

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WILLIAM J. COLLINS, JR.
in the
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEATING, REFRIGERATING
and
AIR-CONDITIONING ENGINEERS, INC.**

1915 – 2005



Seventy-Fifth Anniversary

Central Oklahoma Chapter, ASHRAE

1935 – 2010



William J. Collins, Jr.

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It is my joy in life —
To find at the turning of
 every road —
The strong arms of a comrad —
To help me onward with my
 load —
And since I have no gold to
 give —
God make me worthy of my friends.

Anon.

FOREWORD

This account of the ASHRAE career of Bill Collins is based on his files and other memorabilia given to the Central Oklahoma Chapter by Carlen Collins, his wife. Bill was active throughout his career in assisting or writing various historical documents and speeches for the Society and the Chapter. Three of these works were particularly useful in this present writing. Namely: *Proclaiming the Truth*, written by the Society Centennial Committee of which Bill was a member; *History Recalled*, a 60 year history of the Central OK Chapter, written by Bill and Bob Vermillion; *My ANA of ASHRAE*, personal experiences of Bill in ASHRAE written in 2001. Bill specified that this last piece was not for distribution or archiving and only given to close friends. I knew Bill Collins both professionally and personally for about 35 years and was fortunate to receive a copy. All quotations appearing throughout were favorites of Bill.

This work endeavors to highlight Bill Collins' numerous contributions to ASHRAE and the public at large; his high regard for friends and associates and his success in general in everything he was involved in. He was the most extraordinary man I have ever known.

The files contained many photos with very few documented with identification or dates. Therefore, considerable detective work was required in order to use them herein. In this regard a number of individuals were very helpful. Damon Gowan, Houston, TX recalled some Research Promotion details for me. Sam Cummins, Little Rock, AR was helpful with some details relating to a Collins visit to the Arkansas Chapter. Mike Beda helped to verify the date of a special golf event in OKC and Bud Miller helped identify some photos. Also, Gloria Cofer, Society Staff, a very good friend and a person helpful to many, many ASHRAE members, provided several lists of meeting dates, presidential members, photos, etc.

Finally, I want to thank the Central Oklahoma Chapter BOG and Chapter Historian, Alan Loeffler for the opportunity to undertake this project, a rewarding experience.

Faye C. McQuiston
ASHRAE Fellow
Fall 2010

You must give something to your fellow men — even if it's a little thing, do something for others — something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it.

Albert Schweitzer

Chapter 1

THE BEGINNING

William J. (Bill) Collins, Jr. was born May 26, 1915 in Iron River, Michigan. Bill's father was a miner, having dropped out of school upon the death of his father to support the family. However, through self-education, he worked his way up to General Manager of all the mining properties in the Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota area for the Pittsburgh Coke and Chemical Company. Bill apparently inherited his father's qualities and took his education seriously, attending school and graduated from Michigan Technological University in 1935 with a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. He had also earned a Reserve Commission in the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers but did not go on active duty until later in 1942 during World War II.

Upon graduation, he was immediately employed as an engineer by Swift and Co. and the C.A. Dunham companies in Iowa until 1937 when he moved to Oklahoma City and was employed by the Loeffler-Greene Supply Co. until 1941. From 1941 to 1942, he worked for the Austin Co. in Ft. Worth, Texas when he was called to active military duty.

It is not known what grade he held, when recalled, but he was released from active duty in 1946 as a Lieutenant Colonel. College-educated engineers were scarce in the military at that time and his entire tour was

spent stateside as an engineer, developing army training facilities like Camp Leonard Wood, Missouri, later becoming Fort Leonard Wood, and others. His rapid advancement during this tour of duty was a good indication of the leadership he was to exhibit the remainder of his life.

Following his military duty, Bill Collins returned to Oklahoma City and formed his own engineering firm, Collins Engineering Associates. In 1976, the firm merged with Soter Engineering to become Collins-Soter Engineering, Inc., with Bill as the Chairman of the Board. These companies were very successful while at the same time Bill rose rapidly in ASHVE, ASHAE and finally ASHRAE.

Bill had knowledge of ASHVE while a senior in college but no real association with the organization until 1939 when his employer, Frank X. Loeffler, invited him to a chapter meeting. He apparently attended chapter meetings and a Society meeting in Chicago in 1949 as a non-member, probably more interested in the exposition than ASHVE. After returning from the meeting, he was approached, and strongly urged, to become a Society member, which he did. This was Bill Collins' real beginning in the organization that was to become ASHRAE.

No engineer has the right to call himself an Engineer until he has learned to say, "I made a mistake", and "I don't know".

Bill Collins

Chapter 2

ONWARD AND UPWARD

As was his nature, Bill Collins became involved in the then Oklahoma Chapter. In 1950, when Dick Swan was chapter president, the first monthly chapter newsletter – the Sou’wester – was published with Bill as editor. Bill was chapter president in 1952-53 and instituted the first Past Presidents Night and presented each a diamond studded pin; a practice still practiced today. He attended the 1952 Winter Meeting in St. Louis as the chapter delegate to the Chapters Conference Committee. The elected secretary did not attend the meeting, therefore, the chairman appointed Bill as the acting secretary. At the close of the meeting, he was elected secretary for the following year and then he became chairman of the committee in 1953-54. These were the first official Society positions held by Mr. Collins. It is interesting that Frank X. Loeffler, Jr., the son of one of the founding fathers of the chapter, followed Bill as chapter president in 1953.

