



Chester Hensley

September 3, 1943 - January 18, 2020

Chester Hensley, 76, of St. Albans passed away Saturday, January 18, 2020 at his home with his family by his side.

He was born in St. Albans to the late William and Lucy Ward Hensley. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Dolly Larck, Virginia Wileman, and Dorothy Gillispie; brothers, Donald, Billy, and Luther Hensley; niece and surrogate daughter Carol Chandler; and great-grandson Owen Dye.

Throughout the latter part of his childhood years and into his teens, Chester lived with his oldest sister Virginia, and her husband Allen. Allen died in 1971, but the positive impact he made on Chester would last a lifetime. Chester credits him with his high work ethic and determination to succeed. Chester's nieces and nephews became more like brothers and sisters. They are Elsie Leggett (deceased), Lucy Gerken (deceased), Allen Wileman Jr. (deceased), Lois Stancill (deceased), Delbert Wileman (living), and Eleanor Stambaugh (living).

Chester moved to Ohio in the late 60's where he began working at the Chrysler Corporation. While living in Ohio, he built the family home from the ground up with the help of Do It Yourself books and few close friends. He retired from the Chrysler Corporation in 1979 and returned to his hometown of St. Albans. He invested in rental property, became a self-employed contractor,

and later retired from the Kanawha County Board of Education. In addition to Chester's full-time jobs, he worked for the Teays Hill Cemetery Association starting in the mid-1980s.

Three accomplishments Chester was most proud of were:

1. Serving in the US Army as a General Supply Specialist

Chester successfully completed the Supply Clerks Course MOS 760 in March of 1963 at Fort Polk, Louisiana; and the General Supply Specialist Course at Fort Lee, Virginia Quartermaster School in April of 1963

Chester was a proud veteran, and served a part of his time during the Vietnam War

He received the National Defense medal (after his discharge), which was awarded to all service members including those who did not serve in the war zone, for serving honorably during a time of war or conflict that was designated as a national emergency

Chester also received the Good Conduct Medal, which is awarded for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity in active Federal Military service and is awarded on a selective basis

Additionally, he earned an expert level Army Marksmanship Qualification Badge using an M-1 rifle

2. Earning his high school diploma at the age of 54

Chester's highest level of education was the 7th grade, until 1997 when he earned his high school diploma (not a General Education Diploma) after returning to night school through the Kanawha County Adult Education Program

3. Serving as Sexton for the Teays Hill Cemetery Association

Chester held various job positions throughout his 34+ years with the cemetery

- He started as groundskeeper and grave digger, and eventually became sexton
- Chester's passion was caring for the cemetery; so much so that he refused to resign until only eight months prior to his death. Even through the last weeks of his life, he was deeply concerned that there was work on the cemetery that he should be doing

Chester may have started life as a poor boy from a rundown part of St. Albans, but his life ended with his head held high and never forgetting where he came from.

Surviving are his loving wife of nearly 55 years, Rhoda Lunsford Hensley; his daughter, Sandy Cunningham (Charles); son, Shannon Hensley of St. Albans; ex-daughter-in-law, Jennifer Hensley of Florida; three surrogate daughters: Della Estep, Michelle Scarberry, and Patricia Hensley; grandchildren: Cody, Casey, Cory; Jamie and Samantha; Justin and Kayla; great grandchildren: Braylyn, Abel; Travis; Candace, Bradyn, Brooklyn, and Kinsley; surrogate grandchildren: Baily, Ryan, and Josh; and his Lone Ranger movie buddy and surrogate granddaughter Ashley Meddings.

A heartfelt thanks to his best friend and camping buddy, Harold Hazlewood and his wife Lucy (Chester's niece) for helping to make it possible for Chester to take one last trip to the mountains during the fall of 2019.

We would like to thank everyone who has and continues to provide us with a strong support system during this difficult time, including special nieces Eleanor Stambaugh, Bonnie Domina, Lucy (Harold) Hazlewood; our best friends Pearl and Susan Harmon; as well as other family members and friends: Joann Steele, Virginia Lovejoy, Michelle and Tracy Scarberry, William Hensley, Patricia Hensley, LeeLee Russell, C. Beatrice Adkins, Luther

Hensley, John Adkins, Rob and Omazell Keeler, Joann Racer, Robert Gillispie, Tiara Chandler, Ashley Garrett, Charles Cunningham, and the Teays Hill Cemetery Association. A special note of appreciate to Pastor John Gillenwater for visiting Chester at home to pray with him.

