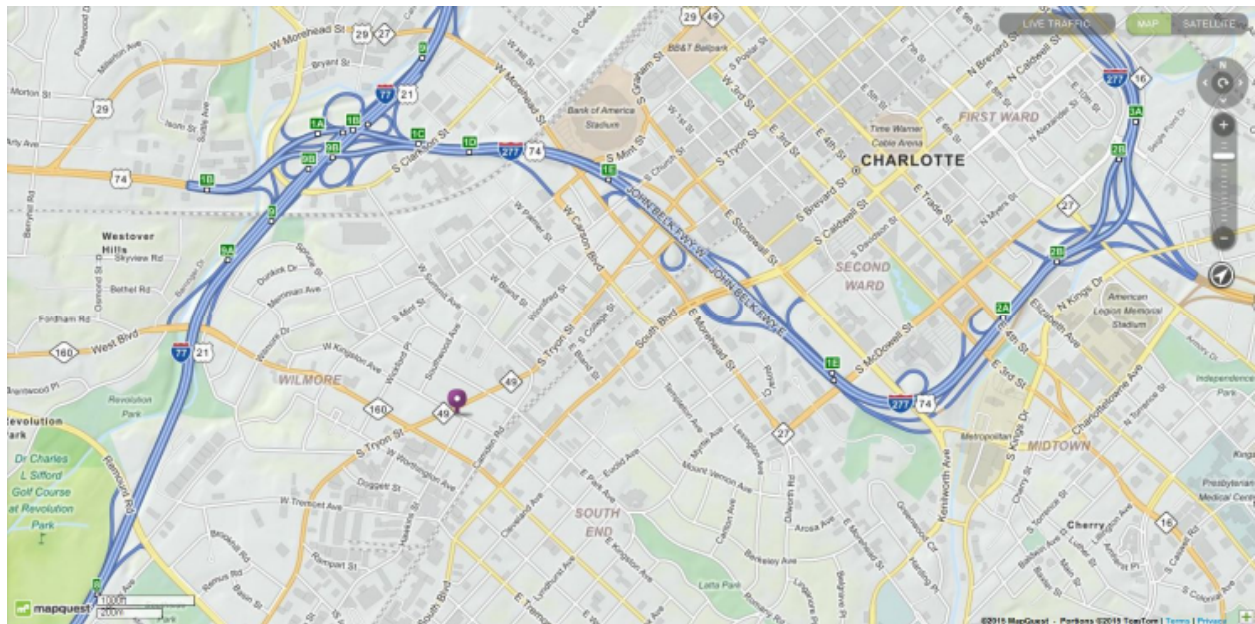


# History of Rufus Neely (Rudy) Ferguson, Jr.

## Birth and Parents

Rudy Ferguson was born on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943 in Davidson County, NC to Rufus Neely Ferguson and Virginia Ferguson, the former Mary Virginia Griffin. From the 1940 US Census records, Rudy's parents lived on Kingston Avenue in Charlotte. Virginia's sister Elizabeth A. Griffin also lived with them in the rented house. At the time of the census, Rufus Ferguson was 27 years old, Virginia was 24, and Elizabeth was 21.

Kingston Avenue parallels East / West Boulevard in Charlotte. Starting in the Dilworth neighborhood and travelling west, it crosses South Boulevard, enters the Wilmore neighborhood, and crosses Tryon Street and Mint Street before ending at Wilmore Drive.



Rufus Ferguson Sr. was a budget manager with an automotive accessories company. He was born in Mecklenburg County on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1913 and passed away on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1956 at the age of 43 from a coronary occlusion. His father was Rufus A. Ferguson and his mother was Mary Jane Helms (Rudy's grandparents).

Virginia Ferguson was a waitress. She was born in Union County on July 12, 1915 and died on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, living to be 88 years old. Her parents were Edward Mark Griffin and Sheffie L. Griffin. Her sister Elizabeth was a stenographer.

Here are a couple of records for his father – his draft registration card and his death certificate:

SERIAL NUMBER 4215	1. NAME (Print) Rufus Neely Ferguson	ORDER NUMBER 3855
2. ADDRESS (Print) Rt. 7 Dogwood Ave Charlotte Meck. N.C. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
3. TELEPHONE 3-4134	4. AGE IN YEARS 28 DATE OF BIRTH Feb. 25 1913 (Month) (Day) (Year)	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Mecklenburg N.C. (Town or county) (State or country)
6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.		7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Rufus Neely Ferguson (First) (Middle) (Last)
8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON Wife		9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON Rt. 7 Dogwood Charlotte Meck. N.C. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME Goodrich Silvertown Store & Goodrich Co. B.F.		
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS 4th Brevard St. Charlotte Meck. N.C. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 (over) 16-17105 R. N. Ferguson (Registrant's signature)		

OCT 8 1956		NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS	
60		24047	
REGISTRATION DISTRICT NO. 40-00		REGISTRAR'S CERTIFICATE NO. 94	
1. PLACE OF DEATH a. COUNTY UNION		b. TOWNSHIP	
c. CITY OR TOWN INDIAN TRAIL		d. LENGTH OF STAY (in days)	
e. FULL NAME OF (If not in hospital or institution, give street address or location) HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION Rt. 1		f. CITY OR TOWN CHARLOTTE	
g. STREET ADDRESS or R. F. D. NO. Rt. 11		h. PLACE OF DEATH	
i. NAME OF DECEASED First Rufus Middle NEELY Last FERGUSON		j. DATE OF DEATH 9 5 56	
k. SEX MALE		l. AGE (In years last birthday) 43	
m. COLOR OR RACE WHITE		n. MARRIED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEVER MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> WIDOWED <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/>	
o. USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired) SALESMAN		p. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY GOODRICH TIRE CO. MECKLENBURG, N.C.	
q. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) MECKLENBURG, N.C.		r. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY?	
s. FATHER'S NAME RUFUS A. FERGUSON		t. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME MARY JANE HELMS	
u. NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE VIRGINIA GRIFFIN FERGU-		v. SON	
w. RUFUS A. FERGUSON		x. MRS. R. N. FERGUSON	
y. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes, no, or unknown) (If yes, give war or dates of service)		z. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. 244-09-1707	
aa. INFORMANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS		bb. RT. 11, CHARLOTTE, N.C.	
12. CAUSE OF DEATH—ENTER ONLY ONE CAUSE PER LINE FOR (a), (b) and (c).			
PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY:			
IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) Coronary Occlusion			
ANTECEDENT CAUSES—Conditions, if any, which gave rise to above cause (a), stating the underlying cause last.			
DUE TO (b)			
DUE TO (c)			
PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO IMMEDIATE CAUSE GIVEN IN PART I (a)			
13. WAS AUTOPSY PERFORMED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
14. ATTENDANT SURVIVE HOMICIDE			
15. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED. (Enter nature of injury in Part I or Part II of item 16)			
16. TIME MONTH, DAY, YEAR MONTH OF INJURY			
17. INJURY OCCURRED WHILE AT WORK <input type="checkbox"/> NOT WHILE AT WORK <input type="checkbox"/>			
18. PLACE OF INJURY (e.g., in or about home, farm, factory, street, office bldg., etc.)			
19. CITY OR TOWNSHIP COUNTY STATE			
20. EXAMINED DECEASED AFTER DEATH & INVESTIGATED CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING DEATH			
21. SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR			
22. DATE SIGNED 9/8/56			
23. LOCATION (City, town, or county) MECKLENBURG CO., N.C.			
24. DATE RECEIVED BY LOCAL REG. 9/11/56			
25. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE			
26. FUNERAL DIRECTOR			
27. ADDRESS 727 E. Morehead St., Charlotte, N. C.			

## Chapter Service

Rudy served the Southern Piedmont Chapter of ASHRAE for many years and was awarded the Southern Piedmont Chapter Distinguished Service Award in 1975, presumably for his work on committees, as service as a chapter officer did not commence until 1976. Below is a listing of the years he served as a chapter officer and the people who served with him.

<b><u>1976 – 1977 Officers</u></b>	
President	Ernest C. Dowless
Vice-President	David R. Boozer
Secretary	David N. Shultz
Treasurer	Jack E. Walters
Governor	Robert M. Stuckey
Governor	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Past President	William R. Petty
Regional Chair	Donald H. Denton, Jr.

<b><u>1977 – 1978 Officers</u></b>	
President	David R. Boozer
Vice-President	David N. Shultz
Secretary	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Treasurer	Jack E. Walters
Governor	Mark H. Kornhauser
Governor	Douglas C. Simpson
Past President	Ernest C. Dowless
Regional Chair	Benny T. Bootle

<b><u>1978 – 1979 Officers</u></b>	
President	David N. Shultz
Vice-President	Jack E. Walters
Secretary	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Treasurer	James A. Story
Governor	Mark H. Kornhauser
Governor	James D. Hoskins
Past President	David R. Boozer
Regional Chair	Benny T. Bootle

**1979 – 1980 Officers**

President	Jack E. Walters
Vice-President	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Secretary	Mark H. Kornhauser
Treasurer	James A. Story
Governor	John B. Burnette
Governor	Russell E. Silpher
Past President	David N. Shultz
Regional Chair	Benny T. Bootle

**1980 – 1981 Officers**

President	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Vice-President	James A. Story
Secretary	Mark H. Kornhauser
Treasurer	Richard M. Givens
Governor	David A. Brown
Governor	Charles W. Smith
Past President	Jack E. Walters
Regional Chair	H.E. “Barney” Burroughs

**1981 – 1982 Officers**

President	James A. Story
Vice-President	Mark H. Kornhauser
Secretary	William R. McCleave, Jr.
Treasurer	Richard M. Givens
Governor	Charles L. Wooten
Governor	Michael D. Moore
Past President	<b>R.N. Ferguson, Jr.</b>
Regional Chair	H.E. “Barney” Burroughs

**1982 – 1983 Officers**

President	Mark H. Kornhauser
Vice-President	Richard M. Givens
Secretary	William R. McCleave, Jr.
Treasurer	Frank A. Shepard
Governor	Charles F. Daly
Governor	John H. Stanley
Past President	James A. Story
Regional Chair	H.E. “Barney” Burroughs

## **Rudy's Contemporaries**

Several of Rudy's contemporaries have passed away. Of those who remain some were not able to recall much useful information because of the time that has gone by and in one case because of medication that the person is now taking.

Three things about Rudy are generally known:

- He was a dedicated ASHRAE volunteer
- He worked very hard
- He passed away at his desk

Two of those contacted for this history were Barney Burroughs (Atlanta Chapter) and Jack Walters (Southern Piedmont Chapter). Here is what they had to say in a phone interview:

### Barney Burroughs:

Barney was the Regional Chair at the time Rudy Ferguson was the chapter president.

Rudy was a handsome gentleman who was articulate and had a commanding style that allowed him to speak well in front of an audience. He was a leader, was articulate, enthusiastic, had a good demeanor, and was probably destined to be a Regional Chair. He died at his desk of a heart attack in his late thirties.

It was thought that Barney Burroughs was the person who spearheaded the effort to create the Rudy Ferguson award for the best overall chapter in the region for a given year, but Mr. Burroughs said that it

was not he, but probably Benny Bootle (Greenville Chapter), who was the Regional Chair 1977 – 1980, when Rudy was a chapter office and then vice president, who has the driving force behind the award.

