



## Wesley Enoch Collins

October 22, 1923 - July 20, 2020

Wesley Enoch Collins died July 20, 2020. He was 96 years old.

Born on a Stokes County tobacco farm, he rose to the highest ranks of the furniture industry, deeply grateful to his Lord, family and friends who traveled with him along the way. "I've been blessed," he said, remembering that when he left for college, his mother took his only pair of shoes and painted them black so he would be properly dressed. "We were poor, but I didn't feel poor," he said.

Wes graduated from Guilford College in 1948 and later completed an advanced management training program at the University of North Carolina.

Wes joined the United States Marine Corps in World War II and trained as a fighter pilot. Several years later, he was recalled during the Korean conflict, flying 24 combat missions, and achieving the rank of captain. He remained connected thereafter in the reserves.

Employed by Heritage Furniture as a trainee, Wes rotated through every phase of the manufacturing process, culminating with a focus on upholstery. That caught the eye of John Christian Bernhardt who invited Wes to join Bernhardt Industries and initiate a "Flair" upholstery division. Shortly thereafter, he became Bernhardt's President. During his furniture career, he headed Bernhardt, Broyhill and Universal, three giants in the furniture world.

Recognized by his industry peers, Wes served as president and board chairman of the American Furniture Manufacturers Association. Having learned from others, he relished the opportunity to mentor those who followed him. During his retirement years, Wes thrived vicariously on their success.

Wes was a people person, fully invested in his community. He was an elder at Lenoir Presbyterian Church, a board member at Caldwell Memorial Hospital for whom he led a successful \$2 ½ million fund campaign. He was a Guardian Ad Litem volunteer, Boy Scout

leader, Chairman of United Way, a board member of Caldwell House, an avid golfer at Cedar Rock Country Club, and an energetic athlete who could still do 50 pushups at age 90.

Wes is predeceased by two brothers, John Carol and Thomas Preston, and is survived by his youngest brother, James Albert.

He was married to his high school sweetheart, Joy Dearmin for 66 years until her death in 2011. They birthed three children, Samuel, Wesley Jr., and Elizabeth Jane, who died at 44 years of age. They had six grandchildren: Jeremy Collins, Patrick Templeton, Elizabeth Jane Templeton, Wesley Templeton, William Collins, and Cassie Collins, and six great grandchildren, Ruth Templeton, Joshua Templeton, Daisy Joy Templeton, Jacob Collins, Cooper Collins, and Anna Grace Collins.

In 2015, Wes' life was enriched by his marriage to Gail Clark, formerly of Pinehurst, NC, who with her late husband Dr. Ted Clark had enjoyed a close Collins/Clark friendship for many years. Gail's daughter is Dorie Clark, a prominent author, lecturer and public policy consultant in New York City.

Wes Collins loved life, eager to explore adventure. By the calculus of his faith, a new one has just begun.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Caldwell House, a ministry with persons struggling with addictions, at 951 Kenham Place SW, Lenoir, NC 28645.

Out of a concern for the health of Wes' friends and associates, the worship service celebrating his faith and life will be live streamed only. Friends may participate in the service online at 1:00, July 23, by accessing the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/440188931> and may be viewed later at <https://lenoirpres.org/worship/>

Online condolences may be left at [www.evansfuneralservice.com](http://www.evansfuneralservice.com).

Evans Funeral Service and Crematory is serving the family.

# Comments

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“ Sam, I have many memories of you and your family as we grew up. I am saddened to hear this news and loss. You were a good friend back then. I know you are comforted by your father returning to the full presence of our Creator. Be strong for your family. You will feel love from all of us.  
Jody Good

**Jody Good** - July 25, 2020 at 11:09 AM

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“ I knew Wes because of Golf, He knew me because of my Grandfather at Bernhardt and my Father from golf and business. We played a lot together in my 30's, why he would want to play with me, I don't know, but he did and did so often. I enjoyed him, his company and jokes. He was simply one of the finest men I have ever known. He earned it, every last bit of it. Rest well Wes.

**David Keller** - July 23, 2020 at 09:44 PM

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“ Such a wonderful gentleman, we were privileged to know him and call him our friend!! Gail, we send our love and prayers to you and to family Dianne and David

**David Dill** - July 23, 2020 at 05:38 PM

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“ I was a assistant golf professional at Cedar Rock CC when I met Wes. He was a very kind and pleasant man. A true leader in the community who impacted so many people in a positive manner. He made you feel comfortable to just be yourself. I am sure that he and Rooster Bush have there first tee time set up in heaven. Prayers to his family. Dewayne Branch

**Dewayne Branch** - July 23, 2020 at 04:50 PM

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“ A great friend, a great person, and someone I always enjoyed being with and hearing his stories. Guy

**Guy Walters** - July 23, 2020 at 01:15 PM

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“ The Stone Girls Nancy, Kaye, Martha & Sattely Fam purchased the Love's Tapestry for the family of Wesley Enoch Collins.



**The Stone Girls Nancy, Kaye, Martha & Sattely Fam** - July 23, 2020 at 12:33 PM

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“ I have fond memories of the times we all met at Clemmons Kitchen for family gatherings. I always loved hearing John's stories about growing up on the farm with his brothers. Danny and I are thinking of you all today...sending our love and prayers.

