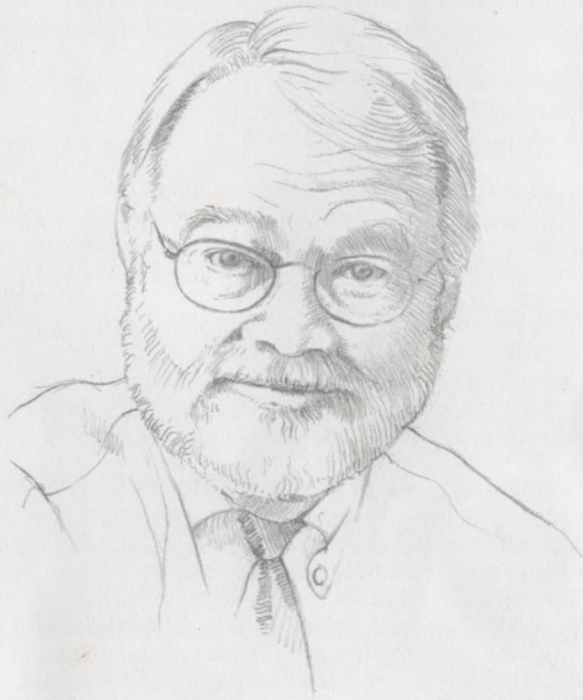


A Celebration of the Life of  
Dr. Charlie “Doc” Marler  
April 13, 1933 – May 27, 2022



Courtesy Jack Maxwell

University Church of Christ  
Abilene, TX  
June 1, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.

## Celebrating the Life of Dr. Charlie Marler

Welcome/Scripture Reading	<i>Dr. Gary McCaleb</i>
Speaker	<i>Ron Hadfield</i>
Congregational Song	<i>"Sing to Me of Heaven"</i>
Speaker	<i>Paul Rotenberry</i>
Congregational Song	<i>"Amazing Grace"</i>
Speaker	<i>Cheryl Mann Bacon</i>
Song	<i>"Shall We Gather at the River"</i>
Speaker	<i>David Marler</i>
Prayer	<i>Kenneth Pybus</i>
Congregational Song	<i>"The Lord Bless You and Keep You"</i>



## Obituary

Dr. Charles H. "Charlie" Marler, revered professor emeritus of journalism and mass communication, and influential historian who taught and mentored Abilene Christian University students for 58 years, died May 27, 2022, in Abilene, Texas, following a short illness. He was 89.

Marler was born April 13, 1933, in Garfield, Arkansas, and graduated from Will Rogers High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1951. He wed Abilene Christian classmate Peggy Gambill on Dec. 30, 1954, in Fulton, Kentucky.

He earned a B.A. in English (1955) and M.A. in history (1968) from ACU, and a doctorate in journalism from the University of Missouri (1974). Marler's distinguished 58-year career on the Hill in Abilene – the fourth-longest full-time role in university history – included 48 years of full-time service (1955-2003) and part-time senior faculty teaching (2003-13), followed by nearly daily volunteer work as an unofficial historian until the day of his passing.

He was hired by his alma mater in 1955 as assistant director of publicity, then took leave to serve in the U.S. Army's 8th Infantry Division in Colorado and in Goeppingen, Germany (1956-57), and in the Army Reserve's 490th Military Affairs and Civilian Government Company in Abilene (1958-59).

Marler returned to campus to serve as ACU's first sports information director (1958-63), associate director of development (1963-64), and director of information and publications (1964-71). Another leave (1971-74) allowed him to complete doctoral work at the University of Missouri, where he also was a research assistant in the Freedom of Information Center.

His full-time JMC legacy began in earnest in 1974 as assistant professor, then professor (1979) and chair (1987-98). His teaching specialties of Communication Law, Opinion Writing and Publication Design made him a department icon known for meticulous standards, tough grading and indefatigable commitment to the First Amendment and spiritual principles. He was named the university's Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 1987.

As an undergraduate, he was the only student to serve as editor of *The Optimist* newspaper and *Prickly Pear* yearbook. Years later as a faculty advisor of both, the flagship student publications became steady winners of juried competition by the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association and the Associated Collegiate Press. Marler's dream was for the JMC department to earn accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, which it did in 2001, one of 100 such collegiate JMC programs in the world to be recognized.

