

Memorial to Charles Wesley Chesterman 1913–1991

Present and former staff members of the California
Division of Mines and Geology
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Charles Chesterman died at Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa, California, on March 25, 1991. He was born in Larned, Kansas, on February 2, 1913, and moved with his family to Bakersfield, California, when he was seven years old.

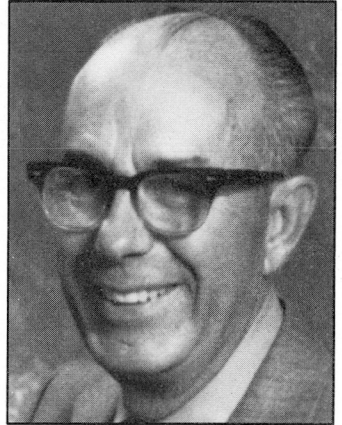
Charles received a bachelor of arts degree in geology from Fresno State College and, in 1940, a master of arts degree in geology from the University of California at Berkeley. His thesis at Berkeley was a study of the contact metamorphic rocks of the Twin Lakes area in the southern Sierra Nevada. He began work in the Twin Lakes area in 1939, and his interest in this area continued for the rest of his life.

After graduating from Berkeley, he taught at the City College of San Francisco for two years before joining the U.S. Geological Survey in 1942. During the period between 1942 and 1946 he examined tungsten mines and prospects in California and Nevada as part of the war effort. In 1946 he also spent nine months in Japan as a geologist for the U.S. government.

In 1947 Charles joined the staff of the California Division of Mines and Geology. He worked at the division's San Francisco office until his retirement in 1978. Early in his career with the division he was in charge of the Public Services Laboratory, which provided information on mineral specimens to prospectors, the public, and the staff. Many of the young geologists who started their careers with the division were taught laboratory techniques by Chesterman. As many of these geologists attest, Charles insisted on high standards for work in his laboratory. Later he made significant contributions to the division by modernizing the staff geochemical laboratory and establishing a geophysical program.

Charles was an outstanding mineralogist, petrographer, and field geologist; but he was also a scientist with a broad range of interests, including music and photography. He was the author of numerous division publications on various mineral commodities including nephrite jade and jadeite, and on other subjects such as volcanic hazards, volcanic rocks, and the geology of the Bodie gold mining district. Published geologic maps include the 15-minute Shoshone, Bodie, and Matterhorn Peak quadrangles. He was also the author of *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Rocks and Minerals*.

Charles was associated with the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco for 37 years until his death: first as a research assistant in 1954, and later as a Fellow and as honorary curator of minerals. He was responsible for the research and display of the mineral collection at the academy for many years, and he personally added significantly to the collection through his field work. During his years at the academy, Charles developed and led a number of popular trips and lecture tours, and taught classes in geology and mineralogy. In 1991 he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



In recognition of his distinguished career over many years as a professional geologist and mineralogist, Charles was honored by having a new mineral named after him in 1988, one that he discovered in the Twin Lakes region in 1980. Chestermanite is a magnesium-iron-aluminum-antimony-borate mineral.

Charles and his wife, Norma, lived in Calistoga, in the Napa Valley of California, for a number of years. During this time he served on the Calistoga Water Advisory Committee. Shortly after his death the city named a new park in his honor in appreciation for his public service.

Despite his acknowledged abilities and talents, Charles was a very modest and thoughtful man. He was always willing to listen seriously to opinions and arguments that did not necessarily agree with his own. He has left a large number of friends, not only those in his profession, but among all the people who knew him. As many have stated, he was an agreeable companion both in the office and in the field. Those of us who knew him and worked with him will miss his sense of humor and his good advice.

Charles is survived by his wife Norma, a son, two daughters, a stepdaughter, a stepson, and nine grandchildren.

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