive heritage. It would turn out to be a very apropos final tribute to a man who was a great ambassador to the entire collector car hobby.

Charles attended both the 1937 and the 1987 Munson Reunions at New Haven. He was elected to the TMF Board of Directors in 1988 and served as TMF President from 1998-2000.

Charles leaves a loving son, C. Wesley Blackman and his partner Bill Clark of Florida.



Rest in Peace, Love, Wesley!