



Eldridge Ruthven Collins Jr.

November 14, 2018

With great sadness the family of Eldridge Ruthven Collins, Jr., formerly of Blacksburg, Virginia, announces his passing on Wednesday, November 14, 2018, in Springdale, Arkansas at the age of 78.

Eldridge was born in Lake City, Florida to Eldridge R. Collins, Sr. and Christine Witt Collins. His youth was spent in Florida where he graduated from St. Cloud High School. He then earned a B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering from Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama where he was a scholarship member of the Naval ROTC program. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant Combat Engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps. Following 4 years of active duty, he returned to Auburn where he earned a PhD degree in Agricultural Engineering. His professional career began at Virginia Tech (VPI/SU) in 1971, where he remained until his retirement in 2001. He specialized in Agricultural Engineering/Research and Cooperative Extension service, which resulted in numerous professional publications focusing primarily on issues of importance to the agriculture community such as waste management, environmental stewardship and ventilation of animal production facilities. He also advised and directed both undergraduate and graduate students on their degree projects and theses/dissertations. Additionally, he often served as an expert witness in Virginia for court proceedings involving livestock and poultry issues. A highlight of his career was serving as a member of a faculty development team at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. Team members were charged with visiting research stations, giving lectures, and developing literature to improve the University Agricultural Engineering Department's research and curriculum in the area of agricultural waste management. His membership in the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) began in 1958, where he held many leadership roles. In 2000, he was recognized as a Fellow of the ASAE. Upon retirement from Virginia Tech, Eldridge was awarded the status of Professor Emeritus.

Passionate about community service, Eldridge's activities included leadership roles in his beloved Blacksburg United Methodist Church, a mission trip to Kiev, and a mission trip to Mississippi helping with hurricane relief. Other activities included involvement with the Virginia Tech Wesley Foundation, Boy Scouts, high school band boosters, Blacksburg Sports Club, Marine Corps League New River Valley and Rotary International. He used his

engineering skills to complete much of the electrical, plumbing, and carpentry jobs required in building his family's first new home. He loved tinkering with his vehicles and machines powered by small engines. He also enjoyed listening to a variety of music with bluegrass, both traditional and new, at the top of his playlist. Singing in his church choir also brought him great joy as did singing along with gusto to Handel's Messiah at Christmastime.

Eldridge was preceded in death by his father, Eldridge, Sr., and his mother, Christine. He is lovingly remembered by his wife of 56 years, Belva Collins of Springdale, Arkansas; two sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandsons, Trey and Stacie Collins, Liam and Keegan of Cedar Park, Texas; Nathan and Lori Collins, Ethan and Owen of Elm Springs, Arkansas; sister, Miriam Henrikson and her husband Jim; brother, Julian Collins and his wife Cynthia; nephew, Justin Collins, his wife Amie, and great-nephew Garrison; niece, Laura Jane Collins; and several very special cousins.

Eldridge lived his life of deep faith with a tender, open, and compassionate heart. He was devoted to his family and treasured his friendships, old and new. His presence will be greatly missed by many. A Celebration of Life will be held at 1 PM on March 23rd, 2019, at the Blacksburg United Methodist Church in Blacksburg, Va.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Eldridge Ruthven Collins, Jr. Memorial Fund. The fund was established to provide support for Agricultural Engineering programs in Virginia Cooperative Extension. Checks can be made out to the Virginia Tech Foundation, 902 Prices Fork Road, Suite 4500, Blacksburg, VA 24061 with "Eldridge Ruthven Collins, Jr. Fund" written on the memo line. Alternatively, please consider a contribution in his name to the Polycystic Kidney (PKD) Foundation at www.pkdcure.org; or to the Blacksburg United Methodist Church, Blacksburg, Virginia.