Jack Walters:

Rudy's first job after graduating from college was working for Jack Bell, an engineer in Charlotte. After working for Mr. Bell, Rudy worked for Harold McKnight, another Charlotte engineer, before deciding to work in product sales and taking a job with L.R. Gorrell Company. It is Jack's recollection that Rudy was not satisfied at L.R. Gorrell, feeling that his talents were not being fully utilized. He and Mr. Walters were associates in ASHRAE. Jack Walters was an equipment representative at the time for Barber-Coleman controls, but also had a line of air diffusion product that he did not much like working with, so he gave that line to Rudy Ferguson and that is how he started a product sales company of his own with Jack Sullivan.

According to Jack Walters, Rudy's wife Harriett was from South Carolina and is (she is still living) the daughter of a former textile mill owner. The couple had two daughters and had a skiing trip planned when he passed away from a massive heart attack.

Several attempts were made to contact Harriett Ferguson, but unsuccessfully. Jack Walters mentioned that after Rudy's death she discontinued her association with ASHRAE.

Several people responded to my inquiry about Rudy. Here is what they had to say – in their own words.

Greg Rumble:

Here is what I know of Rudy.

He lost his dad at a young age, which was 38 years old, due to a heart attack.

After he graduated from high school he joined the Marines.

He attended UNCC after release from the Marines and graduated in Mechanical Engineering.

I think his first job was with Harold McKnight. This is where I met Rudy for the first time.

He began to talk with Emil Shearon about becoming a rep and decided to come to work for LR Gorrell.

He became very active in ASHRAE as well as the Masons.

Due to hard work he held several committee positions and soon moved up to secretary of the chapter.

From there he became President of the chapter and I served as his Membership chairman for two years.

Rudy was a great person and a close friend. A short work week for him would be 60 hours.

He attended Myers Park Lutheran church and we talked about our relationship with Jesus often.

I was glad and sad when he told me he was leaving Gorrell to start his own business with Jack Sullivan.

He was married to Harriett and they had two daughters.

I hope this will help.

David Shultz:

You are going back on an old man.

My best recollection of him was as a manufactures rep. I believe he started with Emil Shearon then went out on his own. He was probably the most honest sales representative I ever knew along with Shearon. If he did not have product line that meet your needs he would help you find one. I had a policy that no rep could drop into my office without my approval. He honored it and I always looked at his new products and where I could use them I told him and he honored my approvals or disapprovals. He was an all-around good person, friend and professional in business and ASHRAE.

Frank Shepard:

I remember Rudy fondly. He was always so positive and professional. His work ethic was impressive and the engineers and contractors in the business during his business life could depend on him. As a manufacturer's representative he was truly one of the important people in the HVAC business in Charlotte.

Dave Brown:

I had fun writing this and I hope you will find it useful. Unfortunately, I had to leave out the good stuff. On the third page of this document is Sam Corwell's phone number. I haven't talked to Sam in a few years. Sam is around 80 and he may be able to help us contact Rudy's wife.  
  
(See Dave Brown's story which is attached)





# United Mechanical Corporation

*The Leader in Comfort and Process Mechanical Solutions*

June 21, 2016

Mr. Chuck Curlin  
SHULTZ ENGINEERING GROUP  
P.O. Box 37008  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Subject: The Rudy Ferguson Story from the Dave Brown Perspective

Dear Chuck:

As we discussed recently, I wanted to share with you my Rudy Ferguson story. I am writing this on United Mechanical letterhead and this is not inappropriate, as I think you will agree after reading my story. After finishing engineering school in 1968, I moved to Charlotte to start my career with Duke Power Company. A Jaycee friend, Sam Cornwell, knew that I was not entirely happy with the large bureaucracy at Duke and he introduced me to his wife's first cousin, Rudy Ferguson. This was around 1971. Rudy was with McKnight Engineering that later became McKnight Smith Engineers. Rudy and I had a number of serious discussions about me joining him at McKnight. Rudy ultimately left McKnight to work with Emil Shearon at the Charlotte office of L. R. Gorrell Company. About that same time in 1973, I left Duke Power to take a teaching position in the College of Engineering at UNCC.

