

In Loving Memory
James (Jay) Ralph
Collins



January 2, 1933 – June 18, 2022

July 30, 2022

11:00 A.M.

Dr. Robert L. Dean, Jr. officiating

Welcome

Opening prayer

Scripture reading:

2 Corinthians 5:1–8

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

Opening hymn:

“The God of Abraham Praise” (#34 in the hymnal)

Message:

Dr. Robert Dean

Special message video

Closing prayer

Closing hymn:

“How Firm a Foundation” (#275 in the hymnal)



Jay was a red-headed identical twin—surprise!—the last of eight children born at home in Hitchcock, TX to immigrants Wilhelm (William) A.G. Von Colln (Collins) and Dagny Christiansen Cook during the Great Depression. He is survived by his daughter Karen, son-in-law Steve, sister Joan Ellen, and many other relatives, friends and business associates.

A favorite childhood memory was how he (and twin Jock) waited outside during a rare snow for their mother. As she appeared they pelted her with snowballs only to be instantly under return fire, forgetting she was Norwegian. Raised in poverty, Jay learned to appreciate hard work and sacrifice, acquiring skills to help the family. He assisted his father renovating Galveston's famous Bishop's Palace, milked cows, became an Eagle Scout ...

Jay was voted Best All-Around Boy Student as a senior at La Marque High, then, urged by the counselor, won a scholarship to Texas A&M, graduating with a DVM in 1956. He married "such a pretty woman" Bettie Joyce Bean shortly after. By then, as usual alongside his twin, he was an accomplished photographer, outdoorsman, real estate dabbler and concession stand operator at Kyle Field. And more.

Post-Korean War Jay completed service time as a federal meat inspector in Ft. Worth before he and Joyce moved to Houston, city of opportunity. Their only child, Karen, was born in 1958. At a fellow Aggie's urging (pre-Galleria), Jay and Jock purchased land off San Felipe and gravel S. Post Oak Road where they personally built and operated a veterinary clinic (expanding to the additional Westwood location) until a developer purchased the land. Soon, Jay and Joyce initiated the Veterinary Medical Endowed Scholars at A&M. Jay's clinic relocated to San Felipe and Augusta until he "retired."

He had a grateful client following. One gifted the family a ski-week stay at their Vail, CO home for years. Another bartered family portraits, another steaks. One became US President, others included famous actors, a boxer ... A first grade teacher at St. Thomas wondered why Karen was not her student. After reviewing class homework assignments, Jay and Joyce immediately enrolled her. The subsequent year that teacher, with Jay and Joyce's help, founded a Christian school. Jay appeared several years on the "Ask the Expert" radio program and was on call (with twin) to assist the Houston Zoo veterinarian. He served as president of diverse professional and other local and national organizations, on many Boards including the A&M CVM Development Council, and as an Assistant Professor of Dermatology at Baylor. And much more.

Restless curiosity drove him all his life. He shunned comfort and luxury except for a special tool, camera, reel, firearm, etc. Off work found him chatting with people worldwide on ham radio or racing a dune buggy (both built from scratch), or completing a Master Merchant Marine Officer's license (for fun), or acing (first try) the Academy of Veterinary Dermatology exam ... SCUBA trips (no caves), bow hunting in Idaho or Alaska, or "catching" in the Gulf, and some international travel. Jay enjoyed the written word, penning many published articles. He created the logo of the Society of Aquatic Veterinary Medicine as a founding member, and much, much more.

Joyce never knew what experiment might lurk in the garage or kitchen fridge: cow warts to animal parts or plants preserved in "the water." Precise in his sutures or leather tooling, his home office was a mess. Joyce simply closed the door.

His quirky humor was legendary. On return from camping, he enticed the family to drive all night to pitch tents on Joyce's quite proper aunt's lawn. When asked to pass the guacamole, he plopped a spoonful in the outstretched hand. He wore a camo bow tie and cummerbund to formal events. Jay adored classical music. He (and twin) performed as taskmasters in "Aida," the inaugural opera at Jones Hall. In "Carmen," Jay applied half makeup as a choral toreador—since he crossed the stage in only one direction. Adventure? He photographed one of the first forays to Palenque, skied (on purpose, once) off a cliff at Mid-Vail, joined a dig in Qumran, took marksmanship courses at Gun Site (with Joyce) and Chapman Academy (with Karen). And much, much, much more.

Jay pushed himself, taking pride in fitting into his Aggie coveralls and famously climbed 50+ flights of stairs 2–3 times weekly for decades. He was blessed with a host of deep friendships, teaching many to hang wallpaper, sand and paint drywall, lay tile, bait a hook, skin a deer or goat, close up a spay. Countless cherish special memories, benefiting from a session on root words (ruboid rostrulled cervid) or his gift of a Dorland's. Alone or with others he invented/patented things: surgical stapler, ear cropper, lure launcher, various therapeutic gels and bioremediation products—all activities frequently performed while caring for Joyce after her brain hemorrhage. And SO much more.

Ultimately, Jay's curiosity led him to an abiding faith in the logic and veracity of the Bible and it became a lifelong study. Because of his faith in Jesus Christ, Jay is Home, and truly is spectacular!

"All is well."