

**Charles “Chuck”
Edward Mason, Jr.**

November 8, 1949 - January 8, 2023

Celebrating the Life of
Charles “Chuck” Edward Mason, Jr.

Saturday, January 14, 2023 11:00 a.m.

Broussard’s Chapel

Beaumont, Texas

Dr. James R. Fuller

Prelude

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

Betty Duncan, piano

Opening Sentences

A Life Remembered

Reading of the Obituary

Tosh Villery

Joe Cohen Written Memory read by Floyd McSpadden

Beth Schreck

Brad Mason

Chad Mason & Kristin Mason Lenoir

Prayer

“The Impossible Dream”

Lamar University Music Students & Rotary Chorus Members

Directed by Dr. James Han

Eulogy

Message

Well done!

“Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Matthew 25.23a

Prayer

“You Raise Me Up”

Lamar University Music Students & Rotary Chorus Members

Directed by Dr. James Han



Charles Edward Mason, Jr. was born on November 8, 1949, in Nacogdoches to Charles and Irene Mason. The oldest of three siblings, Chuck had little time for sleep even as a baby and spent much of his time with his nose buried in a book. But he had eclectic taste – he enjoyed everything from comic books and MAD Magazines to the Mason family’s set of Encyclopedia Britannica, which he read cover to cover.

As many siblings do, Chuck’s brother Brad and sister Mary Bess loved to taunt their older, bookish brother. He, in return, could not understand why they couldn’t just figure out their homework, and gave them a hard time about it. But even so, Mary Bess remembers a long family car trip to Memphis, curling up in Chuck’s lap anytime she wanted to get some sleep.

As he got older, Chuck joined the Boy Scouts, and the knowledge and experience he gained was useful throughout his life. One day when Chuck was 12, a boy at the park near his house severed an artery and Chuck applied a tourniquet, which saved the boy’s life and landed Chuck in the newspaper.

As a scout, Chuck had the opportunity to go to Philmont Scout Ranch, a definitive experience for him. Chuck’s favorite story from his time at Philmont: as one of the youngest campers, he had to carry some of the other boys’ packs. While hiking down a hill he lost his footing, he tumbled, eventually doing a flip and landing on his feet. The older boys thought he did it on purpose and tried to do it, but none of them could.

As a student, Chuck excelled in school, earning all A's and becoming salutatorian at French High School. He loved to play basketball and there he demonstrated some of his most enduring traits – determination and heart. He was always second string, but he put everything he had into practicing and playing. At one point his coach told the team, “If you all played with half the heart as Chuck does, we'd be great!”



In 1967 Chuck met Becky Dickson, who would become the love of his life. Chuck was attending a concert for the Melody Maids, a girls' singing group started by his aunt Eloise. For a song where Eloise wanted to give the visual representation of family groups, she asked the older girls to pair up with a boy (though apparently nobody else heard this instruction). Becky walked up to Chuck and asked him to form a family. He agreed, and during the concert, he got up the courage to ask Becky on a date for that night. Becky almost said no because she didn't think she should admit that it was Saturday night, and she didn't already have a date. They saw a movie and went back to Becky's house where they sat on the couch and talked for hours, joking about the actual family they would start when they got married.

Chuck came into his own when he went off to study at Southwestern University. In high school he was just the smart kid, but in college he joined a fraternity, started playing intramurals, and made great friends. After two years at Southwestern he ran out of money (partly because of the long-distance phone charges from hours-long conversations with Becky) and decided to finish his degree at Lamar University.

Though pursuing a major in biology, Chuck worked in the family construction business for two summers, soon realizing that business problem-solving was what he really enjoyed. Inspired by his tough but effective biology professor Russell Long, Chuck quickly learned to embrace the “scientific approach” and eventually found that approach “paid off in making solid business decisions.” He graduated from Lamar University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science in biology.

In 1970, Chuck became one of the third generation Masons to join Mason Equipment (which would eventually be renamed Mason Construction, LLC), a family business that has been in operation since 1939. In 1980, with their father’s health declining, Chuck and Brad took over the reins from their dad, with Chuck becoming President. They jumped in feet first, and although there were plenty of disagreements and tough lessons learned, they complemented each other and led the business to grow exponentially, from six staff members to more than 500 employees.



