

4-13-2023

In Memoriam: Charles “Chuck” Ritter

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Wu, Shuang-Ye, "In Memoriam: Charles “Chuck” Ritter" (2023). *College of Arts and Sciences Newsroom*. 621.

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In Memoriam: Charles “Chuck” Ritter

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Thursday April 13, 2023

By Shuang-Ye Wu

Charles “Chuck” Ritter, a geology professor at the University of Dayton for nearly 30 years, died April 7. He was 91.

Chuck taught geology at UD from 1967 to 1994, when he retired at the rank of professor emeritus. He served for 11 years as chair of the Department of Geology.

A University lab, the Ritter Undergraduate Research Facility, was named after Chuck. He was inducted into the UD Army ROTC Hall of Fame in 2011.

Chuck taught a wide variety of undergraduate courses. His research, which involved many students, was used to determine the natural background levels of heavy metals — such as lead, cadmium and mercury — in soils and water from the Dayton area. Potential sources of pollution above the natural background levels could then be investigated and mitigated.

Over the years and through his travels, Chuck amassed a large and diverse collection of rocks and minerals. He meticulously maintained a description of each piece. In October 2022, he donated this collection to the Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences. The department is grateful for his donation, and we are pleased to be able to share it with everyone through this display.



Chuck was caring, selfless and compassionate, with an infectious sense of humor and an anecdote or two up his sleeve. “A thoroughly decent human being” are words that readily come to mind when thinking about Chuck.

There are many stories of UD students who took an introductory geology class with him, who then declared as majors in the department, a reflection of his engaging teaching, approachability and sincere and genuine nature.

Chuck was born April 24, 1931, in Verona, Pa., to the late Edward William and Mary Margaret (Lauer) Ritter. He served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955, and subsequently graduated in 1959 with a bachelor’s degree in geology from the University of Dayton. He earned a Master of Science degree in geology and geophysics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1962, and a doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1971.

Chuck is survived by his daughter, Mary Ritter of Miamisburg, Ohio; son, Bill Ritter of Cincinnati; and sister Rose Marie Ritter of Verona, Pa.. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Suzanne (Schwind) Ritter.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, April 17, at Precious Blood Catholic Church, 4961 Salem Ave., Dayton, with Father Tony Fortman presiding. A visitation will take place Monday from 9:30 a.m. until the time of Mass.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the UD Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences, 300 College Park, Dayton, Ohio 45469; the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, Kansas 66675-8516; or Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, 309 SW 14th St. Miami, Florida 33145. Online condolences to the family may be made on [Kindred Funeral Home's website](#).

Shuang-Ye Wu is professor and chair of the UD Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences.