

Stories of Northside

INTERVIEWEE: **CHARLES COBB JR.**



Third, he doesn't believe that stories contain an ending, or at least when it pertains to his own. This is a man who, having just celebrated his 50th year practicing law and working in commercial real estate, jokes that he's renewed his license for another 10 years and plans to retire at 97 to travel the world with his wife, Carolyn. These are the stories, however, that inspire us the most, the ones that seemingly have no end, as if the author focuses not on the pages he or she has filled, but rather on the pages devoid of ink.

Despite his passion to fill yet more pages, Charles has lived a full life, one that has been no doubt inspired by his family and upbringing.

If you ever get a chance to sit a spell with Charles Cobb Jr., you may discover a few things. First, he is a highly competitive, stalwart man of God and Methodist who lives to share his light and love of Northside. Second, he is a storyteller himself, and oh the collection he possesses. Some stories may recount bits and pieces of his own 85-year journey, but most prominently showcase others and their accomplishments, strengths, and remarkable character traits. This interview alone featured half a dozen or so friends and loved ones.

"We were strong Methodists throughout. Mother was a Sunday school teacher; Dad was a 40-year chairman of the board of trustees for Canton Methodist Church. My grandmother attended Holbrook Campground every August for 90 of her 94 years. I was born into it and didn't protest. I fully followed the pattern.

"I grew up in Canton, Georgia. In 6th grade, my teacher assigned seating based on our scholastic average at the end of the quarter. I didn't realize she was going to do that, and at the end of the first quarter, I was not seated in the first seat. It gave me a very competitive urge to sit in that first seat and work hard to accomplish that. I was in the first seat in the next quarter. Since then, I've been a pretty competitive guy.

"I went to Canton High School, which only had 11 years. I thought the people going to Tech went to great Atlanta high schools and was worried I'd be ambushed by their preparation, so I elected to attend one more year at Darlington in Rome. However, the other guys ended up being no further advanced than I was; I felt much better and started to compete at Tech.

"I really majored in extra curricular activities at Tech and had a whole lot of associations and memberships. I served in student government, as business manager of the yearbook, as president of the senior class, and worked with the YMCA and the Wesley Foundation. I had something to do every day. I was also in the band and played trumpet. During the four years I was at Tech, we went to four major bowls: Sugar Bowl twice, Orange Bowl once, and the Cotton Bowl once. When I tell people that, they ask what position I played. I usually don't reply.

"I spent three years in the Air Force as a supply officer in Germany and then came back, worked, and went to law school at night. Several of my classmates at Tech told me they were going to Harvard Business School that next year, so I applied and was accepted. After that, I came back to Atlanta.

"While on Easter vacation one year, I happened to meet a stewardess, who became my wife, Carolyn. She was from Miami, so after I left Harvard, I moved back to Atlanta and began working for Oxford Manufacturing Company. They had a long distance line that was not used at night, so if I stayed over after 5:00PM, nobody else was in the office and I could use it. That helped keep the conversation going.

"We eventually married and lived near Emory. They had a night law school, so I continued studying law while working at Oxford. I knew I wanted to go into a field where I

would not be blocked at the top. My options were real estate as a broker, insurance sales, or stock and bond sales. None of those required having capital to start. I was afraid that I would not enjoy talking about death. Plus, I noticed that at parties, when you start talking about insurance, all of a sudden people have to refill their drink. The sale of stock seemed most interesting, but it required you to sit at a desk, answer the phone, and speak with clients. We didn't have cell phones, so you needed to be planted by your landline. I thought that would be pretty restrictive, so I chose real estate because at least you got to go out and look at properties. I greatly enjoy it and have for 50 years now."

After much travel and learning to ski in northern Switzerland and Italy when he was stationed in Germany, Charles eventually came to Northside in 1965 to become an integral part of our story.

"We were at the Methodist church at Emory but moved to Howell Mill Rd. in our second year of marriage, which was in 1965. Northside was about 10 years old at the time. I miss all the old folks who held prime positions back then. One of my first posts was on the education committee for several years, two of which were spent as chairman of Sunday school and committee chairman. I also served on the board of trustees, finance committee, one year as lay leader, 25 years as a collections counter, 20 years as an usher, and 15 years as a Stephen Minister.

"Serving as a Stephen Minister has been one of the highlights of my 55 years at Northside. It put me in touch with drifting souls and with some who have strong ties, but all of us have times when another voice or view can be helpful. One friend whom I visited over the past ten years will continue to be my friend for life. »



"I've also played softball for 45 years. I started out playing second base, and then, when Jimmy Moore retired, I took his position as pitcher. I seemed to throw fewer and fewer strikes as the seasons went on, though, so I moved to catcher and finished as an infield substitute. We had lost so many games over my career due to forfeiting. If you don't have 8 players minimum at the game, you've lost before it starts. It was almost tearful for me. I'm fairly competitive, so I volunteered to come out and be the eighth man if needed. Some years, I subbed almost every game. We have about 12 games per season and a tournament at the end, and we won more than our share among the 8 teams in the conference. Just look at the trophies piling up in the trophy case on third floor above the Sanctuary! Major thanks to Coach Daren Boaz and a lot of my twenty- and thirty-year teammates. They presented me with a bat that's

now in a case attached to the wall of my office. It was a lot of fun."

Charles continues to live as if his story has no end. He enjoys teaching his grandchildren chess, no doubt hoping to pass on his competitive gene, and he is still faithful to what he loves: his wife, his family, his job, and his church. His tremendous tenure on our men's softball team should absolutely be celebrated, but more than that, Charles has spent the last 55 years showing us what it means to be a "Methodist throughout." Charles has quite a few pages left to fill, and although we hope to continue being a part of his prose, we are forever grateful to the countless pages he has already dedicated. So sit a spell with Charles, and we guarantee you his stories, whether about him or a friend, will speak into your life. 🌐



**"In the same way,
let your light shine
before others,
that they may see
your good deeds
and glorify your
Father in heaven."**
Matthew 5:16

"I have known Charlie Cobb for the 20 years I have served on staff at Northside Church. It has been a joy to see how Charlie continues to share his light and love to our church and the men on the softball field. All-time MVP is well deserved, Charlie! We love and appreciate you."

Kelley Stonis
Director of Sports & Rec Ministries

"I have been playing softball with Charles for almost 15 years, and he has always been an inspiration to me and the other players. It has been a pleasure to share the field with him, and I want to wish him well in the next chapter of his life!"

Daren Boaz
Coach

"Charlie always showed up when we needed him and played with 100% effort, which is more than you can say for most players half his age. I have a lot of fond memories of Charlie: When Charlie would get on base, he would refuse to have a pinch runner. He'd get into his Pete Rose crouch like he was ready to sprint to second base, even though most of us could walk there quicker than Charlie could run."

Tom Tidwell
Teammate