Words are not enough to express our gratitude to those with the VA in Huntington and South Charleston, and Dr. Carroll, who have taken such exceptional care of him over the years; especially during the last 6 months. We are impressed at how seamlessly the VA worked with Amedisys, and then Hospice (Amanda, Mary, Holly, and all others), to ensure that he was well cared for up until the end. We could not have been assigned better doctors, nurses, and CNAs. The professionalism, compassion, and patience shown by the staff at Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home is very much appreciated.

Funeral service will be held at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, February 2, 2020 at Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home, St. Albans with Pastor Stephen Neese officiating. Burial will be in Teays Hill Cemetery, St. Albans with Military Honors.

Friends may call one hour prior to the funeral service.

You may visit Chester's tribute page at bartlettnicholsfunerahome.com to share memories or condolences with the family.

Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home, family owned and located at 409 Sixth Ave., St. Albans is honored to serve the Hensley family.

Cemetery Details

Teays Hill Cemetery

Coal River Road
St. Albans, WV 25177

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 2. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home
409 Sixth Avenue
Saint Albans, WV 25177
(304) 727-4325

Funeral Service

FEB 2. 2:00 PM (ET)

Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home
409 Sixth Avenue
Saint Albans, WV 25177
(304) 727-4325

Tribute Wall

KE

“ *The West Virginia and Kanawha County Associations of Retired School Employees extend their sincere sympathy to you, the family, in your sorrow. Blessings to all.*

Kanawha Co. Retired School Employees - February 03, 2020 at 09:32 AM

MI

“ ❤️

mike - February 02, 2020 at 10:05 AM

CW

“ *My Uncle, Chester Hensley, was always fun to be around and helpful. If he wasn't laughing at us, he was laughing with us! He built so many amazing things and nice houses. When I was little I thought my Aunt Rhoda married Elvis! Lol He looked like Elvis to me! He was a hard worker and always looking out for family. One of my favorite memories now is when he caught me and Della on a "detour" to the boys' we liked house when we were teens. We told him we were just picking up a ring for a friend. I told him I didn't need permission, that I was allowed to date. I'll never forget him saying "well, ya'll are gonna get a ring around your butts! He told me I had 3 days to tell Mom where I was and every day after school he asked if I'd told her and I smarted off. To this day, I don't know if he told her, but she found out! She was waiting for me when I got home and I got into trouble! Boy was I ever! I am so very grateful for Chester, and my other uncles and aunts who looked out for me and tried to keep me out of trouble! We were incredibly blessed to have them in our lives. We knew they loved us and cared about us and they were awesome examples to us as they lived their lives in front of us.*

Christy Wayne - February 02, 2020 at 02:37 AM



“ Chester was always one of my favorite people to be around...he always had a smile and a nice word for anyone. He loved family and I am lucky enough to have been included in that. One of my last and favorite memories would be a couple years ago when he was trying to learn the guitar, he couldn't work the DVD player so I would put the DVD in for him and he would go through the lessons. I always thought it was awesome that at his age he was still trying to learn something new!



Jennifer Hensley - February 01, 2020 at 09:01 PM



“ I have too many memories of him but my most recent memory is when I was on Rhoda and Chester's porch crying about Mom dying and he walked around the house and seen me and asked what was wrong and I told him " he stood there looking at me for a minute and said you know me and Rhoda loves you don't you "? I started to laugh and said yeah Chester and I love y'all too . It wasn't what he said it was the way he hesitant and I could tell that he was trying to come up with something to make me feel better and it did LoL



Michelle Scarberry - January 31, 2020 at 09:12 PM

BG

“ The last time I talked to my uncle Chester was at the hospital. Sandy said “Dad, do you know who that is?” He said yes, it’s Bobby. That’s the first time he’s ever called me Bobby. He always called me Robert. Then he wanted Me and Mary to go to the mountains with him. Then he told me I could stay home. Lol

Bobby Gillispie - January 30, 2020 at 09:56 PM

CG

“ One of my fondest memories of Uncle Chester is when I was little, Dad, Mom and myself went camping with him, Rhoda, Sandy and the boys, Carol, Greg, Mike and Tiara and when we would all go out to eat Uncle Chester would always eat all of my fries.

Chelsea Gillispie - January 30, 2020 at 08:25 PM

WH

“ Chester has always been super kind to me , supported and caring .(My favorite uncle by far) I loved him like a dad . BTW - my dad his baby brother loved him SO much . They had a bond like No Other , I love you SO much Chester and will miss you terribly , ❤️ , William,

william Hensley - January 30, 2020 at 03:28 PM



“ Chester was a down to earth family man....Never acted "above" family, that I saw, and was always there with a hug and a kiss on the cheek.....He was definitely special, and was always willing to lend a helping hand for just about any cause.....

