

RHA Honors Leland Chambliss



Beck Family Members Attending Ceremony
Front: Lori Heisler; Elaine Chambliss; Sr. Claudia Leopold; Sue Beck
Back: Tom Beck; Rosie Karrer; Bill Heisler; Mary Beck; Steve Beck

Leland Chambliss is honored posthumously on Sunday, November 14, 2010 at the Rockne Museum. President Gerri Martinez unveiled a plaque that will hang permanently in the museum. Marian Nelson outlined the value of the Roots/Magic Program for genealogy and history enthusiasts and said Mr. Chambliss's work will continue for future generations.

Elaine Beck Chambliss, Mr. Chambliss's widow gave the following talk:

"Little did I realize when I met Leland Chambliss, who lived all his life in Northeast Texas, and who had never been anywhere near Bastrop County or heard of Rockne, Texas, that more than a hundred years earlier, his cousin, Rebecca Chambliss, taught my grandparents. Here all along, Leland thought his ancestors had only journeyed from Coldwater, Mississippi to Northeast Texas.

During our 15½ years of marriage, Leland developed a "passion" for uncovering Chambliss family genealogy. He made inquiries online and came in contact with other Chambliss family researchers. Sandra Rathmann Weaver was one of these researchers due to her mother being a Chambliss. After Leland made telephone contact with Sandra, she extended an invitation for us to visit in her Austin home. Sandra had been compiling Chambliss research for several years and she was happy to share her findings.

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It was so "amazing" viewing photos of Chamblisses and Becks together. One of the many highlights was the photo of the 1895 Hilbig Park School students and teachers. Imagine our "surprise" in discovering that the teacher, Rebecca Chambliss, was Sandra's grandmother and Leland's cousin. Two of the students were my grandparents, Albert Beck, Jr. and Hettie Goertz.

After discovering that he had "roots" in Bastrop County and that our lives were "intertwined," Leland took on the "daunting" task of inputting 20,000 names into the computer program, RootsMagic.

Most of those 20,000 names came from the book, Rockne, by Father Alois Goertz which was updated in 1996. RootsMagic allows users to access this information and add to it, make corrections or find connections, etc. Leland used the "red book" as the basis for his research. However, he cross-referenced using information from the Texas State Department of Health and vital statistics, visits with county clerks, immigration records including ship logs, and census records which he pulled from microfilm found in public libraries. As you can see, this not only involved sitting in front of a computer BUT also required a lot of "leg work." He spent roughly 8 months—which I figured was about 1400 hours—collecting and inputting these data.



Even after being diagnosed with cancer, Leland continued this work. He realized that it would be a priceless resource. It was his wish that these files continue to be updated."

Leland C. Chambliss
5/18/1938 - 4/22/2009