He was a visiting lecturer or journalist-in-residence for Bethany College (1988), the USIA's U.S. Speaker Program in Brazil and Argentina (1993), and the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities' Summer Journalism Institute (1998-2000). Marler also taught in ACU's study abroad programs in Switzerland and in Prague, Poland, and the former East Germany.

The Charles H. Marler Scholarship was established in 2001 by the Southwestern Journalism Congress, for which he served five terms as president. He held numerous other offices and leadership roles in professional organizations, including president of the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association and Southwestern Education Council for Journalism and Mass Communication. He also was chair of the American Journalism Historians Association board.

Marler's *Horizons* magazine, the forerunner of *ACU Today*, was an early pacesetter for Abilene Christian's longtime tradition of earning national recognition for excellence in publication design, writing, photography and marketing communications, starting with alumni magazine awards for *Horizons*, sponsored by *Time/Life* (1966) and *Newsweek* (1970).



A master historian, he was editor of *No Ordinary University: The History of a City Set on a Hill*, Dr. John C. Stevens' 1998 book about their shared alma mater. He was a member of ACU's Centennial Commission, chaired its Centennial Collection Taskforce (2005-06), and received one of 17 Hashknife Awards in 2006 for "heroic and pioneering contributions to the preservation of archives and artifacts documenting the history of the university." The last 26 years, he worked daily on updating and expanding the digital *ACU AnswerBook*, a nearly exhaustive style guide and important historical source for JMC students and the campus.

A prolific writer and a researcher of newspapers around the globe, he also edited a 1989 book, *Lone Star Christmas: The Seasonal Editorials of Frank Grimes*. The late Grimes was editor of the *Abilene Reporter-News* for more than 40 years.

He was inducted in 2006 into the ACU Sports Hall of Fame for distinguished lifetime achievement, noting his legendary knowledge of Wildcat sports history and leadership role in establishing a nationally respected athletics media relations office. Marler was press chief for the 1960 U.S. Olympic Trials in women's track and field, hosted by Abilene Christian at Elmer Gray Stadium. And he penned the name of the Southland Conference, the NCAA league ACU co-founded in 1963 with Arkansas State, Texas-Arlington, Lamar and Trinity.

In 1993 he pioneered the creation of ACU's Gutenberg Award, which annually recognizes the distinguished professional achievements of JMC alumni. Recipients each October at Homecoming are presented a wooden, scale model of a Gutenberg printing press, made all the more a treasure because Marler assembled them by hand in his home workshop. The honorees – many of them his former students – are among the university's most noteworthy graduates, including best-selling authors; educators and business leaders; media and entertainment industry standouts; members of the Grand Ole Opry and Gospel Music Hall of Fame; and nominees or winners of Oscars, Emmys, Grammys, Tellys and MTV awards, and the Pulitzer Prize.

He and Peggy were members of University Church of Christ, where he served as an elder for many years.

His community service focused on the Boy Scouts of America and as scoutmaster of Abilene's Troop 201 that met for years in a small hutment on Cedar Crest near campus, developing scores of young men who became Eagle Scouts and leaders in all walks of life. Marler earned scouting's Silver Beaver and Faithful Servant awards and pioneered the Members of Churches of Christ for Scouting and its Servant Leadership Awards and curriculum for scouts and the adults who mentor them.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Owen Marler and Velma Valentine Marler McCabe, and a granddaughter, Callie Faith Marler. Survivors include Peggy of Abilene, Texas, his wife of 67 years; sons and daughters-in-law Dr. David Marler of Easton, Pennsylvania; Todd and Lee Ann Marler of Kingwood, Texas; and Scott and Lori Marler of Lansing, Kansas; and sisters Doris Waggoner of Wichita, Kansas, and Shirley Buchanan of Tulsa, Oklahoma. His grandchildren include Lindsey Marler of Dublin, Ohio; Ashley and Shane McLaughlin of Chamblee, Georgia; Michael Marler of Kingwood, Texas; Jeremy and Emilie Marler of Kelso, Washington; and Jacob Marler and Crystal Stipe of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He also has three great-grandchildren: Addelyn Marler, Raegan Marler and Finnigan Marler of Kelso, Wisconsin.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Charlie and Peggy Marler Endowment for JMC (ACU Box 29132, Abilene, Texas 79699-9132 or [bit.ly/CharlieMarler](http://bit.ly/CharlieMarler)).