The name of the Society was changed from ASHVE to ASHAE in 1954, and during the same time,

discussions were held in the Council about increasing membership and chapters, finally voting to adopt a Regional Plan with the society divided into regions. However, there was concern that regional meetings would be unsuccessful. The Oklahoma Chapter offered to host a trial regional meeting. The meeting was held in April 1955, during Gordon Ervin’s term as chapter president, with who else but Bill Collins as Chairman of the meeting and probably the person suggesting the Oklahoma Chapter sponsor it in the first place.

The events to this point in time were a strong indication of the leadership and vision of Bill Collins. When he joined an organization or took on an assignment, it was full steam ahead and he enjoyed and expected those around him to get on the bandwagon. He liked to see others succeed as well as himself. It was, “Lead, follow or get out of the way”.

No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.

Abraham Lincoln

Bill, I consider you my number one constructive critic.

Walter Spiegel
Society President, 1972-73

Chapter 3

THE 1955 CRC AND REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TO 1964

Bill, and a blue ribbon committee consisting of G.T. Donceel, John Carnahan, Floyd Denham, Bud Loeffler, Joe Patton, Arnold Shelley, Marion Cohenour, Lewis Wickline, and Earle Gray, organized the trial Regional Meeting which was a resounding success and proved to be a model for years to come, especially in Region VIII. More than half of the Society chapters were represented with 240 members and guests from 18 states, the District of Columbia and Canada present. There were business meetings, technical sessions, entertainment and social events.

John E. Haines, the Society President, was present as well as other prominent Society members. A novel honor was bestowed on Mr. Haines, after the banquet dinner, when Chief Jasper Saunkeah, and wife, in full Indian dress, named him Chief Gome-Pau Toa-Keah, “man who controls the weather,” Figures 1 and 2. This tradition was reenacted at a later Regional meeting in Oklahoma City. Other group photos are shown in, “History Recalled 1895 – 1955”, Central Oklahoma Chapter, ASHRAE, April 1995.



Figure 1. Society President (Chief) John Haines and Chief Jasper Saunkeah and Wife.



Figure 2. Chief Gome-Pau Toa-Keah; Society President John Haines, 1955.

The Society was divided into eight Regions in 1955 with Region VI comprised of Texas (except El Paso), Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas and the northwest corner of Louisiana, excluding Shreveport. The first Chapter Regional Conference for Region VI was held in Dallas, TX in March 1956 and the second CRC was in Tulsa, OK in May 1957 with Dan Mills as Regional Director both years. Arnold Shelley was Chapter President in 1958 when Frank X. Loeffler was recognized as a Society Life Member. He had actually been a member for 44 years, Figure 3.

Bill was a great supporter of the CRC's and his presence was always evident. It is thought that the tremendous success of the trial meeting convinced him of the importance of a good organizational structure of the Society with participation of as many members as possible to advance its goals and objectives. Although he had a strong technical background, he left that to others while he worked diligently to provide the vehicle to advance the art and science of HVAC&R. This was also evident in his work with other professional societies, to be outlined later.

He was a member of the nominating committee in 1955, 1965-68 and 1976-78 and always had considerable influence on that committee. He was a member and chairman of the publications committee until 1957 and was continually involved in Society affairs thereafter. Bill was Regional Director of Region VI, 1959-61, and of Region VIII, 1961-63, which made him a member of the BOD of the Society. He was always much involved in regional and chapter affairs. The Central Oklahoma Chapter was, again, challenged in 1963 as it was their turn to host the Region VIII CRC.



Figure 3. Chapter President Arnold Shelley Presenting Life Member Award to Frank X. Loeffler, 1958.

Again, it was a huge success with very good attendance including: Society President John Fox, Treasurer James May, and Vice-Presidents Frank Faust and John Dube. Bill Collins was Regional Director at the time. Bill was always able to attract Society dignitaries to CRCs and chapter meetings as well, Figure 4.

At the CRC in Dallas, April 1964, Bill was recognized for his outstanding leadership as Regional Director, 1959-63, with a plaque indicating the chapters in both Region VI and VIII. George Meffert, Regional Director, a great admirer of Collins, remarked in his presentation, "If the Society could have a Vice-President in charge of Regions, Bill Collins should have the job", Figure 5.

ASHAE and ASRE merged to form ASHRAE in 1959 and it was about this time when Arthur Hess, Society President asked Bill to draft a proposal for the Distinguished Service Award which was presented to the Honors and Awards Committee and the award was born. John Dube, Society President in 1964, solicited Bill's help in devising the ALCO Award and Bill Holladay, President in 1968, asked him for help in drafting the Louise and Bill Holladay award. Bill was a great believer in awards and always made sure that deserving persons were recognized as they became eligible.

In about 1960, the ASHRAE Research Laboratory in Cleveland, Ohio was closed in favor of contracting research to others, mainly colleges and universities. Surprisingly, Bill, a member of the BOD, was opposed to that decision; however, he stood by the BOD's decision and expressed the prevailing opinion in following appearances. Later, he admitted that he was wrong, remained a strong advocate of research, and worked diligently in that regard.

Although this story is about Bill Collins and ASHRAE, it is important to note that while he diligently devoted so much time and effort to that organization, he was also very active in the Oklahoma and National Societies of Professional Engineers from 1959 to 1980 and the Consulting Engineers Councils of Oklahoma and America from 1953 to 1967. He served on numerous committees, boards of directors, and executive committees of all those organizations as well as President of OSPE and CECO.

Floyd R. Denham, a close personal friend and prominent chapter member, died unexpectedly in the fall of 1963, leaving his wife and children. Bill and wife, Anne, maintained a close relationship with Mabel Denham and her children in following years. This resulted in the establishment of the Floyd R. Denham Memorial Scholarship in Mechanical Engineering at Oklahoma State University in the Spring of 1964.

