

## **Charles E. (*Charlie*) Knight**

dob 09 November 1994

### **VITA Volunteer Income Tax Assistance skills.**

At a point in the late 1960's and early 1970's I had the opportunity to learn some skills related to being a volunteer in taxation assistance worker. Once again the word is volunteer but I think I received some sort of a stipend. In some cases the stipend was for the training and in other cases it was for the actual work performed.

We completed some extensive training and then helped the poor in filling out their income tax forms. The part that was most beneficial was the ability to be able to read the tax laws and look for certain things, and if found, to be able to reduce the tax burden for the poor.

Many years later, I think it might have been after 2000, I also did this type of training again and was assigned to Partners in Community Action, but they never called me to ask me to work. I probably should have followed up and asked more about it, but the class was large and I was an older caucasian male and I just assumed they had enough people, especially folks they felt would best interface with their base clientele, and did not see the need to call me. This hurt some as I have been a part of many a program to help the poor and needy in the past. But Springfield, MA, is a highly self segregated city and often I find huge artificial barriers are erected by people in need as they only trust other people with similar ethnic, racial, political, or cultural backgrounds. I found this was true even in Church and other places I would not expect to see it. Also I became ill and a friend was involved in a flooding in the area around a house and friends & I had just moved her half way into and spent the next 3 months helping her tear off walls and such so the contractor could rebuild and stop the mold and such from occurring. So I found myself so busy I most probably could not have helped then at all.

In each case we had tools to follow and had to know the tax laws very well. In the case of the tools used in the after 2000 training there was an easy sort of "flip chart" booklet to follow, if this then that sort of thing. Sort of like a "If this is true, then go to line number xxx" instructions in early computer programming. I also was severely criticized by one of my teachers for not spending the time working on that instructor's class work, that I was having trouble with because I had been sick and out of class so much, so I had another reason to focus on the class work and just wait for the people assigned to call me if they wanted me in the after 2000 training.

Outside of formally working as a volunteer in taxation assistance I used these skills for years to help family and friends to negotiate their tax returns. Much later I sought this same sort of assistance when filing out a tax form as the tax laws had changed. But sadly I did not get the same quality of advice that I gave.

I was very proud of the conscientious service I provided in this program.

As in all times of serving those in need I viewed my service not as to those in need so much as it was service to the people of the United States of America, a service to my fellow countrymen.

This program still exists in some form as of June 4, 2018 and this is the url as of that date:

< <https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1543> >