

Charles was most proud of helping to educate the deaf and blind children, saving North Dakota's three junior colleges, helping the North Dakota School for the Deaf, and helping to pass the first legislation to partially fund local schools with state money.

Late in 1991, Governor George Sinner appointed Charles to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget for the state of North Dakota. Charles served the state in that positions until December 1992 when Governor Ed Shaffer took office.

The following April, Charles received a Presidential appointment from President Bill Clinton to be the North Dakota State Director of the USDA-FMHA (Farmers Home Administration). This was later changed to USDA Rural Development. Charles retired in 2000.

As a small businessman in Devils Lake, Charles was active in civic and fraternal organizations. He served on the school board for St. Joseph's Elementary School, co-chairman of the ACT (Active Community Thought) Program sponsored by the Devils Lake Chamber of Commerce. This program helped local government prioritize the needs of the community. This led to the construction of the two new underpasses, the routing of US Highway City Route and the Lemmna Project as the lagoons.

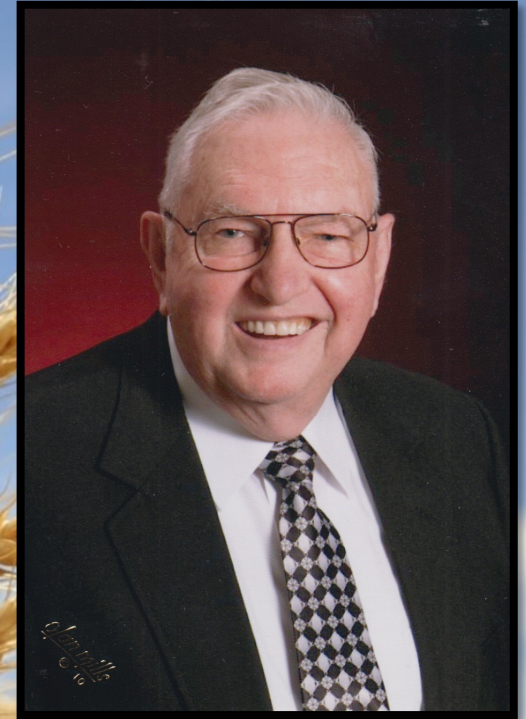
Charles was a faithful and active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, and was a 4th Degree Knight.

Charles so faithfully and proudly served his country, his community, his State, and his Lord. He loved his wife, children and grandchildren with his whole heart and treasured each and every moment spent with them.

Charles is survived by his precious wife Janet of nearly 65 years; 6 children Richard Mertens, Laura (Keith) Nielsen, Ken (Chris Janke) Mertens, Jeanne (Jerry) Aasand, Connie (Greg Kaiser) Mertens and Craig (Kristen) Mertens; 14 grandchildren Douglas (Bre) Nielsen, Rebecca (Ryan) Clark, Kristina (Alex) Hickel, Zach (Jennifer) Mertens, Adam (Kelsey) Mertens, Nick (Jackie) Mertens, Isaac (Casey) Mertens, Emily (Pat) Zangari, Garrett (Billie) Aasand, Michael Kaiser, Liz Kaiser, Brooks Mertens, Jace Mertens and Sydney Mertens; 20 great grandchildren; sister Phyllis (Richard) Lang; in-laws Michael Kuntz, Raymond Kuntz, Jake and Helen Kuntz, Theresa Kuntz and Mary Dahlen; many beloved nieces, nephews and their families and his Belgium family. These were Charles's cousins and their families who were so special to him. He loved that the families remained close throughout the years.

He was preceded in death by his parents, siblings Victor Mertens, Ernest (Mildred) Mertens, Joseph (Betty) Mertens, Lucy (Joe) Ziegler, Dorothy (Ed) Kalinowski, Rosalie (Eldon) Lucken, Jeanette (Glenn) Weirick, Florence (Richard) Del Guidice, Mary (Richard) Evansen, Henry (Ann) Mertens, John (Bernice) Mertens, Cecil (Carol) Mertens and Gerald (Shirley) Mertens, in-law Peter and Jenny Kuntz and many other dear relatives.

