

# ALTON WILLIS CHENEY JR., FRC: A ROSICRUCIAN FOR EIGHTY-ONE YEARS AND COUNTING!

On September 19, 1920, the soul known in this incarnation as Alton Willis Cheney Jr. entered the world once again in Springfield, Massachusetts. Growing up, he developed an interest in reincarnation, so in 1938, his uncle, Wales Cheney, gave him what Alton refers to as “the red book,” the *Rosicrucian Manual*.

It was to be a fateful and lasting gift.

At the age of eighteen, three years before the then minimum admission age of twenty-one, young Alton wasted no time, and wrote to Rosicrucian Park petitioning to begin his studies early. To his delight, he received word in return mail that Emperor H. Spencer Lewis had approved his becoming a member early, and Alton began his membership and his studies in 1938. Today, being an active member for eighty-one years, he is our longest standing member.

As he had graduated from high school in 1938, he went on to study engineering at Yale University’s Silliman Sheffield Science School, receiving his Bachelor of Science in 1942.

The United States had entered World War II in 1941, and so as he emerged with his fresh Yale Degree, Frater Alton put his expertise at the service of the Nation, joining the Army Air Corps as a Mechanical Engineer.

This was to be a momentous move, as he met the love of his life, Lillian, also serving in the Army Air Corps Communications Division, to whom he would be married until her transition in 2010 at age ninety-two. As Frater Alton says, “I was married to the right person for sixty-six years!” With Lillian, Frater

Cheney has four sons, nine grandchildren, and fourteen great grandchildren, ranging from two to twenty-two years old.

A few months before their 1944 marriage, Frater Alton quite literally hit a “bump in the road,” which demonstrated some of the efficaciousness of his Rosicrucian work.

In 1943, during his service, Frater Alton was riding his motorcycle on the highway when he swerved to narrowly miss a car. As he moved past that car, someone—he does not know who—rear-ended his motorcycle with such force that he remembers nothing of the accident. He later learned that he was found wandering in the street and only recovered consciousness in the hospital.

During his five-month convalescence, he petitioned the Council of Solace for metaphysical aid in healing and credits the work of the Council with his complete recovery from such a catastrophic accident.

Inspired by H. Spencer Lewis, whom Frater Alton refers to as “my mentor from his writings,” he was very much involved in Rosicrucian life. Although he never met H. Spencer Lewis, he was in contact by letter with him twice.

Among other positions, Frater Alton served as the Master of Karnak Chapter in Milwaukee and delivered a discourse at Nefertiti Lodge in Chicago. While he lived in Detroit, he served as the Order’s Inspector General (today called Grand Councilor) there. After he and Lillian moved to Prescott, Arizona, he began a Pronaos there, and later visited Phoenix where he met Grand Master Julie Scott at an event at the local group.

In 1980, at the age of sixty, Frater Alton went back to school and earned a J.D. from John Marshall Law school to begin the practice of Law.

As his wife Lillian fell ill, Frater Alton was her chief caregiver. In 2009, his second “bump” occurred as he broke his hip. Both Frater Alton and Lillian went to live in a senior community, and, once again, he petitioned the Council of Solace and was not disappointed. He credits the Council’s metaphysical aid with his rapid

healing, and his ability to continue care for his wife, who made her transition the following year.

Frater Alton remains a cheerful, enthusiastic member of the Order today in Prescott. He introduces himself as “ninety-eight and still breathing,” with a chuckle. He is grateful for a wonderful life, of which he has enjoyed every minute. He credits the Order with keeping him on the straight path and for his two remarkable healings.



*Since we shared the story of our longest standing member, we thought that readers might be interested in reading about some of the experiences of a newer member too. In a recent Grand Master’s video message, Soror Julie Scott invited members to participate in the team that meditates for new beings coming to Earth and Rosicrucian members who have gone through transition. When a newer member responded, the Grand Master asked her if she would share her experience of finding the Rosicrucians and in what ways it has enriched her life. Here is her response.*

Hello Soror Julie,

After years of studying esotericism and mysticism in my free time, I stumbled across Rosicrucian philosophy. I believe I first heard of it, in detail, through audiobooks and lectures online, which I enjoy listening to while painting or drawing. This philosophy immediately resonated with me and made me want to keep exploring. AMORC’s focus on humanitarianism and environmental stewardship made the Order very inspiring. Also, I loved the universal and inclusive nature of the Order in encouraging people from all faiths and spiritual backgrounds to join.

The meditations and exercises have helped me to feel more patient and compassionate in my day-to-day life, which is particularly important since I work as a nurse. As time passes, and I continue to work with the new monographs and review older ones, I notice that I feel calmer and more aware of the presence of the Divine. Since joining AMORC, I made the decision to become vegetarian. This decision was one that was reinforced by my own interpretation of the “Rosicrucian Code of Life” in its comment about regarding animals as “conscious and sensitive beings.” While AMORC does not encourage any diet in particular, I began to see this small and personal choice as an offering that I could make daily to attempt to show respect to the environment and to live in a more harmonious manner.

I love spending time with the monographs each week and truly look forward to it. The topics that have been covered, so far, are absolutely fascinating and I can’t wait to see what comes next in the First Temple Degree. Life just feels more peaceful, in general, since I began to implement the teachings of the Order in my thoughts and actions. I still have a lot of work to do, but I’m enjoying each day on this path.

Soror Liz

