

Christopher Frank Wendel

I was born in Houston, Texas on April 2, 1951, the third of three children born to Virginia Florence (Latham) Wendel and Alvah James Wendel.

I attended St. Philip Catholic School in El Campo through the 6th grade. Transferred to El Campo school system for 7th & 8th grade. Attended El Campo High School for 9th & 10th grade. Attended Schreiner Military Institute in Kerrville, TX. for 11th & 12th grades. Graduated from Schreiner in 1969. I attended Wharton County Junior College and Sam Houston State. No degree.

While a sophomore at El Campo High School (1966) I started dating Mary Jane Swanson. We remained together from that point on. We married on May 1, 1971. The May 1 date was the same anniversary date of her parents, Beth & F.D. Swanson, Jr. Our family grew with the birth of three daughters: Tracy Elizabeth - June 30, 1975; Sarah Katheryn - March 8, 1978; Christy Virginia - March 7, 1980.

I enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard on June 27, 1970. Basic training was provided at Fort Ord, CA. beginning on November 5, 1970. Advanced Infantry Training took place at Fort Polk, LA. Completed training on March 27, 1971. Released from training and returned to El Campo Army National Guard. While I was trained in light weapon infantry (11B10), once I returned to the El Campo unit I was informed they needed cooks. So I transferred to the mess unit. Remained in this unit for the duration of my military obligation. Discharged for Army National Guard July 27, 1976.

My family had a number of businesses. I began working when I was fairly young. I started off working in the family cotton gin when I was around 10. I helped as needed, from helping with trailers to working the overflow cubicle. I began working at the family farm equipment repair shop as a freshman in high school and remained there every summer until I graduated. Once I was married in 1970 I began work on the family farm outside Wharton. I worked with my brother-in-law - Wayne Waters who was married to my sister Susan. We farmed together for the next 45 years. One of the community services we performed was to assist the Wharton County Youth Fair by supplying labor and equipment to farm the 45 acre site they used for income. We fertilized, planted, cultivated and harvested whatever crop they decided on. Local agricultural companies supplied fertilizer, seed, chemicals for the duration of the years we were active. So the fair acreage essentially were expense free. They received all the income. We retired from farming in 2015.

I joined the El Campo Elks Lodge #1749 in March 1994. I was a third generation Wendel to be a Member. I became an officer later in 1994 and have remained an officer ever since. I was elected as President of the local Lodge in 1997 and again in 1999. I moved up through offices available in the District, State and National organizations. I was elected as Gulf Coast District Vice-President in 2001. National Vice-President in 2002. I have remained as Lodge Secretary since 2000.

I joined the William H. Wharton Chapter #23 of the *Sons of the Republic of Texas* in 1991. I was elected Secretary in 1994 and served until 1999. I was elected Treasurer in 2000 and remain in the position. I became a Life Member in 2005.

I was admitted to the Cradle of Texas Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution in December 2012. Became Life Member in 2014.