In Loving Memory



Charles Mertens

***Our Treasured Husband, Dad, Grandpa,
Great Grandpa, Brother, Uncle, Cousin,
Faithful Servant and Child of God***

Charles Franklin Mertens

“Charlie”

January 3, 1933 ~ April 13, 2024

ROSARY AND SCRIPTURE SERVICE

St. Joseph Catholic Church

Devils Lake, North Dakota

Friday, April 19, 2024 ~ 7:00 p.m.

Rosary led by the Knights of Columbus

Honor Guard by the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus

Scripture Service by Reverend Mr. Ken Severinson, Deacon

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

St. Joseph Catholic Church

Devils Lake, North Dakota

Saturday, April 20, 2024 ~ 10:00 a.m.

CELEBRANT

Reverend Bernard Pfau

SPECIAL MUSIC

The Ternes Family

Special Music for the Scripture Service

Donovan Foughty, Soloist

Jean Aardahl, Pianist

LECTORS

Laura Nielsen and Connie Mertens

GIFT BEARERS

Richard Mertens, Ken Mertens,

Jeanne Aasand, Craig Mertens

HONORARY URN BEARERS

The Precious Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren

EARTHLY PLACE OF REST

St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery

Devils Lake, North Dakota

MILITARY HONORS

Accorded by the Neathery-Simensen Post #756

Devils Lake Veterans of Foreign Wars

North Dakota Military Funeral Honors Team-Army

Charles F. Mertens, 91 of Devils Lake, died on Saturday, April 13, 2024, in the Eventide Heartland Care Center surrounded by his family.

Charles Franklin Mertens was born January 3, 1933, in Devils Lake ND. He was the youngest of 15 children born to Henry and Mary (Van Steenvoort) Mertens. He lived on a farm northwest of Crary, ND until he was 6. He attended 1st grade at Crary School, then in the fall of 1939 moved to Devils Lake. He attended St. Mary's Academy until 5th grade. He attended Devils Lake Public School in 6th and 7th grade, then back to St. Mary's Academy beginning in the 8th grade and graduating from St. Mary's High School on May 25th, 1950.

Charles attended one year at Lake Region Junior College (which was the old Pershing building). He then took his mother to Van Nuys, California, where he graduated from Valley Junior College in June 1952, with an Associates of Arts Degree. He then enlisted in the United States Army on February 25, 1953, during the Korean Conflict, serving 33 months, being honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. He was stationed in Germany for 22 months in a Division Finance Office as a pay clerk and cashier.

He returned to Devils Lake in 1956 and that fall entered into a partnership with his brothers to start Lake View Dairy. On June 20, 1959, Charles was united in marriage to Janet Kuntz, the daughter of Peter and Jenny Kuntz. They would call Devils Lake home for the rest of their lives, living, working and raising their family here.

Charles ran for the State House of Representatives in 1968 and lost. He ran again in 1970 and won and served ten terms in the North Dakota House. He served 8 terms on the House Appropriations Committee, serving as Chairman in 1983. In the 1985 and 1987 sessions, he served as Democratic-NPL Floor Leader. In his 2nd term (1973) he was elected to the Legislative Council and in his last two terms (1987-1989) he served as Chairman.

When he was elected to the Legislative Council, he earned the privilege of chairing an interim committee. Because he served on the Appropriations Committee during the sessions, he always chose another committee to chair during the interim to broaden his legislative knowledge.

During the 1975-1976 Interim he chaired the Education "A" Committee. They drafted the legislation to start the High School Vocational Education Center and also to test and educate children that were both deaf and blind.

Other committees he chaired or served on were: Industry, Business and Labor "C", Transportation, Political Subdivisions, the Tenneco Plant Proposal, Natural Resources, Garrison Diversion Overview, Legislative Procedure and Arrangements, and the Budget Committee on Higher Education.