**Bebbe Dillard** - July 23, 2020 at 09:49 AM

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“ 5 files added to the album Memories of my Dad



**Sam Collins** - July 23, 2020 at 12:31 AM



“ Sam, thanks for sharing, somany wonderful memories. Your dad was an awesome gentleman

**Willa Jean Eaton** - July 23, 2020 at 09:55 AM

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“ I worked for Wes as a Credit Manager at Universal Furniture. Wes gave me an opportunity to learn and grow and I joined him as we entertained customers like Macy's and others. He taught me so much. Because of Wes' guidance and his request I was able to establish The Universal Underprivileged Children's Fund. He mentored me and I simply adored him. He was a wonderful friend and a great leader. Wes encouraged me to get involved and help those less fortunate. He was and always will be one of the greatest men I have ever met. I will never forget him.  
Leessa Black

Leessa Black - July 22, 2020 at 10:11 PM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Wesley Enoch Collins.



July 22, 2020 at 04:51 PM

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“ Gail D Westmoreland purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Wesley Enoch Collins.



Gail D Westmoreland - July 22, 2020 at 04:31 PM

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“ Wes was a great friend of my dad's then became a good friend to me. He was always happy to tell me about flying in WWII. Great guy and hero. Praying for you Sam and your family.

Christian Dula - July 22, 2020 at 09:43 AM

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“ Wes taught me an appreciation of watching professional golf...I was around him many hours during the time I cared for his beloved wife Joy. He loved golf...so I began listening to his stories and watching the matches on tv during the hours I stayed with Joy, because he was always by her side, thus we were always together! We also enjoyed great meals. I became very fond of him and even after we lost Joy, I would visit with him from time to time or by email.  
My heart is crying to feel this earthly loss....but he was a man of God who loved to study the Bible and we discussed it often.  
God Speed Wes! Tammy Hoyle

Tammy Hoyle - July 22, 2020 at 09:24 AM

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“ Was chaired the \$2.5 million campaign for me at Caldwell Memorial. He made it happen. The only problem for me was that Wes had all our meetings at 7:00 AM so he could hurry to go play golf! He called me Night Owl and came to my office to have me listen to the song Night Owl on his car stereo. Great memories.

Faye McGhinnis - July 22, 2020 at 09:15 AM

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“ Wes Collins was an inspiration to me, an example of what one can accomplish in this great country with hard work, determination and the ability as a leader to motivate others to give their best. I enjoyed serving on the Caldwell Memorial Hospital Board with Wes, where I was able to observe and learn from his dedication to the organization.  
Wes was a friend and competitor on the golf course ( he practiced and worked on his game in order to compete with his best friend Rooster Bush ). A group of golfers from Cedar Rock Country Club traveled to Scotland years ago for a week of golf on several famous courses. Wes was the oldest guy in the group, and some of us were concerned that he might not be able to last all week, walking with caddies because there were no golf carts in Scotland. On the final day of the trip, Wes was still going strong, when some were struggling to finish! He said to me, " Playing golf is not hard. Landing a fighter plane on a carrier deck at night is hard".  
Wes had a great sense of humor. He told me when he was President of Universal, his father would call him sometimes at 4:30am and say " Boy, you're never going to amount to anything lying in the bed all morning!"  
Wes Collins was a good friend to me and many others. His quick smile and great wisdom will be missed. My condolences to his family and loved ones.  
Bob Floyd

Bob Floyd - July 22, 2020 at 09:14 AM

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“ Wes, was a dear friend to my entire family. All of us are saddened by his loss. He led a life of strength and dignity setting the example of a purpose driven life. For me, he was a teacher who always had a story to tell and a new practical lesson to learn. His words and phrases of quality, honesty, hard work, and "do your very best" were born within. I can't imagine life without him as he set the example for us all to follow. Prayers and blessing to the Collins Family and in loving memory of Janey and Joy who passed before him.

**Ed Broyhill** - July 21, 2020 at 09:51 PM

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“ Uncle Wes: Thank you for being a great mentor and friend to all of us. But most of all, thank you for using the platform you were given to grow the Kingdom for GOD. Indeed, it's as if Philippians 4:9 was written especially for you.

John and Jo

**John Collins** - July 21, 2020 at 06:51 PM

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“ Wes was one of a kind. Our Industry has lost a wonderful person. I feel blessed and honored to have known and shared time with him at Bernhardt. He had a great sense of humor and always pleasant to be around.

RIP Wes, Jim Annunziata

**Jim Annunziata** - July 21, 2020 at 05:13 PM



“ I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Wes at Bernhardt. He was truly a Mans Man and not afraid of anything or anyone. I remember riding Mountain Bikes with him in the Mountains of NC. Despite being several years younger and thinking I was a pretty good rider I could not keep up with him. May you Rest In Peace my good friend.

**George Akins** - July 21, 2020 at 05:27 PM

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“ 21 files added to the album Memories of my Dad



**Sam Collins** - July 21, 2020 at 04:51 PM

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“ Will never forget the love you & Joy shared! Rest in our Saviors arms!



**Sandra Thompson** - July 21, 2020 at 03:42 PM