



## Lowell Collins

August 20, 1929 - July 26, 2025

Born and raised in Umatilla, Lowell Collins was the son of Cliff and Ollie Collins. He graduated from Umatilla High School in 1947, joined the Air Force in 1949, and was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base.

Technically adept and gung ho, Lowell was soon promoted to Staff Sergeant and worked as a flight mechanic on B29s. He flew with such notable officers as General Curtis LeMay and Paul Tibbets, Jr.

In 1949, Lowell read a Vancouver Sun article about a beauty queen named Catherine (Kay) Ronco. His letter to her began a whirlwind courtship and they married in 1952. Returning to Umatilla, they raised daughter Leslie and son Doug and contributed their love, time, and talent to their community. They were active members of the United Methodist Church for over 50 years and later attended the Umatilla Presbyterian Church. Lowell and Kay were married for 69 years, until Kay passed in 2021.

In 1953, hearing that a local resident needed a life-saving blood transfusion, Lowell donated his rare blood and became a steadfast donor for the rest of his life, reaching the 173 gallon mark in January 2024.

He was also a proud member of the Umatilla Masonic Lodge for over 60 years and served as Chaplain until the end of 2023.

Lowell began his career at Golden Gem Growers. In 1966, he became a loan officer at Production Credit Association and rose through the ranks of the Farm Credit system. In 1970, he was named VP of the Federal Land Bank of Orlando, becoming Director in 1980. He retired at the age of 57 in 1987 and devoted the next 38 years of his life to his beloved Kay, their church, the Masonic Lodge, the Lake County Blood Bank (now One Blood), and the Umatilla Historical Museum, which he co-founded with Evelyn (Sister) Sebree, Ed Lisle, and others in 2004.

A humbly devout Christian, loving husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, Lowell was also an avid fisherman, gardener, skilled carpenter, baker of exceptional hummingbird cakes, steadfast friend and, later, a devoted caregiver during Kay's extended descent into dementia. He will be remembered for his generosity of spirit, his wisdom, boundless energy, sense of humor, compassion for others, and his mischievous smile.

Lowell is survived by Leslie Oakes, Doug Collins, grandchildren Brent Oakes (Angie), Alise Neis (Phil), great-grandchildren Paul Neis, Ella and Lyle Oakes, his sister Jean Gastfield, 5 nieces and 4 nephews. He was pre-deceased by his brother, Russell Collins.

Our nation, the community of Umatilla, and countless individuals' lives were enriched by Lowell's tireless and joyful contributions over 96 action-packed years. May he rest in Heavenly peace with Kay.

Funeral services will be held on August 20th, visitation will take place at 10am and the service will begin at 11am at the Calvary Chapel (previous Umatilla Methodist church.) In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Umatilla Historical Society: 299 N Trowell Ave, Umatilla

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 20. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Calvary Chapel (previous Umatilla Methodist church.)  
250 Guerrant St  
Umatilla, FL 32784

## Funeral Service

AUG 20. 11:00 AM (ET)

Calvary Chapel (previous Umatilla Methodist church.)  
250 Guerrant St  
Umatilla, FL 32784

## Interment

AUG 20. 12:00 PM (ET)

umatilla cemetery annex II  
Umatilla, FL 32784

# Tribute Wall

GA

“ Lowell's love was passed to his daughter Leslie Oakes. Her ministry at St. Thomas UMC in Manassas, VA was the best/top notch. She gives 100% into her service to the Lord.  
We love her and miss her,  
George and  
Sharron Anderson

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**George Anderson** - August 18, 2025 at 02:32 PM

DQ

“ Leslie, so sorry to hear about your father. Obviously, he was a great person like his daughter. May God bless you, comfort you and give you peace. Hope you are healthy and doing well.  
Love, Dean & Doris Quick

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**Dean Quck** - July 30, 2025 at 05:43 PM

JW

Leslie, my heart hurts for you but at same time rejoicing that your precious Dad is now resting with Jesus. All my love, prayers, and deepest sympathy is with you and your family. Treasure the precious memories that you made with your Dad. He loved you so much. May God hold you tightly on the palm of His hands in the coming days.  
Jean Webb

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**Jean webb** - July 30, 2025 at 06:09 PM