

He took every opportunity to spend time with Lindsey and Chris—from helping them drive across the United States to running mundane daily errands—and was always genuinely happy to participate. He was down for whatever, whenever, a great companion for midnight grocery store runs for some cookies or to fix a hub cap or drive from Texas to Colorado in an ice storm. He empowered his children to chase their dreams, teaching them to roll up their sleeves, work hard, and treat everyone—regardless of circumstances—with honor and respect, but also how to spot people who didn't live by those same values.

Jimmy had a lifelong love of antique cars. In 1990, he acquired the very Cadillac he first saw Susan in. He and his nine-year-old son, Chris, embarked on a journey to bring it home from Arkansas, not entirely sure the car would make it back. He later restored and collected other family hand-me-down vehicles, including a 1950 Chevrolet Deluxe and a 1967 El Camino. He was a consistent presence driving his 1974 Cadillac convertible in parades in McKinney, Weston, and Crowell, Texas. He loved caring for these cars but preferred to do so simply and without excess. A friend once said, "You know what's faster than the Sputnik rocket? Jimmy Collins washing his car on a single quarter."

A regular at Aero Country Airport—often cruising around in his golf cart—Jimmy shared a love of aviation with Chris beginning in the mid-1990s. Together they spent countless hours at the hangar driving old cars, flying planes, and listening to stories from WWII pilots—memories that became some of their most cherished.

Jimmy sold the restaurant and retired in 2017. In 2023, following the birth of his granddaughter Evy, he and Susan moved out of Texas for the first time in their lives, settling down near his children and just down the block from Chris in Oakland, California. There, he spent his final days enjoying the wonderful weather of Northern California. Until his final weeks, he was still walking two miles a day with his dog Emmylou. Like everywhere else he had lived, he quickly became well known and beloved by his Oakland neighbors. He regularly accompanied Lindsey to the Dolphin Club in San Francisco for swimming adventures in the San Francisco Bay. While he refused to get in frigid waters himself, he loved going for a post-swim Irish coffee at the legendary Buena Vista across the street, one of his old haunts from his San Francisco business trips in the 1970s.

While life took him across the country for work and eventually to live, Jimmy never stopped seeing himself as a small-town Texan. Storytelling was Jimmy's greatest gift. His favorite pastime was telling stories about the colorful characters he met throughout his life. He was a living archive of Vernon's people, places, and spirit. He always advised, "Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story." His lifelong best friend, Joe Rogers, said, "Jimmy and I could spend hours recounting characters we had met, known, or just made up. Our friendship was a lifetime of good stories and laughter with—or at—one another. Our time together was good for the soul."

Jimmy was deeply loved and admired by those who had the privilege to know him. In 2025, on his 80th birthday, Mayor Bill Cox issued an official City of McKinney Proclamation to honor Jimmy for a lifetime of business leadership and service to the city. He will be remembered for the way he made people feel whenever they were around him.

Even in his final days, Jimmy's kindness was unmistakable. The nurses who cared for him could immediately tell he was a sweet, gentle man. At the end of one nurse's shift, knowing she would not see him again, she said, "I hate it when I get a good assignment right before my time off." As he was leaving us, even in his semi-lucid state, Jimmy was positive, kind, and true to his sweet nature. He said, "I'm just so excited I can't stand it," and "I couldn't be happier."

These final words speak volumes about Jimmy—joyful, kind, and full of warmth to the very end.

In honor of our beloved Jimmy, we invite you to contribute to the ministry and missions of the First United Methodist Church, McKinney. In the memo section, please attribute the donation to Jim Collins. <https://abundant.co/sharingtheheart/memorial>

A Service of Remembrance Celebrating the Life of Jim Collins September 5, 1945 - February 5, 2026



March 11, 2026 ♦ 1:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
315 N. Church St. McKinney, TX 75069
SharingTheHeart.org

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE	
GREETING	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"It Is Well with My Soul"
WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE	Matthew 5:1-16 Michael Dorff
WITNESS OF THE FAMILY	Chris and Lindsey Collins
VIDEO CELEBRATION	
*HYMN No. 378, vv. 1,5,6	"Amazing Grace"
WITNESS OF THE GOSPEL	
SPECIAL MUSIC	"I'll Fly Away"
*BENEDICTION	
May the Lord bless you and keep you.	
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.	
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.	

