

**Charles H. Gardner (1937-2011), 11th State Geologist
of North Carolina**

Charles Harwood Gardner, 74, died at Solace Center, Asheville on September 22, 2011 after a very short illness with metastatic melanoma. He is survived by two sons, Charles H. Gardner, Jr. of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. and Heath Davis Gardner of Raleigh, N.C., and by his sister, Bonnie Gardner Barnes of Lake Junaluska, N.C.



Born in Greensboro, Ga. of Methodist minister father, William H. and mother Katherine B. Gardner, Charles grew up in Georgia and graduated from Gainesville, GA High School in 1955. He went on to earn his B.S. Degree from Emory University and his M.S. in Geology, also from Emory.

His career included several years working with Law Engineering, including some time working under the direction of the George Sowers. He spent 26 years in Raleigh with the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources, including serving as State Geologist from 1990-2002. Upon his retirement in 2002, Charles was awarded the “Order of the Long-Leaf Pine,” the State’s highest civilian award.

As the Director of the Division of Land Resources, Charles was responsible for the State’s Geodetic Survey, Mine Reclamation, Dam Safety and Sedimentation Control programs as well as the Geological Survey. He served as President of the Association of American State Geologists and the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, and held honorary membership in both organizations. During his tenure as State Geologist, the North Carolina Geological Survey was involved in a number of important projects in addition to STATEMAP, most notably evaluating a low-level nuclear waste site. He helped to establish the North Carolina licensing law for geologists. He is also credited with preventing the elimination of the Geological Survey by the state General Assembly one year. He continued to serve the state after retirement as a member of the advisory council for the Geological Survey and the North Carolina /South Carolina Boundary Commission.

After retiring, Charles utilized his keen peacemaking skills as a court certified mediator for cases in the state Superior Courts. He took great satisfaction in the fact that many of the scores of cases that he mediated were settled.

Charles enjoyed regularly meeting with his friends at the Asheville office of the N.C. Geological Survey and other local geologists. He enjoyed many interesting pastimes. He was an avid gardener, fly fisherman, bee-keeper, and world traveler. He recently visited the Galapagos Islands, and in the last few years he explored India and Southeast Asia. Charles also loved music and entertained family and friends accompanying, with guitar, his son Chuck, a star banjo player.

Charles was affiliated with the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting where he had many friends whose faithful attendance to him in his illness is greatly appreciated. A service of remembrance

was held on Sunday, September 25 at the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting in Black Mountain, N.C. Charles wanted said of him: “He stood in awe of the beauty of nature”.