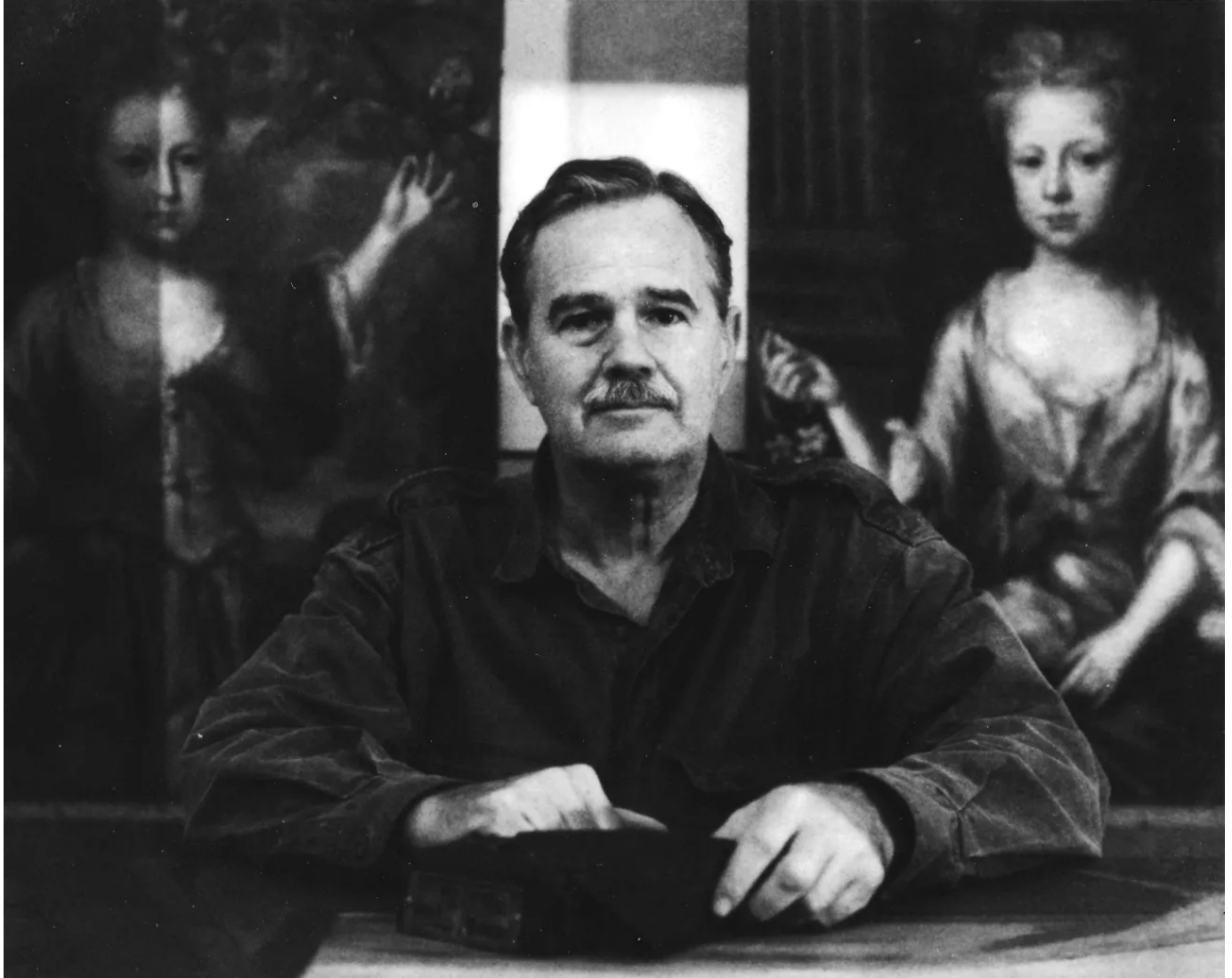


Obituary: Charles H. Olin (1933-2023)

Submitted by sharragrow on 13 Jul 2023

Image



Charles H. Olin was born in Niagara Falls to West Point Grad. Col. Charles L. Olin and Jeanette A. Olin. In youth he developed passions for arts, astronomy, and travel, crossing the ocean via ocean liner many times.

Charles received a B.S. in physics at Dickinson College, where he met his wife, Jacqueline: married in 1955. Charles was commissioned into the Marine Corps as a second lieutenant, studying advanced weaponry systems, leading tank maneuvers, and serving in the honor guard at 8th and I Marine Barracks. Charles resigned as a captain.

Charles attended graduate school in Fine Arts at Cornell University, and then became one of the first students to attend the Art Conservation Center at New York University, Institute of Fine Arts. Charles was invited by the Smithsonian Institution to establish and develop multiple Conservation Programs for the Smithsonian. He was founder of the U.S. National Museum's Conservation Analytical Laboratory (now the Museum Conservation Institute), The National Collection of Fine Arts Conservation Lab (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum Lunder Center), and the Conservation Lab at the National Portrait Gallery.

At the Smithsonian, Charles was responsible for conserving exhibits for two Museum openings, establishing analytical processes, and developing programs for training future conservators. He was among the founding members and a Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation.

Charles resigned from the Smithsonian and established a private conservation studio in Great Falls, VA: Olin Conservation, Inc. Charles' company continues to serve numerous private, institutional, and museum clients across the country. During his own work in the private sector, Charles continued to train conservators, including a number of well-respected conservators in the field today. One of these is his son David. Charles was responsible for the conservation of innumerable works, including Renoir's "Luncheon of the Boating Party".

Charles considered his work in art conservation a "profession", rather than a "business." The key to his approach was observation, understanding, and attention to detail. These qualities were present in his lifelong passions. The study of science, specifically physics and astronomy, was omnipresent in every aspect of Charles's life. He was an avid gardener, naturalist, and he enjoyed the edible bounty of natural plants and wild game. Charles was a dedicated bow hunter and trapper. His love of classical music and opera was well known. Charles led championship teams with the Washington Area Dart Association and made wine from local vineyards. He enjoyed cooking. Charles was an accomplished sailor, including blue water adventures in his Hinckley Pilot 35, Betelgeux.

In Great Falls, VA, Charles became an EMT with the Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department. He was also the founding president of the Analemma Society at Observatory Park. Survivors include wife, Jacqueline S. Olin, daughter, Dr. Deborah Norris, son David Olin, granddaughters Jessie Taylor and Jacqueline Hernandez, grandson Jon H. Norris, great-granddaughters Avery and Livia Taylor, and great-grandson Monte Taylor.

A Memorial Service for Charles was held by his family in conjunction with the Analemma Society on May 21, 2023 at 1400 hrs. The Memorial was held at Observatory Park, Fairfax County Virginia (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/astronomy>). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Analemma Society (<https://www.analemma.org/>). Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at some future point.

Obituary written by David Olin