

CHARLES SHELTON SR.

CHARLOTTE — Whether it was helping start a winery or cooking a big breakfast when his granddaughters came to visit, Charlie Shelton filled every moment with love and achievement. Could there be a more powerful legacy? Charles Madison Shelton Sr. passed away on Jan. 22, 2022, at age 86. If not for Alzheimer's, he'd still be going full speed ahead. Charlie, as he was known, was born on May 12, 1935, in Mount Airy, son of Reid and Bertha Shelton. Charlie's father was a barber. One of his customers used to pay by singing a song or two, a local kid who made good, Andy Griffith. Charlie and his younger brother, Ed, attended Franklin School across the street from their home — all 12 grades — then got down to business as lifelong friends and partners. Together, they launched Fortis Homes in 1962, then went on to establish King Sash and Door Co. and Carolinas' Distribution Services. Two of their biggest undertakings put them on the map. In 1977, they started Shelco, a general contractor company, and The Shelton Companies, a private real estate and investment firm. No wonder his family considered him a serial entrepreneur: Charlie and Ed opened Shelton Vineyards in Dobson in 2000. There in the heart of the Yadkin Valley, 90 miles north of Charlotte, they've created one of the largest wineries and vineyards on the East Coast. More than 100,000 visitors come each year to sample the wines, enjoy a stay in the hotel and share a meal in the Harvest Grill. Just as important to Charlie, here in his home on the grounds is where he prepared biscuits and



for his five granddaughters. Big Daddy they called him. Family meant everything to him, starting with Sandy, his wife of 55 years. That was

one successful blind date. Charlie is survived by his wife, Sandra Graham Shelton of Charlotte; two children — Mandy Houser and her husband, Todd, and Chip Shelton, all of Charlotte; five granddaughters — Anna, Parker, Shelton, Grayson and Madison; his brother, Ed Shelton, and his wife, Dotti, of Charlotte; his brother-in-law, Dr. Larry Redmond, of Lynchburg, Virginia, and numerous nieces and nephews. A private family graveside service is planned. A celebration of his life will be held when it is safe to gather. Rather than flowers, a gift in his memory can be made to the Charles M. Shelton Advancement Fund at the Atrium Health Foundation for Alzheimer's care, research and education across the Carolinas. Visit [www.atriumhealthfoundation.org/shelton](http://www atriumhealth foundation.org/shelton) or send a check to Atrium Health Foundation with Charles M. Shelton Advancement Fund in the memo line to 208 East Blvd., Charlotte, N.C. 2820. The family is grateful for the love and care shown by Charles Twene, his personal caregiver this past year; Dr. Prashanth Kamath and Dr. John Paat; and everyone at the Southminster retirement community and Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region. Charlie gave his time to many great causes and organizations, among them the N.C. Department of Transportation, First Union Corp., Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Wake Forest Baptist Hospital (now part of Atrium Health

Enterprise), N.C. Grape Council, University of North Carolina Health Care System, UNC Charlotte Foundation, Arts & Science Council, Davidson College, Wake Forest University and the Winston-Salem Foundation. For his good works, Charlie was awarded one of the state's highest honors, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, and inducted into the North Carolina Business Hall of Fame and Queens University of Charlotte's Carolinas Entrepreneurial Hall of Fame. As humbled as he was by the recognition, that's not what filled Charlie Shelton's heart to overflowing. He loved helping others, without fanfare. When he read about a woman whose home was destroyed by Hurricane Hugo, he bought her another. There were hundreds of other acts of kindness. A lifelong Methodist, Charlie attended Myers Park United Methodist Church. He found life's true riches in exploring the world through traveling with family and friends, growing heirloom tomatoes and handing out Christmas candy each holiday. He liked to say that family was the only bond you couldn't break. No moment lacked a purpose. He believed that if you're on time, you're late. He'd attend a meeting and humbly know the answers before it started. From pauper to president, in Charlie Shelton's world, everyone was equal. And the secret to a truly successful life, he believed, was this: Try to be someone before you try to be something. He did it his way. Mission accomplished. Moody Funeral Service & Crematory is taking care of the family. Online condolences can be shared at www.moodyfuneralservices.com.