

# Clyde Spurgeon Sawyer Obituary

## Clyde Spurgeon Sawyer

*Mesa, Arizona*

December 10, 1928- April 5, 2018



Clyde Spurgeon Sawyer, age 89, quietly departed his body around 7:20pm on April 5, 2018, at Courtyard Towers in Mesa, AZ. Mr. Sawyer's quality of life and health had started to decline after several surgeries on his shoulder in 2006 and finally in 2014, he moved to Arizona to live with his daughter. The diagnosis that was given as the reason for his health deterioration was Parkinson's.

Clyde Sawyer was born in Norfolk, VA to Reverend Clyde Spurgeon Sawyer, Sr and his wife, Bertha Elizabeth Davis on December 10, 1928. He served in the US Army, 82nd Airborne Division from 1946 - 1948. He attended Virginia Polytechnical Institute where he was introduced by his sister, Cora Lee Sawyer to Clotilde Mason LaBruce, whom he married on November 26, 1948. His first son, Steven Spurgeon Sawyer was born in 1950 in Blacksburg, VA, where the family lived until he graduated from VPI with a B.S. in Agriculture in 1951. Soon after he moved to Tyrrell County to the family farm, where the remaining children were born, Bruce Davis Sawyer and Clothilde Elizabeth Sawyer. Clyde loved the farm and would reminisce of those days often.

Mr. Sawyer and his wife were very active in all levels of scouting. Clyde served as the Scout Master for Troop 94 in Columbia, NC. Many trips and events are well remembered by many to include 50-mile hikes of the Appalachian trail, the 1964

National Jamboree and multiple Pinewood Derby races. In 1965, Clyde received the distinguished scouting award, the Silver Beaver.

Clyde began his Soil Conservationist career in July 1952, as a Soil Conservationist aid in Columbia, NC. He took the part-time job to help support his family because farming income was so unpredictable. He gave up farming as his primary occupation for a full-time job as a Soil Conservationist in May 1954. He had 5 counties he was responsible for in Eastern North Carolina. He was most proud of the pumping station project that he helped to design and build in Gum Neck, NC. It was a huge undertaking that prevented the farmers in these low-lying areas from constantly being flooded. Richard Nixon wrote a letter of congratulations to the community for their accomplishment.

Clyde served as a District Conservationist in Columbia for almost 20 years, then he was promoted and moved to Raleigh in 1972, to serve as the District Conservationist. There he was given the responsibility of solving the problems with flooding along Crabtree Creek. He was in charge of the design/build of 13 dams along Crabtree Creek in Wake County which prevented the flooding in that watershed for years into the future.

In May 1975, he was assigned the position of Area Conservationist in Chattanooga, TN. This time his project was the Cooper basin. It was a huge area of land that looked like a red moon with barren hills of red dirt due to the acid rains from the cooper mine. He served in Eastern Tennessee until his retirement in January 1984, ending over 30 years in the Soil Conservation Service.

Clyde was married to Clotilde for over 25 years, and then he divorced in 1974. After that he was married to Sarah for 15 years and then he married his last wife Faye Cloer Varnell on May 27, 1989. He became a widow when she passed after ten years of marriage from pancreatic cancer. He never remarried, but had a companion and dear friend, Betty Johnson for over fifteen years thereafter.

Mr. Sawyer enjoyed 30 wonderful and busy years of retirement. He traveled often and for years with his wife Faye in their motor coach and spent several winters in Florida. And he always had one or more projects going in his shop in the garage. Many of his friend and neighbors in Chattanooga will remember him for the special built wooden birdhouses that he gave them to help propagate the bluebird population.

Clyde is survived by his former wife, Clotilde LaBruce Burcher, his three children, Steven Sawyer, Bruce Sawyer and Clothilde Canale, and six grandchildren, Nicole

Sawyer Paske, Jason Sawyer, Joshua Sawyer, Brandi Sawyer Smyth, Giovanni Canale, Cianchino Canale and several great grandchildren.

Clyde's body will be cremated, and his remains will be buried in Hamilton Memorial Gardens in Chattanooga, TN at a yet undetermined date. It has yet to be determined whether there will be services in Tennessee or not. His family will have an intimate celebration of his life in Arizona.