Angel Cochran - January 30, 2020 at 03:02 PM

LR

“ He was always good to me and my kidsWhen Nicole was a majorette he would volunteer his time to make things they needed for competition and it was always the best props that man could do anything in life if he put his mind to it he done it

Leelee Russell - January 30, 2020 at 02:39 PM

KN

“ I remember uncle Chester calling me when I would make the A Honor Roll in school and my name was posted in the paper. He always ended the call with, “ I’m proud of you and I love you.”


Katie Hensley Parsons - his niece - January 30, 2020 at 01:52 PM

PH

Awe, thats so sweet!

Patricia Hensley - January 30, 2020 at 01:55 PM

PH

“ Chester to me is and will always be a man that was more than an uncle. He has always kind, caring, sweet, fun, loving, a hugger like me, i can still hear his laugh. I remember his hearing aid going off when i leaned in for a hug, he was a man who was always always doing something, no matter if it was doing something for aunt Rhoda, he was building something, working on something, riding something, pounding on something, digging something, he worked at home, work at the cemetery, or worked as a janitor. He was always working. He means alot to me, and i cherish him and the memories i have made with my uncle chester and i will always carry them. One thing i can say that set Chester apart from his brothers, he was able to laugh at himself, do silly things that made your day, even at his expense., Like dress up on holloween, or skate at the roller rink at a kids b'day party, or dance and laugh, the other hensley boys wasnt like that. Dad wasnt like that, he was when he was older,and being affectionate, my dad wasnt , but chester was, my dad worked alot too, and left that up to my mom, but he was definitely affectionate as we got older. But chester was always like that. I will miss you uncle Chester, i already do. Give dad and the rest a big hug, and know that you made a difference to me in my childhood and as an adult. Always treating my kids as your grandkids. And they loved you the same. love you always! Your niece Sissy 

Patricia Hensley - January 30, 2020 at 01:47 PM

ES

My “other brother, Uncle Chester was the biggest influence I had in my life. He was always around and he was my deceased husbands best friend and boss. My uncle was the best and if he wasn’t working, which was very few moments, he was thinking about it. I loved all my uncles but he was extra special. I spent many a summer in Ohio with him and Aunt Rhoda and they treated me as their own. You are missed so much. Thank you for being there for me all those years.

Eleanor (niece/ sisterr) - May 26, 2022 at 11:14 AM

KK

“ The thing about him I thought the most about is how he would go out of his way to take care of his wife it made me smile when I would see him stop what he was doing to make shore she had well any thing she needed.

kenneth rob keeler - January 30, 2020 at 01:11 PM

ES

“ Not only was Chester my Uncle he was also an older brother. He was always a part of my family and my earliest memories of my life always has him in them. My mom and dad thought of him as their son. Him and Aunt Rhoda have always been there for me and also I owe a large part of my life to them. Della Jane and I were best friends and I always loved getting to spend my summers in Ohio with them. Aunt Rhoda could really use the fly swatter better on our hind ends than she could swat a fly. He was Oscar's best friend , along with Johnny Adkins, most of our married life. He is definitely loved and missed by me.

Eleanor Stambaugh - January 30, 2020 at 01:03 PM

RN

“ Uncle Chester.... you will be so dearly missed, I did not see you as often as I always had hoped for. But you had always been in my heart. You had always been such a special kind hearted man. I know mom is there waiting with Jesus and all the others welcoming you with arms reached and the angel wings spread wide. RIP Uncle Chester.

Aunt Rhoda, Sandy, Shannon, my prayers are sent your way. Keep all those special happy memories in your heart. Doesn't make the pain go away but it makes it a little better.

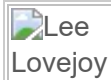
Love you all. Rosie (Larck) Nelson

Rosa Nelson - January 26, 2020 at 05:51 PM



“ When I was a young man I didn't have a man to call father. So it has always stuck with me the times that I needed to borrow a wheel barrow or another tool and Chester would take his time to get me what ever I needed and make sure I knew what I was doing. Chester, Rhoda, Sandy, and of course one of my best friends growing up Shannon where and always will be very important to me and mine! LoL y'all and I am so sorry for your loss. Its not enough but I would offer my help with anything y'all might need , just get a hold of me. Love y'all. Lee Lovejoy

Lee Lovejoy - January 26, 2020 at 09:33 AM



Sorry about the picture I didn't realize it would post it too.

Lee Lovejoy - January 26, 2020 at 09:34 AM



“ Memorial Honor Blanket was purchased for the family of Chester Hensley.



January 25, 2020 at 10:20 PM



“ R.I.p Chester
Sue & Bill Holstein

Billy Holstein - January 25, 2020 at 03:53 PM



Just about the best man I ever knew and he was everyone's favorite uncle.

Nicki Hale - February 01, 2020 at 03:43 AM