Chuck would say that Becky’s love gave him the confidence he needed to become the person he was, and they married in Beaumont in 1971. Following their wedding, Chuck and Becky lived in a little house right next to the railroad tracks. The house was falling down but they were in newlywed bliss, and Chuck took great joy in fixing it up. A lifelong night owl, he used the overnight hours to work on house projects, and every morning Becky woke up excited to see what he had done. One night he

used a toothbrush to hand dye the bedroom carpet brown, while Becky slept peacefully unaware.

This would be a common theme for their homes through the years, with Chuck always thinking of ideas to optimize their living space. They moved to their current house in 1979, where Chuck saw the potential of a rundown house and made it into a warm, welcoming home where he and Becky could do what they loved – hosting dinners, celebrations, and their beloved Christmas party, where they would bring together the people they knew and loved from their many areas of involvement.



In 1977, their son Charles Edward Mason III (Chad) was born, and daughter Kristin Michelle Mason arrived in 1979. Though keeping the family business running smoothly was far more than a 9 to 5 job, Chuck made it a priority to be home for dinner and reading bedtime stories to the kids. They would all settle in on the big comfortable couch, and he would read books, complete with entertaining character voices. After bedtime, Chuck would go back to the office, sometimes until 2am.

For Chuck, having kids was an opportunity to share his wonder and curiosity about the world around us. The family celebrated Frog Day each year, where after letting the pool go all winter, they drained and cleaned it, and often found giant bullfrogs to marvel at. He was never too far removed from his Biology major roots, and loved to impart knowledge any chance he got: towing Chad and Kristin in a clear-bottom inflatable boat while he snorkeled and pointed out fish; turning Chad’s case of the chicken pox into a topic for that year’s school science project; and after killing a snake in the yard, putting it in a jar with formaldehyde for the kids to look at it and learn.



Chuck and Becky loved music, and their home was filled with an eclectic array of it. At home Chuck would turn the stereo up loud for Chad and Kristin to run and dance around the house to a wide variety of music, including the Top Gun soundtrack, The Muppets and John Denver Christmas album, and the theme song from Chariots of Fire. In the car, the whole family enjoyed singalongs to favorite Broadway shows. Chuck loved to share music with his family, and after embracing YouTube in recent years, he was excited to proselytize about

the new artists he discovered scrolling around the site when he inevitably couldn't sleep.

Chuck found great joy in traveling. After discovering Grand Cayman as a young married couple, it became a special place for he and Becky -- and later the family -- to spend time. After many years renting vacation homes on the North Side of the island, they eventually bought Castaway Cove, a home to enjoy and to share with friends. Some of Chuck's favorite Cayman activities were identifying fish and other undersea wonders while he snorkeled for hours; sitting under a palm tree sipping a cold iced tea; visiting one of his favorite Cayman restaurants where all the waiters knew him; and planning house projects.

After the kids got older, Chuck took the family on adventures to Europe, Tahiti, Fiji, and Australia, and in each location, Chuck managed to make friends and find other Texans. Later, he and Becky embraced their independence with trips to Greece, Italy, Denmark, Russia, Estonia, Australia (several more times), New Zealand, and every possible place that Rotary gave them an excuse to travel.

Although successful in business, Chuck's real passion was community involvement. He was extremely active in leadership capacities for many civic, cultural and educational organizations in Beaumont and Southeast

Texas. Over the years, he served on the boards of Beaumont Civic Opera, Young Audiences, Beaumont Community Players, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, United Way, Lamar University Foundation, JASON Alliance, Beaumont Children’s Museum, and Rotary Club of Beaumont. He also served as a member of the Beaumont Centennial Commission that built the working replica of the Spindletop Gusher that is a popular feature of the Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum.

Two of his most rewarding civic achievements were serving as founding president of the JASON Alliance of Southeast Texas and one of the founding board members for the Beaumont Children’s Museum. He wanted to pass along his love of science to future generations.

Rotary had a massive presence in his life. An active member of the Beaumont Rotary Club since 1983, Chuck served as president from 2000-



2001. During 2007-2008, he served as district governor of Rotary District 5910, covering Southeast Texas from Port Arthur to Galveston to College Station to Palestine. In 2010, he received the T. Kelsey Lamb, Sr. Award for Business Ethics from the Rotary Club of Beaumont. During Becky’s year as Centennial President of the Rotary Club of Beaumont, Chuck chaired the design and construction of the Beaumont Rotary Centennial Playground (a 14,000 sq. ft.

barrier-free playground, which is located across the lake from the Beaumont Event Center) as its centennial gift to the community.

