



Edmond Byrl Collins

January 1, 1934 - October 7, 2011

Extension Professor Emeritus Edmond Byrl Collins, 77, of Morgantown, died Friday, October 7, 2011, in the Ruby Memorial Hospital, from complications of encephalopathy. He was born Jan. 7, 1934 in Cairo, Ritchie Co, WV, the son of William Howard and Ada Thomas Collins, descendants of colonial pioneers. His mother died when he was three, and he was raised by grandparents and other family members until he lived with Kate and Laurence Carpenter. At age 15, following a stay in the hospital, he made his home with Glen and Klondel Collins Riddle of West Milford. Ed graduated valedictorian from Unidis High School in 1952 when all 13 graduates went on to the University. That fall, he arrived at WVU with \$5 in his pocket and a lot of determination. Before the day was done, Ed had secured a semester scholarship from Dr. A.D. Longhouse, Chair of Agricultural-Engineering Dept; had traded his services to paint the interior of one of Tony DeBiase's rentals for a semester's rent, and had a job washing dishes at a restaurant for his meals. This was typical of his years at WVU. He was a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering and Gamma Sigma Delta Agriculture Honoraries. He worked as a TA for the Ag-Eng Dept. and was a member of the Army ROTC program. During summers he worked the University farms and as a forest firefighter. Before graduating with a BS degree in 1957, he completed most of the MS degree coursework. In addition to classroom instruction, he had a role in curriculum planning and course development under the guidance of Dr. Longhouse. Ed's research dealt largely with poultry housing, forage processing and tobacco mechanization.

His Master's design for drying tobacco in the barn is still in use. The draft board called, and in January 1958, he reported for duty as a 2nd Lt. While on day-assignment to the Pentagon, he signed up to test for assignment to the U.S. Signal Corps. He did not notice the notation "No one with rank less than Major need apply." Ed was recalled to the Pentagon the next week, and based upon test results, was offered command of a company of specialists stationed at Tobyhanna Signal Depot in the Poconos. The General, who thought such confidence and talent should be rewarded, told Ed he would not be dealing with anyone under the rank of Colonel, and gave him the General's private telephone number. Ed used it only once in his three years of service. His company was among several responsible for maintaining the DEW line (Early Warning system) around the U.S., Canadian and northern European borders. Ed was honorably discharged in 1960 and returned to Morgantown as an Ag-Engineering instructor and as captain and Executive Officer of the 354th Ordinance Co., USAR. He was promoted to Assistant Professor of Ag-Engineering in 1961. In 1965 Ed joined the International Programs Office at WVU. He, his wife and children, ages one and two, went to Egerton Agricultural College at Njoro, Kenya, East Africa, for two years. They ended up staying for eight years. His primary responsibility was to develop a Diploma Program in Agricultural Engineering for students in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. He taught several courses, led curriculum development efforts and set up a major teaching laboratory for instruction and equipment maintenance. In 1967, Ed was appointed Chief of Party for the U.S. delegation at Egerton. His duties included implementing an integrated curriculum to meet agriculture extension service needs in E.A., and establishing specialized extension programs in ag-engineering, ag-education and range management. Ed was to seek government funding of extension programs to include seminars, short courses and field officer training. Additionally, he was involved in development of policies to improve instructional criteria and standards. He had responsibility for all U.S. Personnel assigned to the USAID contract, including selection, evaluation, promotion, salary increments, contract extensions, and

contract terminations. Concurrently, Ed was Chair of the Ag-Engineering Dept. at Egerton, and directed development of the dept. and its 25 member staff. He promoted and maintained units of continuing education and other in-service training, developed an extensive staff evaluation and recruitment program, determined priority needs of staff, equipment and technology programs, and then sought funding through private, government and international sources. He also taught two or more classes each academic term. Ed served as chair and or member of four EA regional agricultural education committees, served as chair and or member of five Egerton College administration committees, served as chair and or member of three Kenyan national committees dealing with ag-education; served as an external examiner and assisted in ag-program development for several Universities in South African countries; was Chair of University of London, Cambridge O-level examination committee, Agricultural Section, E.A.; and became a registered Professional Engineer, of Kenya. Perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments was the successful funding and building of two new structures for the Ag-Eng. Dept. which he designed and supervised construction, adding about 20,000 square feet of classrooms, laboratories and offices. This building is now part of the University of East Africa. Ed and the department also found time to host a leadership role in the National Ploughing Contest at Njoro each year. In 1966, he was the Power-saw champion of Kenya. He laughed when he said he won because he knew how to sharpen saws. Much of Ed's spare time was spent on weekend hunts or photo safaris which allowed the family to see much of East Africa's beauty and to drive the primitive terrain. His favorite hunting adventure occurred when asked by Lord Delamere to rid his ranch of a rogue buffalo, which Ed did. In addition to hunting, Ed was a golfer at Njoro Club, and joined his wife in the Nakuru Rifle Club, and the Kenya Regiment Rifle Club competing across Kenya against civilians, the Kenyan Army and the Kenyan Police. When the USAID-WVU contract ended, Ed and family returned to Morgantown in 1973. He was to be assigned as a Major in the Reserves, but

