TUPPER

The dangerous downtown nights of El Paso are dimmer now since Charlie F. Tupper, Sr., died on September 2, 1997. The glow of his spirit remains in the memories of many family, grandfriends, nursing home residents, and happy customers. Charlie, as he was affectionately known to all, endured early hardships which probably helped direct his adult life into one of service of others. The hardships certainly gave him many opportunities to choose whether to laugh or cry over a challenging situation. He always chose laughter—and looked for the good in any situation! Charlie's mother died when he was ten, leaving behind eight children, one of whom was a new baby. His father never quite recovered from her death. Things were hard for the Tupper children as they moved from house to house, striving to keep the family intact. By the time Charlie was 16, he was the sole financial support for himself, his invalid father, and four little girls. He quite school and worked twelve hours daily for 20 cents an hour, every day but Christmas. During the 30's, Charlie also sang on radio station KTSM with the Tri-State Music Company show. He was known as "The Crooner"

In 1934 his friend Wyle Castell lent Charlie $100 and a closed-down gas station, to be rent free for three months. His first station was at Bliss and Pershing Streets, then at Five Points. He reopened and successfully operated the Chevron station at 400 North Stanton until the real property was sold in 1956 to become the Federal Reserve Bank. From then until 1969 he operated the Chevron station at 600 North Mesa. In 1969, at age 60, Charlie sold his business and began working as personal relations director of the American Bank of Commerce. Immediately after retiring at age 65, he took a similar position with the Bank of El Paso. He finally retired form Interfirst Bank at Chelmont in 1987. Charlie Tupper was a member of First Baptist Church. Much of his work was directly performed to benefit fellow El Pasoans in need. His extensive volunteer activities included Salvation Army bell ringing at Christmas as well as fund raising for the YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, and United Way. He served on the board of the March of Dimes, the

[illegible] Association of El Paso for 17 years, and the Chamber's Downtown Council for several years. He was awarded Life membership in the El Paso Chamber of Commerce and received a bronze plaque for obtaining over 100 new Chamber members. He had more than 40 years of perfect attendance at the Downtown Lions Club, and sponsored 84 new members. He was chosen as El Paso's most outstanding Lion. In 1987 his volunteerism took a different turn after his wife of 45 years, Patsene, began living in the RN Nursing and Convalescent Home. (Her Alzheimer's disease had progressed beyond the point where he could care for her at home any longer.) She preceded him in death in 1988.

Charlie began regular nursing home visitation after her death, regularly visiting five nursing homes, talking, listening, dancing, and telling jokes to those often forgotten. Even after his vision began to fail, he continued his optimistic visitation, helped by friends Phyllis and Galen Meuwissin, and sister Annie Mae Davis. Of special help to him in his later years was his niece, Charlene Ruddock of El Paso. His numerous community awards include the Sertoma Club's Ben Franklin Award for civic service, KROD-TV's "Spirit of El Paso" honor, and election to the Older El Pasoans' Hall of Fame. Survivors of Charles F. Tupper, Sr. include sons Charles F. Tupper, Jr. of Dallas, TX and his wife, Dottie Dunnam, Thomas S. Tupper of Santa Ana, CA, and his wife, Judy Greenwood, daughter, Beverly Clark of El Paso, sisters Annie Mae Davis of El Paso and Kathryn Powel of Springfield, MO, grandchildren, Karen Hischke, Patsene Twiss, Christina Tupper Blaine, Jennifer, Abigail and Blaine Tupper, as well as two great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Visitation will be Thursday from 3 to 9 p.m. at the funeral home with Funeral Service Friday 10 a.m. at Kaster Maxon & Futrell Dyer Street Chapel with Rev. Ray Walker officiating. Interment in Restlawn Memorial Park and Cemetery.

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