Rudy made a number of introductions that significantly influenced my career. In 1973 he introduced me to Pat Garrison who was later President of Tri-Meck Mechanical and John Wayne Adams who was President of Adams Heating and Air Conditioning. John and Pat wanted to take the commercial state licensing exam and there were no tutoring classes available at that time. My task was to assemble the material necessary for the exam and to present it to John and Pat. At this point, I had no experience in the HVAC industry. After assembling what I hoped was the necessary material, we began to meet to review the material. John, Pat, and myself met for a number of Saturday mornings around our breakfast table and studied for the exam. We all three passed the exam.

Before the summer of 1974, Rudy introduced me to Bill Ross. Bill was a mechanical consulting engineer who was partnered with Gil Buddenbaum, an electrical engineer. Through this introduction, I spent the summer of 1974 doing drafting work on mechanical systems for Buddenbaum/Ross Engineers. The drawings were done by hand and the pay was \$5.00 per hour. To this day, I count this as one of my most valuable learning experiences and I needed the \$200 per week to supplement my meager teaching income.

One evening in the fall of 1974, I was visiting Rudy in his office at L. R. Gorrell. About that time, the door opens and Pete Helms with Helms Sheetmetal of Concord comes into the office. Part of the conversation was Pete discussing his need for some drafting and estimating help. For a young



**AUTHORIZED CONTROLS INTEGRATOR**

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engineering professor that was trying to provide for a wife and two children, this was music to my ears. I spent the next two and one-half years working part-time with Pete. Again, this was an incredibly valuable learning experience.

In the summer of 1977 after I left UNCC, United Mechanical was founded. In the early years I am reminded of names like Emil Shearon, Henry Champion, Glen Agnew, Byron Hamrick, Fred DeVore, Mickey Williams, John Earnhardt, Larry Sides, Frank Shepard, Jack Walters, and others. There were even competitors like Herb Hunter at Southern Comfort and Jack Cathey at A. Z. Price that cannot be forgotten. All of these people were incredibly kind mentors to this fledgling contractor during those early years. However, Rudy Ferguson is the one name that stands apart.

Rudy was an incredible engineering talent and the very best natural sales person you could possibly know. He proved to be a great friend and a catalyst for my career that I can never forget. Additionally, whole chapters could be written about his devotion to his family and to all aspects of his profession.

Unfortunately, in 1986 at 42 years of age Rudy passed away while sitting at his desk doing the job he loved.

And, this is the Rudy Ferguson story based on my personal experience. If they could be found, there must be countless other similar stories.

Very truly yours,

UNITED MECHANICAL CORPORATION

David A. Brown  
Chairman

## **Rudy Ferguson Award**

When Benny Bootle was DRC (1977 – 1979), Region IV won the best Region in Society award for three straight years. When Barney Burroughs became DRC (1980-1982), he established a regional award for the best chapter in the region, based on performance. The performance criteria included PAOE and many other items deemed essential to meet the needs of the membership.

Rudy Ferguson, Southern Piedmont Chapter President (1980-1981) passed away at his desk on March 22, 1982, several months before the new regional award was slated to be presented for the first time at the 1982 CRC. A motion was passed at the 1982 Region IV CRC to name this award in honor the life and service of Rudy Ferguson.

The Region IV “Rudy Ferguson” is awarded in Region IV each year for the best overall chapter in the region for the preceding ASHRAE year. The first “Rudy” was awarded at the 1982 CRC for the ASHRAE year 1981 – 1982 and was presented to the Greenville Chapter.

The Southern Piedmont Chapter was awarded the Presidential Award of Excellence the year of his chapter presidency. Rudy believed in our profession. He was 38 years old at the time of his death. He continues to be an inspiration to all Region IV chapter presidents as they compete each year for the coveted award that bears his name.



**Rudy Ferguson Award**

**Rufus Neely (Rudy) Ferguson, Jr.**

Respectfully Submitted,

June 21, 2016

**Charlie D. Curlin, Jr., PE**

**The Southern Piedmont Chapter Historian**