



# **William Bernard "Bill" Collins Jr**

MAY 19, 1932 - AUG 7, 2025



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FUNERAL HOMES  
OF LONGVIEW AND HENDERSON

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# **William Bernard "Bill" Collins Jr**

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**W**illiam Bernard "Bill" Collins Jr., 93, of Gilmer, Texas, passed away peacefully on August 7, 2025, in Longview, Texas.

Born on May 19, 1932, in Branchville, Maryland, Bill was the son of William Bernard Collins Sr. and Louise Pearl MacGregor Collins. Bill lived in Maryland and Tennessee before moving to Texas in his teen years. He attended Galena Park High School in Galena Park, where he played football and baseball.

In August 1950, he enlisted in the United States Navy, proudly serving his country during the Korean War until his honorable discharge in June 1954. On November 12, 1954, Bill married the love of his life, Lena Mae Mayo, in Houston, Texas. The couple shared a remarkable 70 years together, raising two children-Debra Lynn Collins Staggs and the late Terry Wayne Collins-and building a life filled with family, service, and adventure.

Bill worked as a mechanical maintenance technician at Crown, Cork and Seal in Houston before transferring to Longview and moving to Gilmer, where they enjoyed country life on several acres, raising farm animals and tending to a large garden. Dedicated to community service, Bill was a longtime member of Lions Clubs International, with most of his service in the White Oak Lions Club.

He held numerous leadership roles at both the local and district levels, earning the prestigious Melvin Jones Fellow award-the highest honor for Lions Club members. He was also an avid collector in the Lions International Trading Pin Club, accumulating an extensive pin collection. Bill served several years on the board of the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville and was a proud member of Bethesda Lodge #142 A.F. & A.M. in Gilmer, where he held multiple offices and played Santa a few times at the lodge's family Christmas parties.

After retiring, Bill and Lena traveled the country in their RV, working at several National Parks, including Denali, Yellowstone, Mesa Verde, and Shenandoah to name a few. When back at home,



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Monday nights were reserved for dinner with former co-workers and their wives. Bill was passionate about genealogy, long before online databases made it easy.

He often traveled across state lines to research records in county courthouses, determined to preserve his family's history. Annual family reunions were a cherished tradition he made sure was planned each year. Bill also happily collected programs from the many church and school events his granddaughters were participating in, having them sign them. More recently he began the same tradition with his great-grandchildren.

Each signed program was carefully placed in a folder with the child's name along with any letters, cards and colored drawings they had given him. These treasured keepsakes were recently given to the children. Bill is survived by his beloved wife Lena; daughter Debra and son-in-law Larry Staggs; granddaughters Stephanie Baskin and husband Buck, and Danielle Watson and husband Stephen; and seven great-grandchildren-Hallie Watson, James Baskin, Niki Baskin, Harper Watson, Selah Baskin, Elijah Baskin, and Hope Watson.

He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and friends. He was preceded in death by his son Terry, his parents, and his siblings Robert Collins, Nathaniel "Skippy" Collins, Norma Quin and Glen Collins. Bill will be remembered for his dedication to family, service, and his love of adventure.

A graveside service will be held at Rosewood Park, 1884 Farm to Market Rd 1844, Longview, TX 75605, on Saturday, August 16 at 2:00 p.m., with visitation beginning at 1:00 p.m., under the direction of Rader Funeral Home of Longview, TX. Pastor Stephen Watson will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to causes close to Bill's heart: Texas Lions Camp, 4100 San Antonio Hwy, Kerrville, TX 78028.



## Events


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### Visitation

 **Saturday**, August 16, 2025

 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM CT

 **Rosewood Park Cemetery**  
1884 Farm to Market Rd 1844, Longview TX  
75605

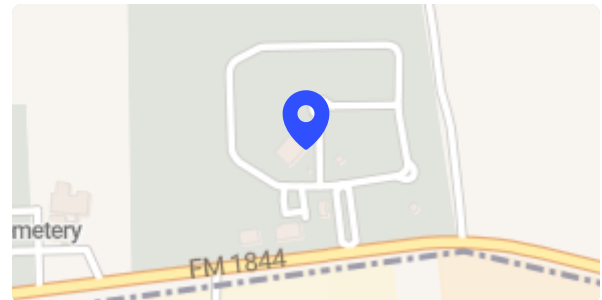


### Graveside Service

 **Saturday**, August 16, 2025

 2:00 PM CT

 **Rosewood Park Mausoleum**  
1884 FM 1844, Longview TX 75605





## Tribute Wall

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**Pamela B Pyeatt** posted:

I met you thru my dad Mitchell 'Sunshine' Billingsley who worked at Crown Cork and Seal with Bill. Your entire family is in my prayers.

August 17 at 7:03 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Serene Retreat to the Collins family.



August 15 at 12:39 PM



**Lion's Club** sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Collins family.



August 15 at 11:20 AM



**Shelly Johnson** lit a candle in honor of William.

Sending our love and deepest sympathy to you and your family. Mr. Collins will always be remembered by us. He and his wife were great neighbors and friends. Amy and Shelly Johnson



August 15 at 5:38 AM



**Tom Mitchell** posted:

I had the pleasure of knowing Bill from the can plant/steelworkers days, and we would always visit whenever we would see each other. He was a good man, and a credit to his union, his friends and his family. Godspeed Bill Tom Mitchell

August 13 at 10:18 AM



**Grateful Nation** posted:

In memory of and in gratitude for your honorable military service. May God bless you and welcome you home.

August 12 at 9:44 AM



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PM

**Paula Miller** posted:

Debbie and Family, so sorry for your loss of your father. May God comfort each of you during this difficult time. I'll not forget taking your Uncle Skippy up to see your Father and surprise him at his 90th Birthday Party. Uncle Bill was so grateful for that. ❤️❤️. Your Father will be missed. Love you Uncle Bill. Paula Kay (Mayo) Miller.

August 11 at 8:07 AM

JT

**Jane Tarr** posted:

Debbie and family, I'm so sorry for the loss of your dad/grandfather. I pray you will feel the comfort of Jesus during this difficult time. His life story is beautiful. We miss them here on earth but know they are in a better place. Love, Jane Tarr

August 10 at 5:53 PM

KM

**Kimberly Miller** posted:

Rest well now Uncle Bill Love, Kimberly Miller

August 10 at 1:07 PM

VS

**Vance Slough** August 16 at 8:13 AM

Bill and I worked together and served as union officers for the United Steeworkers for many years. Ann and I visited Lena and Bill in our Motor Home all over the USA as they worked after we retired. Our friendship covered over 50 years. It was a good run old friend see you down the line.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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