Although technically established by the Chapter, Bill and John Carnahan were the main source of funds. The first award was to David Hullender in the Fall of 1964. Bill was usually present for the presentation each year, Figure 6.



Figure 4. Region VIII Director Collins, Treasurer James May, President John Fox, Vice-President Frank Faust and Vice-President John Dube, CRC, OKC, 1963.



Figure 5. George Meffert Presenting Regional Award to Bill Collins, 1964.



Figure 6. Bill Collins and Faye McQuiston Presenting Denham Scholarship Award to Robert Lemke, 1973.

The stature of Bill Collins continued to grow during his tenure on the Society Board of Directors and his service as Regional Director, noted above. He immediately advanced into the rotation to become Society President. However, in 1964, while Vice-

President, his wife Anne became seriously ill with a terminal disease and Bill stepped aside to devote more time to the needs of Anne. She passed away sometime later in that decade.

I will not allow any, "so move", motions — write them out — read them and give the written copy to the secretary.

Nat Hunter

No one should ever deny an official request of Bill Collins.

George Jackins
Society President, 1998-99

Chapter 4

A MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME – 1964 TO 1973

Following the tragic loss of his wife, Bill returned to his Society and Business work. In 1965, he received the Distinguished Service Award, presented by Society President John Dube in Tulsa, OK and, in 1966, he became a Fellow when James May was President. During the ensuing years, to 1972, Collins served on every major Society committee including Long Range Planning, Research & Technical, Finance (2 times), Nominating, Honors & Awards, Publishing and Research Promotion.

For many years after the founding of the North Eastern Oklahoma Chapter in Tulsa, it was the practice

to have a joint meeting with the Central Oklahoma Chapter, with alternating locations. These were always momentous events with some sort of practical jokes. During one of these events in Oklahoma City, in 1968, announcement of Tulsa as the winner of the attendance contest resulted in Jay Hambrick, Tulsa chapter president, shoving a pie in the face of Lewis Wickline, Oklahoma City chapter president. Strangely, another pie appeared and Wickline returned the favor. Only after some begging, Bill Collins avoided the same fate, Figures 7 and 8.

According to Bill Collins, the discussion that resulted in the Region VIII Golden Gavel Award began at the ASHRAE Winter Meeting in Columbus, OH, in 1968, when Jack Thompson, Regional Director of Region VIII, discussed with George Meffert the need for improved chapter operations with some sort of competition. The award was to have about twelve criteria judged by a committee of five. Bill was to be Chairman without a vote and left with the task of actually putting the award into action, hoping that the idea might spread to other regions thus improving chapter operations throughout the Society as indeed it did. The award exceeded all expectations and has become a hotly contested competition in the region to this day. The award consists of a gold plated gavel, a



Figure 7. Lewis Wickline and Ray Hambrick, Joint Chapter Meeting, 1968.



Figure 8. Wickline, Hambrick and Collins, Joint Chapter Meeting, 1968.



Figure 9. Bill Collins Presenting First Golden Gavel to Lewis Wickline, 1968.

traveling trophy, and a diamond studded Past Presidents pin with a miniature golden gavel attached. The first award was made in the spring of 1968 to none other but the Central Oklahoma Chapter when Lewis Wickline was president, Figure 9. By 1989, the Central Oklahoma Chapter had won the award 11 out of 22 years and there was some feeling that Bill was influencing the judging so he resigned and was given the title of "Honorary Chair". The Central Oklahoma Chapter still won 3 out of the next 4 years. A proud event, that year, was the presentation of the Fifty Year Member Award to Frank X. Loeffler, Sr. by Bill Collins. Actually, Mr. Loeffler had been a member for 54 years at that time and was a founding chapter member, Figure 10. Frank Bridgers, President-Elect in 1970, in attendance at the Region VIII CRC, was so impressed that during his term as Society President he instituted the Presidential Award of Excellence in the Society which was very similar to the Golden Gavel Award. The Central Oklahoma Chapter won the first PAOE in 1971. Bridgers later

visited the Central Oklahoma Chapter when Bill Collins presented him with a Golden Gavel, Figure 11.

It seemed that Bill Collins was responsible for, or behind, almost all outstanding programs in the Region; however, Jack Thompson organized the first Region VIII Monday evening dinner in Kansas City during the Annual Meeting of the Society in 1970. These dinners became very popular with Bill Collins, a great supporter, because he loved social affairs and he later made use of the dinners for some Research Promotion, discussed later.

Bob Vermillion was a devoted chapter member with a number of novel ideas to benefit the Chapter and Society. While Membership Chairman, as one of his most successful ideas in recruiting new members, he presented a duck to Chapter President Bill Flynn with instructions to pass it on after signing up a new member with the chain to continue, Figure 12. Twenty-four new members quickly signed up and, ultimately, over 60 submitted applications.

Perhaps the most significant and far reaching program (with the most dramatic effect on the objectives of the Society) was Research Promotion of which Bill Collins was the chief architect. In a handwritten account of his involvement, to Faye McQuiston in 1984, he described it as follows: It started at the ASHRAE Winter Meeting in Philadelphia in 1971 and specifically during the welcome party at the Franklin Institute in the company of Frank Bridgers, Society President. President Bridgers made sure that Bill was enjoying himself and, as he described it, "he lowered the boom on me," and said, "I've got a job for you that I think only Bill Collins can handle satisfactorily". Bill said, "what's that?", and Frank replied, "Research Promotion". The discussion continued with President Bridgers explaining that, since the closing of the laboratory in Cleveland, the research promotion effort was not doing well. The program was



Figure 10. Bill Collins Presenting 50 Year Member Award to Frank X. Loeffler, 1968.



