



Thomas Michael Collins

September 13, 1945 - June 18, 2020

Thomas Michael (Tom) Collins passed away Thursday, June 18, 2020 at home surrounded by his family. A native Floridian he was born September 13, 1945 to parents Robert Eugene and Mari Lee (Stafford) Collins of Jacksonville, Florida.

Tom began his career with Southern Bell in 1965 as a lineman and cable splicer while attending college in the evenings. In 1966-68 he proudly and honorably served his country in the United States Army as a member of the 1st Infantry Division in the Republic of Viet Nam. Tom received numerous commendations and medals including The Bronze Star, Two Air Medals, Two Purple Hearts, Viet Nam Campaign and Service Medals, National Defense, Combat Infantry Badge and the Expert Rifleman Badge. Tom returned home to work for Southern Bell and in 1973 he was promoted to engineer and served in that capacity until 1987 when he took an early retirement. Tom and his business partner, Chip Nadeau formed Progressive Telephone Inc. (PTE) which provided telecommunications designs, plant contract inspections and other numerous functions for BellSouth, Fluor Global Services, Level 3 Telecommunications, JEA, AT&T and other companies. By 2001 PTE had 110 employees in eight states.

Tom was an avid fisherman and loved boating and the beach. Later he took up golf which he enjoyed for years. He and Jeanette made annual trips to their

condo in Asheville. He was a good cook and enjoyed making new and different recipes for them. College and professional football were always on during the fall. Tom's quick wit was one of his best and lovable traits.

Tom is preceded in death by his parents and brother, Robert E. Collins, Jr. After 38 years together, he is survived by his wife, Jeanette (Bohall) O'Connor as well as his three children, Donny Lee (Kathy) Collins, Tracy M. Baxter and Scott Michael (Trina) Collins. He has six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Other survivors include his brother, Kenneth Kuhn, sister, Cynthia (John) Hawes, sisters-in-law, Gwen Loadholtz and Bonnie (Glenn) Aspinwall. He has many nieces and nephews.

The memorial service will be Friday, July 24, 2020 at Fruit Cove Baptist Church at 11:00am. A family-only reception and private military honors at the Jacksonville National Cemetery will follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Community Hospice or the Boy Scouts of America.

St Johns Family Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL **24**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Fruit Cove Baptist Church
501 State Rd 13
Jacksonville, FL

Tribute Wall



“ *St. Johns Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Thomas Michael Collins*



St. Johns Family Funeral Home - July 03, 2020 at 06:34 PM

MK

“ *Wish I could talk to you uncle Tommy, hopefully you and pop are fishing together somewhere in great beyond. Rest easy and know your missed greatly.*

Michael Kuhn - May 31, 2025 at 10:15 PM

TB

“ *I sure wish he was here to give me advice. I miss my dad. Your daughter tracy*

tracy collins baxter - February 13, 2023 at 09:08 PM

SB

“ *My Dear Friend, Jeanette,
I am sorry I could not attend the service but I was able to attend
virtually. It was a wonderful service. Tom was a great guy and you
should be proud. I had no idea he had a purple heart and other
medals. Thank you, Tom, for your service. He was your soul mate
and you have so many wonderful memories with him to treasure. He
will always be with you on your trips to Asheville.*

*I was so glad Tom came with you for April's Transplant Anniversary
Party. April enjoyed talking with him, and I got to see him one more
time, as it turned out.*

Love you always,

Sandy Biggs.

Sandra Biggs - July 26, 2020 at 02:34 PM

DF

“ *Jeanette, that was a beautiful service for Tom! I really like your
pastor! When those pictures of our hike in Dupont came up on the
screen, I remembered taking those photos. We have shared some
good times together. I wish I had known what a big war hero he
was. I would have liked to thank him for his service! We will miss
him!*

*Love,
Debbie and Bo*

Debbie Fewox - July 24, 2020 at 01:34 PM

PR

“ Jeanette- Thank you for inviting me to the celebration of life at Fruit Cove Baptist Church. I am thankful there is live streaming during the COVID-19 pandemic. The memorial was very spiritual and moving. I will always treasure this day and memory.

Tom - I will miss sharing a cold one with you and reminiscing about the military days. You tried to teach me how to fish, but quickly realized some of us don't have your talent. I salute you and God willing; save me a place in heaven!

Priscilla (Jeanette's JU roommate from 47 years ago.) Lt Col, USAF (ret) Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Priscilla - July 24, 2020 at 12:45 PM

ST

“ I have very fond memories of working with Tom in the old Southern Bell days. I was working in the San Marco office when Tom came into engineering from construction. We were in the same group. Working with Tom wasn't like work. He was always happy and fun to be around. He had a zest for life and will be missed by many.

Susan Timmers - July 24, 2020 at 12:10 PM

SP

“ It was such a blessing to know Tom Collins back in the BellSouth days. He was always willing to help as a coworker and as a friend. I do not know Tom without Jeanette or Jeannette without Tom. I will miss him and I pray for all of the family. May he rest in peace and may his life's journey continue through his family and friends.

Sharon Peacock - July 12, 2020 at 07:34 PM



“ 20 files added to the album Life Tributes



St. Johns Family Funeral Home - July 03, 2020 at 06:33 PM