



Life Member: Cadet Corp Alumni Council

Dr. Charles T. McDowell

Sunday, July 8, 2007

Dr. Charles T. McDowell, COL USA (RET), 85, passed away Sunday, July 8, 2007. When asked to describe Charles McDowell, General W.C. Westmoreland wrote that he was "one of the few outstanding officers that I know." This was an apt description for a gallant, warm-hearted, and highly accomplished man who touched uncountable lives. During his 85 years, McDowell would meet 6 U.S. Presidents, travel to Russia over 55 times, and positively influence hundreds of students, colleagues, and friends. Professor McDowell was born on Nov. 23, 1921, to Jesse Calvin McDowell and Alva Lange in Twin Falls, Idaho. After graduating from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science, he earned a Master of Arts at Columbia University and a Ph.D. at Texas A&M University. He was also a graduate of the Defense Language Institute, Armor Advanced Officer Course, Command and General Staff College, various intelligence courses, and a two-year Soviet-East European Advanced Foreign Area Studies Program at the doctoral level. After receiving his commission, McDowell fought in the European Theater of World War II, where his early assignments ranged from platoon leader to battalion commander. A master parachutist, he jumped behind enemy lines as part of Operation Market Garden. At the conclusion of the war in Europe, McDowell served in the occupational forces in Japan, where his staff assignments included Commandant and Director of the Tokyo Army College and Information and Education Officer for the Eighth U.S. Army. Later, he was a professor of Russian language, history, economics, geography, and political science and Chief of the Research Division for a classified joint military/civilian intelligence agency and an instructor at the Command and General Staff College in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Hawaii. He also served as Professor of Military Science at the University of Texas at Arlington (then Arlington State College). Prior to his retirement, McDowell served the Joint Chiefs of Staff as Intelligence Officer of the Airborne Command Post. In that role, which often involved flying with the President of the United States, McDowell was the custodian of the Nuclear Football. In addition to the awards typical for WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Conflict, he earned the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. After playing a key role in the establishment of the Job Corps program, McDowell was invited to return to the University of Texas at Arlington, where he served consecutively as Assistant to President Jack Woolf and Dean of Student Life. There, he was Professor, Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages, and Director of the Center for Post-Soviet and East European Studies, which he founded. At UTA, he was the first chairman of the Faculty Senate (subsequently reelected six times) and sponsor of Alpha Phi Omega, Alpha Chi Honor Society, the Soviet and East European Club, and the Student Congress. On multiple occasions, he has been selected as an Outstanding Educator of America, UTA Outstanding Teacher, and the recipient of the UTA Chancellors Council Award for Outstanding Teaching. In 2000, McDowell was inducted into the UTA Military Science Hall of Honor. Throughout the course of his life, McDowell made numerous TV and radio appearances concerning Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Peoples Republic of China. He was the author or co-author of numerous book reviews, articles, documents, and books, including classified government materials concerning the Soviet Union. He was chief translator or editor on many projects conducting technical, industrial, and scientific translation from English to Russian and Russian to English. He was the first Eagle Scout in San Saba County, a lifelong leader in the Boy Scouts of America, and a 41-year member of the Arlington Kiwanis Club. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Francis McDowell and his daughter, Cynthia Kathleen Stewart. Survivors: Son, Charles Patrick McDowell; grand children, Charles Cale McDowell and Angela Kathleen McDowell; he will also be missed by his in-laws, nieces, nephews, friends, and colleagues.