



## Charles Edward Aston Jr.

April 13, 1939 - June 24, 2024

Charles (Charlie) Aston, 85, died from complications of kidney disease on June 24 at Family Hospice, Canterbury Place, where he had lived in skilled nursing since 2020. He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Katherine Marlin Aston. He is survived by his wife of sixty years, Jean Aston; daughter, Sarah Aston; son, Adam Aston; sister, Martha Randall; cousin, Dean Marlin; and granddaughters, Rachel and Rebecca Simon along with nieces, grandnieces and grandnephews.

A graduate of Bellevue High School and an Army veteran, he earned both a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a Master of Library Science degree at the University of Pittsburgh. He transformed his love of books into a 53 year career as a librarian at the University of Pittsburgh's Hillman Library. He was coordinator and then head of Special Collections and Rare Books from 1987-2011. From 2011 to his retirement in 2018, he became the curator in Special Collections. Charlie loved his career and took pride in building many collections widely used today for instruction and research. He was especially proud of his role in the restoration of the very rare complete folio set of John James Audubon's Birds of America.

In addition to serving on numerous library and university committees, he was program chair and treasurer of the now inactive Pittsburgh Bibliophiles. Because of his strong belief in voting rights, Charlie volunteered as judge of elections in his Squirrel Hill precinct for many years. In Canterbury, he continued his community service by volunteering on a patient advisory

committee for DCI dialysis and cooperating with his geriatrician in giving insight into life in a skilled nursing unit in interviews aimed at medical students.

His interests and hobbies were wide ranging. He focused on Henry David Thoreau's writings, Buddhism, the British and American Arts and Crafts movement, modern poetry, the environmental movement, classical music, and model railroading. In his first two years at Canterbury, he created a tabletop Z gauge train layout in his skilled nursing unit.

He loved and enjoyed his family, his friends, his reading and writing poetry. Charlie took pleasure in camping trips to New England, vacations with family at the Jersey Shore and trips abroad. A special love was for each of the ten rescue dogs the family acquired over a span of fifty plus years. He leaves behind two beagle mixes, Pepper and Lulu, who delighted him in visits to Canterbury. His warmth, humor, storytelling, and love will be forever missed. Special appreciation goes to the caregivers and staff in both skilled nursing and hospice units at UPMC Canterbury, especially nurses Doreen, Lauren, Denise, and Monica as well as physicians Shuja Hussan and Jane Schell and her staff at DCI dialysis center for their kind, compassionate care.

Private Green Burial at Penn Forrest Natural Burial Park entrusted to D'Alessandro Funeral Home & Crematory Ltd; 4522 Butler Street Pittsburgh, PA, 15201. Later in July the family will notify friends about a celebration of life to be held at Charlie's home. Memorial contributions in his name may be made to Hillman Library Special Collections at the University of Pittsburgh, any animal shelter or dog rescue of your choice, and UPMC Family Hospice at Canterbury Place.

# Cemetery Details

## **Penn Forest Natural Burial Park**

121 Colorado Street  
Verona, PA 15147

# Tribute Wall

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“Charlie was an absolute pleasure to work with at Pitt. He loved to show off the special collections to campus visitors. My deepest sympathy to his family.”

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**Al Novak** - June 30, 2024 at 04:58 PM