travel time conflicted with other commitments and he resigned the commission. Ed was encouraged to move from the College of Engineering to the Extension Service. He was appointed Division Leader, Agriculture, Forestry and Community Development, (later Consumer Sciences). Ed also represented WVU on the Board of Directors of the Northeastern Program Leaders Group. In more recent times, Ed served as Division Leader of Environmental Management Education and of Agriculture and Forestry for WVU Extension. Prior to retirement, Ed served as Associate Director of the ANRD Center. Jackson's Mill was particularly dear to Ed. He was instrumental in bringing the National 4-H Invitational to Jackson's Mill; the rebuilding of the dairy barn after the fire; and moving a log cabin from another county to the Mill. Many weekends were spent volunteering there. The WV Woodlot video series produced cooperatively between WVU Forestry extension and the US Forest Service was completed with Ed's enthusiastic support. Other efforts focused largely on water quality, forage and nutrient management. He was state secretary of Mountaineers for Rural Progress for over 20 years, and he was an active participant in the organization and development of the WV Agricultural and Forestry Hall of Fame. During his career, Ed was prolific in the publication of bulletins and fact sheets to address specific problem issues within the State and Region. Many publications are still viable and used today by Extension staff and citizens of the state. Ed was well recognized for his abilities to secure funding in support of Extension programs. He secured over \$4.75 million through grants and contracts which in 2003 was unequalled by any individual in the Extension Service. During his 51 years of association with WVU and 28 years of Extension service, he received numerous honors and awards in recognition of his significant contributions, including the International Community Service Award, Gamma Sigma Delta Extension Faculty Merit Award, Epsilon Sigma Phi-Environmental Stewardship Award of Excellence in Programming, Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the West Virginia Solid Waste Authorities, and in 2003 the Gamma Sigma

Delta award for Distinguished Service to West Virginia Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences. He was a life member of WVU College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences Alumnae Association. Ed was a good, kind and patient man who felt a great responsibility to those who worked with, and for, him. He often remarked how fortunate he was to have such a capable, professional staff around him. He was particularly appreciative of Dixie Martinelli, who kept the office running smoothly during his tenure. Ed was married in Aug. of 1960 to Linda L. Hare. They were blest with 51 years of marriage, adventure, trials, friendship and love. Together they shared enjoyment of many sports, especially the Mountaineers and the Steelers, hunting, fishing, golfing, bowling, and softball, and in Kenya, Rally Driving and soccer. Ed introduced her to stock car racing on dirt tracks around the state, and she introduced him to target shooting in Kenya. They also were East Africa Safari enthusiasts. In later years, Ed was an armchair fan of NASCAR. Both enjoyed discussion of politics. Ed's love of cars was almost as great as his love of his work and his love of West Virginia. He was truly a shade-tree mechanic, and when not traveling with the Extension Service, he could be found on the driveway, overhauling, painting and rehabbing a 60's or 70's muscle car that he'd found. He owned at one time or another most of the well-known cars of that era, and often remarked "They were all fun to own and run. Each had its own personality and quirks." He was often sought out for advice regarding his staff's cars. He was extraordinarily knowledgeable regarding automobiles. Ed is survived by his wife, Linda; three children, Chris of MD, Colleen Lohide of NV, and Curtis of IL; grandchildren, Brandon of NV, Celsey, Chase, Chad, Chance and Cydney, all of MD, Zoe of OH, Craig of SD, and Cassidie of IL; a former son-in-law, Kurt Lohide of MN; brother-in-law Don Harman of Grafton; sister-in-law Helen Collins of OH; several nieces and nephews; a cousin Jim Collins of Clarksburg; close friends, George and Cathy Corder, of Star City; and Bob Hopkins and Carla Snyder who were supportive during his illness. In addition to his parents, Ed was preceded in death by a brother Bill in 1991, and by two sisters, Phyllis Harman in June and Luella

Cork in September, both of 2011. By his wishes, he was cremated and his remains will be interred in Wolf's Cemetery, Dilliner, Greene County, Pa. A celebration of his life and shared memories will be held next spring. Memorials in his memory may be offered to a church or charity of one's choosing, or to WVU Jackson's Mill Restoration Fund for the WV Building. Contact WVU Extension Service Development Director Julie R. Cryser, at Knapp Hall, 304-293-5691, or julie.cryser@mail.wvu.edu for more information. Arrangements are in the care of the Richard R. Herod Funeral Home, Point Marion.

Tribute Wall

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“ To Linda Collins,

One behalf of all Egerton College students,we wish to offer our sincere and profound condolences to Linda Collins and her families for the loss of Professor Edmond B. Collins.

Professor Collins was our Agriculture Engineering lecturer. He was one of the greatest lecturers we ever had. He had a passion for the students that shined brightly and made you want to be the best student you could be. He was certainly a very special person and immensely respected by each and every student. May God bless and keep you in peace as you mourn your loss. Mr. Edmonton B. Collins will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Salim Hirji,

1966 Ag. Eng. student

Salim Hirji - March 11, 2013 at 05:59 PM

BN

“ *I am so sorry to hear of your great loss.I always thought of Byrl as my cousin. He lived here beside us with my uncle and aunt. We enjoyed many hours of doing our homework together.*

My son and his family live in Uncle Lawrence's former home now and we live across from them. Please stop in sometime, if you are passing through.

With sincere sympathy, Betty Nelson

Betty Carpenter Nelson - December 09, 2011 at 11:22 AM

DM

“ Linda & family,
I was sorry to learn of Ed's passing on October 7. I was blest to work with Ed for many years in my role as State Supervisor for Agricultural Education. He was a highly responsible, solid performer who I was proud to call FRIEND. He will be missed, but his legacy will live on through the many lives he touched through his commitment to excellence at WVU, as well as his international service. One side note, I, too, attended school at Cairo. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Don Michael - December 05, 2011 at 03:36 PM