

Edmond Byrl Collins



Edmond Byrl Collins was born in Ritchie County. He lived there during his boyhood years with relatives after losing his mother at a young age. Later, he relocated to West Milford to live with an aunt and uncle after he was hospitalized with an illness at a Clarksburg Hospital. He went on to graduate valedictorian from West Milford High School.

Collins started WVU in 1952 with only \$10 in his pocket, but much determination. On his first day at WVU, he met Dr. A.D. Longhouse, Agricultural Engineering Department Head, and secured a scholarship for the semester. By the end of the day, he had bartered his services with others for a room and meals.

Collins graduated with his BS degree in 1957 and at the same time had completed much of the coursework for his Masters. He was called to the draft in 1957 and was honorably discharged in 1960. He continued with the U.S. Army Reserves rising to the rank of Captain. In 1960, he married Linda Hare; that same year, he completed his MS degree.

In 1961, he started his career as an instructor in the WVU Agricultural Engineering Department. His research while in this position dealt largely with poultry housing, forage processing and tobacco mechanization. In 1965, Collins accepted a new challenge as an agricultural engineering instructor in Kenya, East Africa. Collins, his wife Linda and two young children remained in Africa for eight years. During that time he assisted in developing and implementing a curriculum to meet the needs of the area and prioritized needs for equipment and supplies, among many other endeavors, in addition to his teaching duties. He was also able to secure funding to construct 20,000 square feet of classroom, laboratories and offices.

Upon his return from Africa, Collins started a new position at WVU in 1973 as a full-time agriculture extension specialist. He was especially gifted in communicating engineering concepts and problem solving techniques and because of this gave dozens of presentations to technical organizations, as well as to state, national and international governmental groups. In the mid-70s he was promoted to Division Leader of Agriculture, Forestry and Community Development.

Throughout his WVU assignment, Collins had a professorial rank in the Ag Engineering Department with a focus largely on water quality, forage and nutrient management and in retirement had an Emeritus status.

Collins and his wife Linda had three children, Christopher, Colleen and Curtis and nine grandchildren. They celebrated their golden anniversary in 2010. Collins passed away in October 2011.