

Charles N. (Bud) Knowles died July 8th, 2021, at 11:30 pm in Dayton, Ohio from health complications due to old age – he was just six weeks shy of his 92nd birthday.

Bud is survived by his wife of 68 years, Jean Anne Knowles. His oldest son, Scott, his wife Jackie, and their children Amanda (Alex) Hamilton and Ben Knowles along with great granddaughters Harper and Hadley. Daughter Brooke Perin, her husband Doug, and their three daughters, Meredith (Scott) Finnegan, Lily and MacKenzie. Youngest son Chris, his wife Susan, and their two sons, Brannon and Trevor.

Bud was born August 18, 1929 in Wichita, Kansas and grew up on a small farm with his parents, brother Dell, and sisters Betty and Nancy.

Bud graduated from Wichita State University with an accounting degree and shortly after graduating reported for duty as a draftee in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War. Bud served with distinction, and he was soon nominated to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Quantico, Virginia where he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He was then stationed at Camp Pendleton in San Diego, California.

One evening at a dance at the Hollywood Palladium, Bud met his future wife Jean Anne (Jan) Davidson. Jan had travelled to San Diego from Connecticut to visit friends. A long-distance relationship bloomed with Bud making trips to meet Jan in Connecticut and New York City. They married in Connecticut in November of 1952 and their “honeymoon” was a cross-country drive back to Camp Pendleton.

After his time in the Marines, Bud joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Initially stationed in Newark, New Jersey he was transferred to the Cincinnati, Ohio office, and soon after that he was moved to the Dayton, Ohio office where after a year as a field agent he was promoted to the senior resident agent in charge. At the time, he was the youngest FBI agent to ever lead an office. Bud had the opportunity to meet with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and a framed, autographed photo of Mr. Hoover proudly hangs on his office wall to this day.

Bud knew his next assignment was going to be a job at FBI headquarters in Washington, DC, but he had become very comfortable in Dayton, Ohio and it was his young family’s home, so when he received that assignment, he decided to leave the FBI and start his own company.

Thus began Bud’s career as an entrepreneur. In 1961 he and Jan started the very successful Wolf Creek Garden Center. He started a Saturday morning gardening talk show on the big local radio station, WHIO, and was a frequent guest on several Dayton TV shows talking about landscaping - including several spots on the fledgling Phil Donahue show!

Bud added many services to the garden center business. It started out as a full-service landscape company first, followed by the addition of irrigation services. The irrigation business was a keen interest for Bud, and he added golf and agricultural irrigation to the

residential services as the company's growth continued. Through all of his efforts, Bud built the largest irrigation business in a three-state area. He also served on the board of the Irrigation Association. That board created the IA's first national certification program which was implemented throughout the U.S.

Bud's success attracted the attention of a national irrigation manufacturer called Rain Bird Corporation which was looking to increase its presence in the Ohio region. In 1979 Bud agreed to become a Rain Bird irrigation equipment distributor and he sold off all of the other businesses. Bud focused on expanding into regional branches until Wolf Creek had locations in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Lexington.

An offshoot of the irrigation business happened in 1996 with the founding of the Portable Piping division. The temporary pipe used in agricultural irrigation was discovered by construction companies that needed temporary fluid bypass piping options. The Portable Piping business has grown to serve all of North America currently, and through its creation of innovative fitting designs, Bud and key staff members earned several U.S. Patents.

Bud's two sons, Scott and Chris, became more active in the business starting in the 1970s and 80s and eventually took ownership in the early 2000s. By 2002 Scott and Chris assumed control over all operations of the business. For many years Bud would come into the office a few hours a week to "see what's going on," and he eventually decided to retire when he turned 85. On that day he came into the office, announced he was done, and cleaned out his desk.

On a personal level, Bud turned a casual interest in wood working into a serious hobby and jumped into it with the same gusto he applied to Wolf Creek. He studied, joined wood working groups, took classes and earned certifications. He particularly enjoyed making wooden toys to donate to children during the holidays. He also made some wonderful furniture including an ornate walnut desk, several side tables, and he made and installed all of the solid cherry cabinets and trim work in their home. He was, quite simply, never content to be idle.

Bud had a life well lived, and he will be sorely missed, but as Dr. Suess once said, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."