POSTLUDE

*Following the service, you are invited to greet the family
at a reception in Dyer Hall.*



LEADING THE SERVICE TODAY:
Dr. Thomas O. Brumett, Senior Pastor
John Emory Bush, organist
Josh Brumett and Waverly Hammond, audio/visual
Denny and Rene Robnett, vocalists

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

OBITUARY

James Fred Collins passed away on February 5, 2026, in Oakland, California. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Jim was a shining light of warmth and kindness. Born in 1945 in Vernon, Texas, to Sidney and Marie Collins, he is survived by his wife of 52 years, Susan; his children, Lindsey and wife Raven and Chris and wife Jennifer; his granddaughters, Evadele, Eve, and Sophia; nieces Stephanie Koerner and Robin King; and many beloved cousins and friends who count as family.

Known to loved ones as Jimmy, he graduated from Vernon High School in 1963 and went on to attend Texas Tech University, where he played cornet in the Going Band from Raiderland. Jimmy met Susan after catching sight of her in the Sonic parking lot in Vernon while she was driving her mother's turquoise 1968 Cadillac Coupe de Ville—a moment he never forgot. They were married in 1973.

His career brought him to Dallas, where he began working as an auditor for Campbell Taggart Inc., traveling extensively to bakeries across the country. As their family grew, Jimmy shifted away from constant travel and joined the Tex-Mex restaurant chain El Chico, Inc. There, he rose to the position of assistant treasurer and tax and audit manager. After Gilbert Culler and Gilbert Cuellar, Jr. repurchased El Chico in 1982, he was elected vice president, treasurer, and chief financial officer of the Dallas based company, helping guide the company through its initial public offering on NASDAQ. With El Chico, Jimmy and Susan traveled to Washington, DC to cater the 1985 White House Congressional Barbeque for President Reagan.

In 1987, Jimmy opened his own El Chico franchise in McKinney, Texas. Because of his meticulous attention to detail, El Chico McKinney became the company's top-performing franchise. He later expanded his franchises to Paris, Texas, and San Antonio. His restaurants were beloved not just for the food, but for Jimmy himself—his warmth, humor, and genuine care for people. Many of his customers ate there several times a week, and many customers became lifelong friends.

He was drawn to people from every walk of life, especially those who were eccentric. Jimmy had a gift for seeing beauty in the odd and quirky and met everyone with genuine curiosity and warmth. He delighted in talking with street performers and local characters—from the thong-and-high-heel-wearing Austin man Leslie Cochran to Santa Cruz's Robert, "the Pink Lady"—and once in Boulder while visiting Lindsey, he struck up a conversation with a bald man whose ornate tattoo covered his entire scalp. The two ended up discussing tattoo-judging competitions—something Jimmy had apparently done once. He listened to anyone and everyone with kindness and appreciation, and taught his children to do the same, encouraging them to delight in the treasury of eccentric people the world has to offer.

After moving his family to McKinney in 1990, Jimmy quickly became deeply involved in the community, serving chairman of the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Collin County, and as finance chair at First United Methodist Church of McKinney, where he also served as an usher. He was a past director of the McKinney Chamber of Commerce and was one of the founding members of Total Quality McKinney. Most recently, he was a board member of the McKinney Family YMCA and a member of its finance committee.

For Jimmy, food was love, and showing up for others came naturally. For many years his El Chico restaurant donated hot meals to hundreds of kids at the annual Christmas party for the Boys and Girls Clubs. He was also known to deliver countless free meals to friends in times of need, or just for no reason at all.

Nothing revealed Jimmy's character more clearly than the way children adored him. He delighted in playful silliness, often letting children feel like the smartest ones in the room, and could spin imaginative stories out of thin air. As a father, Jimmy was the same warm presence to his children that he was to the public. He had endless energy for his family, even after long stressful days on his feet at the restaurant.

(Continued on back.)