Figure 11. President Collins Presenting a Golden Gavel to Past President Frank Bridgers, Chapter Meeting, 1975.



Figure 12. Membership Chairman Bob Vermillion, C.D. (Bud) Miller, Marion Cohenour, and Famous Duck, 1972.

not stimulating members to contribute and at present were trying to reach a goal of \$5.00 per member or \$125,000.00 per year and were only reaching about 20 percent of that. Bill indicated that if that was all they wanted, his talents were not needed. Sensing that he had him hooked, Bridgers asked what kind of goal would be a challenge. Bill immediately answered, “at least \$500,000 per year within five years. This seemed to please Frank so he asked Bill to develop a program and budget, and present it to the Executive Committee at the April 1971 meeting.

Bill went back to Oklahoma City, assembled all the information he could, and developed a plan and structure basically as it exists today. He decided to attend the Region X CRC in San Diego since President Bridgers was to be there so that he could get the reaction to his plan from both Frank and the Region. Well, the reaction by the Region was highly negative but, undaunted, Bill headed back to the Region VIII CRC being held at the same time, in San Antonio, where his program was much more acceptable. He then headed for Albuquerque for the Executive Committee meeting.

Bill presented his plan for a Research Promotion Program that in essence requested two Vice-Chairmen, one East and one West, a Chairman for each Region and a Chairman for every chapter. He planned for a one-day workshop in each Region with attendance by the RP Vice-Chairmen, the Regional Chairman and the chapter chairmen with the Regional Director invited, all with travel expenses paid. A budget for the ten meetings was presented. The first reaction of ExCom was that the BOD would never go for it and the budget was too high. Bill’s reply was, “well just forget it, President Bridgers asked me what it would take to be successful and that’s it”. After further discussion, the plan was accepted and presented to the BOD where it was approved. John Seelaus of Philadelphia accepted the position of Vice-Chairman East and Bill Johnson of Oklahoma City became Vice-Chairman West. During the Presidency of Stan Gilman, 1971-72, the planned Regional Research Promotion meetings were held, all in less than 60 days. Bill did an awful lot of traveling during that time. He presented a report to ExCom in New York, in April 1972, along with all his travel

vouchers with instructions they be paid to the Research Promotion Fund. This became a standard practice of Collins. The results of the program didn’t quite measure up to his expectations and it took a little longer than five years to reach the half million per year goal but Bill only ran the program the first two years. Sometime later, Frank Bridgers stated that the best thing he did as Society President was to put Bill Collins in charge.

Bill gave up his official position of Research Promotion Chairman at the end of 1972 as he was about to become a Society Vice-President and begin a new path to the Society Presidency; however, he never relaxed his support for ASHRAE research. He traveled and spoke on many occasions and worked diligently in Region VIII and the Central Oklahoma Chapter, always leaders in the fund raising effort.

Region VIII Monday night dinners often became fund raising affairs. One of the first of these was in Los Angeles in January 1974 when, after Bill’s usual pitch for RP, Jack Thompson, sometimes referred to as *Collins’ Hatchet Man*, turned to Damon Gowan and said, “I’ll give \$1000 to RP if you will”, at which time Damon said, “OK, I will if Bob Vermillion will give \$1000. This, of course, encouraged others and about five signed up with some others pledging smaller amounts. This activity carried on for many meetings. Damon was Regional RP chairman from 1977 to 1980 and served on the RP ExCom from 1980 to 1983 and was chairman in 1983-84. Starting in 1980, Bill and Damon had a standing wager concerning which chapter would raise the most RP money per member. The Central Oklahoma Chapter seemed to always win, with one notable exception, almost to the point of embarrassment for Bill; however, at the Regional Dinner in 1984, Collins acknowledged the excellent job Damon did as RP Chairman. Damon Gowan and Bob Vermillion became some of the most prominent research promotion people in the region and Society. Bob Vermillion was especially active in the chapter and picked up the load from Bill Collins as he became less active in advancing years. Bill was justifiably proud that the Research Program was such a success and he was particularly proud that Region VIII was a leader in the Society.

I will do anything to help you if you will accept the nomination for President of the Society.

Jack Thompson

Chapter 5

ON TO THE ASHRAE PRESIDENCY

It seems that whenever an issue was under discussion or an idea was needed Bill would come up with something. At the Annual Meeting of the Society in Louisville in the Summer of 1973, when Bill was a Vice-President, there was a discussion about splitting the Guide and Data Book into several volumes. There already was a Handbook of Fundamentals so there was a problem in what to name the new volumes. Bill suggested that since the Fundamentals book was called a Handbook, why not name the whole series Handbooks with different names such as Systems, Equipment, etc. The suggestion was immediately accepted and the books are so named to this day.

During the following years, Bill worked diligently on the Society Executive Committee, visiting CRCs and chapter meetings constantly promoting Research Funding, Energy Conservation and Education. Bill did not feel comfortable attending Society functions alone and invited his sister, Dorothy, to accompany him to the Annual Meeting in Nassau in 1972. Sometime between that meeting and the Winter Meeting in 1973, he married Mabel Denham and adopted her children. Bill became President-Elect of the Society for 1974-75. Two notable events that year were the Region VIII CRC in Dallas, April 1975, and the Region X CRC in Honolulu also that spring, Figure 13.