Chuck was also involved in regional and international Rotary activities, joining projects such as Books for the World and End Polio Now, both of which he was very passionate about. He served as the Rotary Region 26 End Polio Now Coordinator, covering Oklahoma and most of Texas.

Knowing the value of the education he received, Chuck held a variety of volunteer roles at Lamar University. As a member of the Lamar University Foundation board he served as secretary, treasurer, vice president, and chair of the audit, development, and bylaws committees. He was also on the Friends of the Arts Board; Le Grand Bal Honoree in 2012; a member of

Investing in the Future Campaign Cabinet; and a member of the Reese Construction Management Advisory Council.

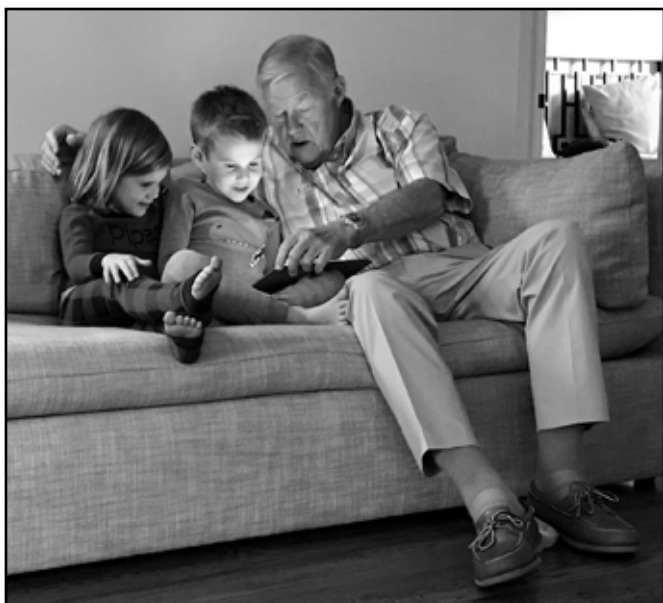
In addition to their volunteer efforts at Lamar, Chuck and Becky endowed the first privately funded Mirabeau Scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholarships the university offers. Together, the Masons generously supported faculty research and development, numerous scholarships, the Cardinal Club, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Human Development, and the College of Business, and many other significant projects and goals of the university.

His involvement in organizations was not just an act of giving – in return, Chuck met countless friends and young people he would mentor.

His intelligence seemed innate. He just understood things, and if he didn't, he was determined to read about it and break it down to understand how it fit together. His curiosity and need to understand was integral to how he approached work and friendships. His deep interest in getting to know others and the things they were curious about led him to make many friendships throughout the years. His critical thinking approach helped him see situations from a unique perspective and oftentimes led him to want to “fix” things that weren't necessarily broken. Indeed, to work on a project with Chuck was to know that at some point he might just blow the whole thing up (maybe even a few times)...only to make it so much better. It wasn't easy, but he never took the easy way when it came to something he cared about.

Without a doubt, Chuck will be looking down on us during his service, thinking of more efficient ways for everyone to fit into the funeral chapel, and wishing he'd been able to edit this bio and cut down the length immensely.

He is survived by his wife, Becky Mason; his son, Chad Mason, and wife Lauren of Beaumont; and his daughter, Kristin Mason Lenoir, and husband Sandy of Houston; and his four grandchildren: Evie Mason, Chase Mason, Aiden Lenoir and Piper Lenoir. He is also survived by his mother, Irene Mason, brother Brad Mason and wife Monica, his sister Mary Bess Townsend, his sister-in-law Linda Cooper, and many nieces and nephews.













Pallbearers

Wilton Allen
Hugh Summers
Tosh Villery
Floyd McSpadden
Michael McBride

Honorary Pallbearer

Joe Cohen

Interment

Forest Lawn Memorial Park
Beaumont, Texas

Memorial Contributions

Beaumont Children's Museum
701 Main Street
Beaumont, Texas 77701

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Rotary International Foundation - Polio Plus
endpolio.org

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Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas Foundation
3070 College Street, Suite 401
Beaumont, Texas 77701

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An Organization of One's Choice

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