



Charles A. Ellis

January 26, 1912 – December 28, 2001

Woodshop Instructor, Mentor, Craftsman

Charles A. Ellis, a longtime and beloved woodshop teacher at the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD), passed away on December 28, 2001, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, at the age of 89.

He left behind a legacy of craftsmanship, mentorship, and heartfelt service to generations of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students.

Born on January 26, 1912, in Colton, South Dakota, Charles grew up in North Dakota and graduated from the North Dakota school for the Deaf in 1935. He later earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Minot State College in 1941, followed by graduate studies at Gallaudet College and other institutions.

He married his wife, Pearl, in 1941, and the couple moved to Sioux Falls in 1946 when Charles joined the faculty of SDSD. Over the next 31 years, he taught industrial arts, deeply influencing his students not only in the woodshop but also in daily life. Mr. Ellis was known for his calm demeanor, steady guidance, and ability to bring out the best in his students—building both their technical and personal skills. In addition to his classroom teaching, Mr. Ellis supported countless student activities over the decades. He helped boys build booths for school carnivals, design sets for Christmas programs, and complete various woodworking projects that became part of the school's fabric. His ability to merge craftsmanship with mentorship made him a cherished figure in the everyday life of SDSD.



In addition to his work at SDSD, Charles was a talented woodworker and carver. He often built intricate wood models, such as miniature churches, clocks, and animals, many with moving parts or hidden compartments. His creativity extended well beyond the classroom, and his home workshop remained active even after retirement.

Charles was preceded in death by his wife, Pearl, in 1995. He is survived by one daughter, three sons, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on December 31, 2001, at East Side Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Interment took place at Hills of Rest Memorial Park.

Charles Ellis is fondly remembered by the SDSD community for his gentle leadership, remarkable craftsmanship, and lifelong dedication to Deaf education.