William J. Collins, Jr. was installed as Society President at the Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts in 1975. His inaugural address was one of his finest speeches. The country was in the midst of a terrible energy situation and Bill devoted the entire

speech to that subject with his Presidential Theme, "Commitment". He stressed that it is not enough to just do a satisfactory job but we must be committed to going that extra mile to do an excellent job. Congratulations poured in from all over ASHRAE and many other professional societies and companies with many news releases. Bill was a very popular choice for the Society's President.

The dire energy situation in the country was the most immediate issue to address. An Ad Hoc Energy Conservation Committee was formed by Rod Kirkwood in 1973-74 to develop an energy standard for new buildings that was to be completed during the administration of David Rickelton during 1974-75. However, there was much controversy and the work was still dragging on in the spring of 1975, much to President Rickelton's dismay and embarrassment. In April of that year, Bill Collins, then President Elect, and Bill Chapman, slated to become President Elect, visited a standard 90 committee meeting to try to speed up the process. The committee questioned why they were there and Collins emphatically explained that as President-Elect he was an ExOfficio member of all ASHRAE committees and was entitled to be there. He further went on to emphasize the critical need for the standard and they could work forever and never reach complete consensus or perfection. Bill flatly stated that a recommended standard must be ready for the Annual Meeting in June and, if that didn't happen, Bill Chapman was in favor of appointing a completely new committee to take over the work. The recommendation came forward and Standard 90-75, Energy Conservation in New Buildings, was adopted in 1975.

One of the most divisive issues in the development of Std 90 related to the origin of energy, namely natural gas and electricity. The gas people wanted the origin to be the wellhead while the electricity people wanted the origin to be at the point of generation, ignoring the cost of transportation. This was not resolved in the initial version of Std 90. Bill traveled extensively, speaking to many different organizations about the energy situation and conservation including the American Gas Association whose feathers he soothed considerably about the origin issue. He was invited to the White House, along with others, for an energy conference.

Two chapters were chartered during his presidency, one in Region I which Bill Chapman attended and the other in Reno, Nevada which he and



Figure 13. President Bill Collins, CRC, Dallas, TX, 1975.

Mabel attended, Figure 14. At a Fort Worth Chapter meeting, he was asked to speak about the energy crisis, and in the course of his talk he commented that “glass buildings as we now know them will be a thing of the past”. The press was present and quoted him, leaving out, *as we now know them*. Bill was severely castigated by the subject TC Chairman, as he was with one of the well known glass manufacturers. Although very busy as Society President, Bill was diligent in attending Region VIII and many Chapter functions, always attracting other Society dignitaries. As Society President, the CRC in 1976 in Tulsa was special; however, the Fort Worth Chapter won the Golden Gavel, Figure 15. A notable appearance was at a joint meeting of the NE Oklahoma Chapter and the Central Oklahoma Chapter in OKC in February 1976. He gave one of his finest speeches entitled, “ASHRAE’s Impact on Today’s World”. He probably used the same speech on other occasions. John Carnahan, a staunch chapter member and life-long friend of Collins, received his Life Member Award at that meeting.

The 1976 Winter Meeting was in Dallas, Texas the Bi-Centennial Year for our country. The dignitaries at the banquet head table were all dressed in Red, White and Blue to highlight the historic year, Figures 16 and 17. This meeting was probably one of the most enjoyable for Bill. When the hall was filled, the band struck up, *The Eyes of Texas*, and the march of those at the head table began. Just as Bill and Mabel appeared, the band quickly changed to, *Oklahoma*, with a loud



Figure 14. President Collins Chartering the Northern Nevada Chapter, Joe Beard President, 1975.



Figure 16. President Bill Collins, Winter Meeting, Dallas, TX, 1976.



Figure 15. President Collins Presenting the Golden Gavel to Joe Romine, Ft. Worth Chapter, 1976.



Figure 17. President Bill Collins and Wife Mabel, Winter Meeting, Dallas, TX, 1976.

cheer from the large OKC delegation. In later years, when asked about his most emotional moment during his ASHRAE career, Bill recalled this event. It is a little known fact that the first effort to provide continuing education materials to members was approved by the BOD at this meeting. However, there were organized seminars and workshops, as needed, such as those to aid in application of Std 90-75. A young college professor, Chairman of the Education Committee, took a proposal from the Education Committee to the BOD for development of some correspondence materials, requesting only a few hundred dollars. Standing committees reported directly to the BOD in those days. Well, the Board dressed him down quite thoroughly and Collins asked some hard questions but supported the proposal and the funds were approved. From that time on, the Society's continuing education program grew rapidly.

This piece about Collins' Presidential Year would not be complete without recalling his very close friendship with Bill Chapman that began in the early 1970s and intensified when Collins became President and Chapman was President-Elect. They worked closely together and often met socially in Oklahoma City, Milwaukee and Chicago. Their wives always accompanied them when they took post-meeting vacations in Canada, Mexico, Missouri, Minnesota and Hawaii. Bill Chapman's wife, Beth, was one of the few people that knew all three of Bill's wives.

Bill Collins wound up his Presidential year at the Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington in June 1976. Most Society presidents seem happy when their term is over, but Bill seemed a little sad yet glad his good friend, Bill Chapman, was taking over. He really enjoyed being President. In his final report, he referred to his theme, *Commitment*, and noted that the Presidential Award of

Excellence had improved chapter performance, research contributions had increased by 12 percent to about \$325,000 from the previous year with the resulting expansion in sponsored research. The approval of Std 90-75 and the following seminar program was noted as especially important. He noted the many awards given for outstanding achievement in various areas. All of these were attributed to willingness of members to commit themselves to their work. One particularly special moment, not in his report, was the presentation of the Homer Adams Award to Kevin F. O'Brien, a graduate student at Oklahoma State University who, incidentally, had received the Floyd Denham Scholarship at OSU the previous year. Bill was devoted to OSU. Bill and Mabel returned to OKC but his ASHRAE work was far from over. It was during his Presidential year that Collins Engineering merged with Soter Engineering to form Collins-Soter Engineering, Inc., Figure 18.



Figure 18. Collins-Soter Engineering Officers, Ray Howell, Jim McKinney, Collins, Soter, Richard Ellis.

I learned not to argue with Bill Collins.

Neil Patterson
Society President, 1993-94

Chapter 6

POST-PRESIDENCY

It seemed that Bill Collins had just hit full stride by the end of his term as Society President. He was continually requested to attend chapter and regional meetings, fill in for following presidents on important assignments and respond to requests for advice. A notable appearance following his term as president was an energy conference organized by the Arkansas Chapter during Engineering Week in April 1977. Also attending was U.S. President-to-be Ronald Reagan, the keynote speaker, Society President Bill Chapman, President-Elect Bruno Morabito, Presidential Member and presidents of nine other professional societies. Many of Collins' appearances were in support of ASHRAE Research Funding, an effort he never shirked. On another occasion, he asked Faye McQuiston, an ExCom member to represent him in Albuquerque at a retirement recognition event for Presidential Member, Frank Bridgers. He had scheduled a research promotion appearance on the same date. This was an indication of Bill's dedication to research promotion, as Bridgers was a close and valued friend. Over the next few years, he served as Vice-Chair and Chairman of the Society Nominating Committee, chaired the Long Range Planning Committee and the Energy Council. He was active in the College of Fellows and the Life Members Club and the Honors and Awards Committee for years.

Bill was a staunch believer in solid performance in chapter and regional activities as a prerequisite to Society leadership, especially as related to the BOD and ExCom. He especially cultivated this belief in Region VIII which led to a number of Region VIII Directors becoming Society President. His term on the Nominating Committee, and the fact that Bill Chapman followed him, greatly influenced the makeup of Society leadership for some time. Morris Backer and Hugh McMillan were the Region VIII directors from 1970 to 1975 and were moving into the rotation, resulting in Backer being President in 1978 and McMillan following in 1979. Even after his term on the Nominating Committee, Bill's input was well received, resulting in Damon Gowan rising to the presidency in 1990 and Bill Goodman in 1999, both having been Region VIII directors.

The 1977 Annual Meeting was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a most unusual meeting due to the remote location and travel difficulties. However, it was most enjoyable. The lobster boil on the beach was outstanding; the unusually long invocation by the local Anglican Priest at the banquet was a long after topic of

conversation. Cornish hen was on the menu and Bill and Mabel commented on how they seemed to be on a steady diet of chicken in their travels. Don Nichols, seated at the same table, whispered in a waiter's ear that the Collins were allergic to fowl and asked if he could arrange something else. Later, two very nice prime rib dinners were placed in front of them. They were the envy of the group. Not long after that meeting, Mabel was diagnosed with a terminal illness and passed away shortly thereafter.

Even though Bill continued to travel extensively, he rarely missed a Central OK Chapter meeting and often attracted friends from other chapters to attend as well. The spring golf tournaments and barbecues were very popular and well attended at that time. A notable one occurred in June 1978 when Bill invited Morris Backer, Hugh McMillan and Jack Thompson to attend. They accepted with the proviso that Collins would also play. He did—the only time anyone could remember him picking up a club, Figures 19 and 20. A memorable chapter meeting occurred sometime in 1979, during Chuck Callahan's year as chapter president. Someone, probably Bob Vermillion, invited Jack Thompson from Dallas, and some others, to roast Collins. George Soter, Vermillion, Louis Nettleship, Harry Rountree and Clint Miller were all in on the fun. An enlarged photo of Bill swinging a golf club, taken at the golf tournament mentioned above, hung on the wall behind the head table. Bill, having found out about the event, took it all in good fun and proceeded to return the favor to each one, well prepared ahead of time, Figures 21, 22 and 23.



Figure 19. Bill Collins, Morris Backer, Hugh McMillan and Jack Thompson, OKC, 1978.



Figure 20. Hugh McMillan Bill Collins and Jack Thompson, OKC, 1978.



Figure 22. Jack Thompson Roasting Collins, Chapter Meeting, OKC, Fall 1979.



Figure 21. Bill Collins Responding to Roast, Chapter Meeting, OKC, Fall 1979.



Figure 23. Bob Vermillion, Louis Nettleship, Collins, Harry Rountree, Bud Miller, George Soter, Jack Thompson and Lewis Carter, Roast, OKC, Fall 1979.

Bill continued attending Society, Regional and Chapter meetings—always in demand as an emcee or as a speaker—when he could Promote Research funding. He was always a great supporter of OSU, going back to his earliest days in the Oklahoma Chapter when the student branch at OSU asked him to speak at a meeting in Stillwater, in about 1950. Some history of HVAC education at OSU is injected here because of Bill's interest and desire that such a program exist. Bob Erwin, a faculty member in Mechanical Engineering, died in the early 1960s, leaving a complete void of any semblance of a HVAC program, except an Extension short course taught by volunteers, many from the Central OK Chapter, chiefly Bill Johnson and Richard Ellis. Faye McQuiston returned to the Mechanical Engineering faculty in 1962 as Laboratory Director where his practical education and interest in HVAC was kindled in learning to operate the gas fired chiller and

other miscellaneous cooling equipment, becoming acquainted with Bill Johnson at Federal Corporation. However, Faye did not become an ASHRAE member at that time but did help select and present the first Denham Scholarship Awardee, David Hullender, to the chapter in 1964. He took leave in 1967 to pursue his doctorate at the Herrick Laboratory, Purdue University, returning to the faculty in 1969, immediately designing and teaching an HVAC course and starting a research program. Bill Johnson quickly signed him up as an ASHRAE member. Faye also assumed a leadership role with the HVAC short course mentioned above. This amounted to the revival of the HVAC program at OSU, pleasing Bill Collins no end and kindling their friendship. In following years, considerable funding from ASHRAE was funneled back to the program, much to the pleasure of Bill Collins.

Bill and Carlen, his third wife, were married during late summer 1981. Shortly thereafter, he was elected to the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology Hall of Fame at OSU and was inducted on November 19, 1981. Bill considered this to be one of his greatest honors. He was not a graduate of OSU—not even educated in Oklahoma—but he loved OSU and supported it in every way he could. Also, he was delighted that the HVAC program was going so well. His acceptance speech was something to behold. According to him, OSU ranked right up there with MIT and Cal Tech and the leadership, from the president on down to the faculty, was the finest to be found. Bill and Carlen never missed the annual Hall of Fame Banquet until health issues prevented it many years later.

To honor his outstanding contributions to the Society's Research Promotion program, an award was established in 1984 entitled, "The William J. (Bill) Collins, Jr. ASHRAE Research Promotion Award". The award was to be given to the Chapter Research Promotion Chairman raising the most money per member during the Society year. Bill was usually on hand to present the award each year.

In 1985, the Central Oklahoma Chapter's 50th Anniversary, the chapter hosted the Region VIII CRC at the recently refurbished Skirvin Hotel—the same location as the 1955 Trial Regional meeting. Bill vowed that it would be one of the grandest ever and worked diligently in the background to make sure many dignitaries attended, including Society President, Robert (Bob) McDonald. Also attending were Presidential Members: Rickelton, Morabito and Backer, Figure 24. Carolyn Crawford was the chapter president, Bill Ferguson, Sr. was the CRC chairman and Damon Gowan was Regional Director, Figure 25. Since it was the 50th anniversary of the chapter, the registration fee was set at \$50. The social, technical, business and award events were outstanding. President McDonald was made an honorary chief of the Kiowa tribe ("Man Who Flies With the Eagles") and presented with a beautiful Indian headdress by Bud Saunkeah, Figure 26. Earle Gray, one of the last living members of the original organizers of the chapter, was presented with a 50 Year Member Award, Figure 27. Harry Rountree received his Fellow Award, Bill Collins was presented with a Research Promotion Medal and at the conclusion



Figure 24. Presidential Members Bill Collins, Morris Backer, Bruno Morabito, David Rickelton and President Bob McDonald, CRC, OKC, 1985.



Figure 26. Chief Bob McDonald and Bud Saunkeah, CRC, OKC, 1985.



Figure 25. Region VIII Director Damon Gowan, CRC, OKC, 1985.



Figure 27. President McDonald Presenting 50 Year Member Award to Earle Gray, CRC, OKC, 1985.

of the meeting he accepted a 50 Year Commendation Certificate, recognizing the contributions to the Society by the chapter, Figure 28.



Figure 28. Presidential Member Bill Collins, CRC, OKC, 1985.

Bill Collins is Mr. ASHRAE, don't you agree.

Dick Charles
Society President, 1992-93

Chapter 7

THE GLORY YEARS

In 1990, the Annual Meeting was in St. Louis and Bill was the Emcee at the President's Luncheon when he had the honor of installing Damon Gowan as President of ASHRAE. Damon was a favorite of Bill, having distinguished himself as a leader in Research Promotion and as Region VIII Director. Later in 1991, Damon appointed a Presidential Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Collins, to investigate and make a recommendation about creating a Foundation for ASHRAE Research. After much deliberation, the committee decided that a separate foundation for research was not needed but one Society Foundation to cover education, other elements and research was viable. The Foundation was formally created with Damon as the initial chairman and Bill Collins as a member, along with mostly past presidents as members. Ultimately, all the emphasis was placed on education, ignoring research much to the dismay of Bill. However, he later acknowledged that research did not suffer and continued to thrive. Altogether, Bill served the ASHRAE Foundation on the founding committee and as a trustee from 1991 to 1997.

During the chapter presidency of B.H. Prasad, in 1992, the Chapter Hall of Fame was created. Bill Collins, revered very highly by B.H. and everyone else, was the first person inducted, on December 14, 1992. Since that date, many other prominent chapter members have been inducted.

Bill was awarded the Andrew T. Boggs Service Award at the Plenary Session of the Society's Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado in 1993. The award is given to a person who previously received the Distinguished Service Award for *continuing, unselfish, dedicated, and distinguished service to the Society*. The certificate was signed by Richard A. Charles, Society President.

In about 1989, Neil Patterson, Chairman of the Member Council, appointed a sub-committee to develop a plan for the Society's Centennial Celebration in 1995 with Bill Collins as Chairman. An extensive number of projects were suggested, and a status report (about one-fourth inch thick) was submitted in 1993 that defined the activities. Richard A. Charles, Society President in 1992-93 appointed the ASHRAE Centennial Committee with Presidential Member, Louis Flagg as Chairman. The committee, mostly Presidential Members (including Collins), were charged with producing a permanent record of the Society's 100 years of progress and accomplishments. Bill was the member

with the longest tenure in ASHRAE and a most valuable resource. A hardback book of over 250 pages of text and photos resulted entitled, *Proclaiming the Truth*. Needless to say, the Centennial Year was a resounding success. It so happened that the Region VIII CRC for spring 1995 was hosted by the Central OK Chapter, the 60th anniversary of the chapter. For this occasion, Bill Collins and Bob Vermillion, chapter historian, produced the 60 year history of the chapter entitled, *History Recalled*. Chapter One of that writing actually begins by reviewing the Society's history from 1895 to 1935 when the Oklahoma Chapter was chartered. Bill had given a chapter program on that period previously. In June 1995, Members of the Centennial Committee were recognized by President Billy Manning for their outstanding work.

The San Francisco Winter Meeting, in 1998, was especially rewarding for Bill and Carlen Collins as Bill received the F. Paul Anderson Award, the highest honor given by the Society to a living member. He was so happy that daughter, Charlotte and her husband, J. Conley Merideth, were present as well as many Oklahoma City members including B.H. Prasad and Bob and Bonnie Vermillion. His selection for this award was very popular throughout the Society. In his acceptance remarks, he was humble and quoted Jack Benny saying, "I don't deserve this honor – but then, I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either". He went on to praise the Society and to acknowledge all the wonderful friends and opportunities it had afforded him, Figures 29, 30, 31 and 32. Of course, some of Bill's friends could not be present. Two of the best were Bill Chapman and Jack Thompson both of whom had passed away some years previously. Bill Chapman has been noted earlier in this story but Jack Thompson needs further recognition.

Jack was a staunch supporter of Collins. He was Region VIII Director from 1967 to 1969 and also a previous Director of Region IX. Jack had many friends and adversaries as well. However, he referred to Bill as his, "one true friend". His goal was always perfection and he didn't mind leaning hard on someone to achieve it. He didn't mind being the devil's advocate and, as a result, many misunderstood his intentions. A young professor remembers how Jack supported him in securing ASHRAE research funding while lecturing him in private about his shortcomings. Jack and wife Pollie frequently socialized with Bill and Carlen and Bill delivered the tribute to Jack at his memorial service.

The Distinguished 50 Year Member Award was presented to Bill Collins by George Jackins, Society President at the Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington in 1999, Figure 33. This award differs from the regular 50 Year Award in that the recipient must have been a

past president, Fellow or Distinguished Service Award recipient. Bill Goodman, from Little Rock, was President-Elect and Don Holte the immediate Past President, Figure 34. George Jackins once said, "No one should ever deny a request of Bill Collins."



Figure 29. President Don Holte Presenting the F. Paul Anderson Award to Bill Collins, San Francisco, 1998.



Figure 32. Bill and Carlen Collins with Bob and Bonnie Vermillion, FPA Award, San Francisco, 1998.



Figure 30 Bill and Carlen Collins, F. Paul Anderson Award, San Francisco, 1998.

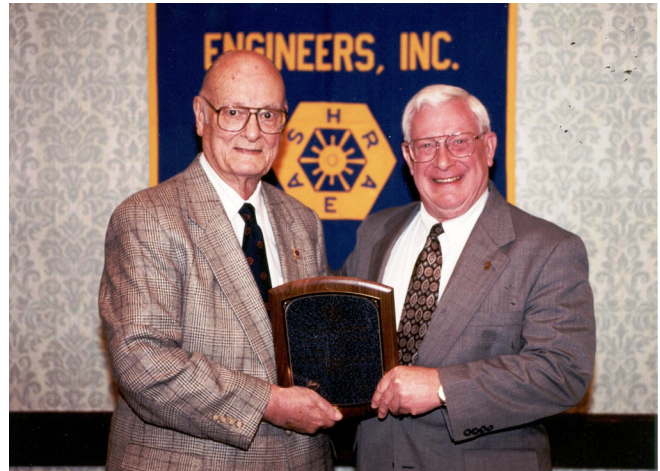


Figure 33. President George Jackins Presenting Bill Collins with the Distinguished 50 Year Member Award, Seattle, WA, 1999.



Figure 31. Bill and Carlen Collins with Daughter Charlotte and Husband J. Conley Meridith, FPA Award, San Francisco, 1998.



Figure 34. Pres-Elect Bill Goodman, Presidential Member Bill Collins, President George Jackins, Presidential Member Don Holte, Seattle, WA, 1999.

The rigors of attending Society Meetings and the associated travel were becoming difficult for Bill but he continued to be active in the College of Fellows, Life Members Club and the Honors and Awards Committee until the Winter Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in January 2001, when he asked for time to address the BOD at their Sunday meeting. He announced that he had just attended his last Sunday luncheon with the directors and stated that time had overtaken him and he needed to curtail his travels. Since 1949, he had attended over 100 meetings and worked with many devoted men and women in the pursuit of the Society's goals for the benefit of the general public. He acknowledged making many of his closest and dearest friends, some in the room at that time, in ASHRAE. He extended his best wishes for the future. It must have been a very emotional time.

Well, Bill only retired from attending Society meetings and kept active at home, attending Chapter meetings and working with the local Research Promotion Chairman, making calls, etc. Bob Vermillion picked up the Research Promotion banner and together they were a force in raising money. By about 2003, at age 88, Bill's health was rapidly declining along with his activities. During the year 2002-2003 fund raising for the Society totaled \$1.42 million, a tidy sum as a result of his lifelong commitment to Research Promotion. Both Bill and Bob would have been pleased to know that Bob Vermillion would be awarded the William J. Collins, Jr. Research Promotion award, posthumously, in 2010 for the 2009-2010 year. Bob passed away on January 10, 2010.

During 2004, the Chapter Scholarship Committee was exploring the possibility of establishing some sort of Scholarship or Fellowship at Oklahoma State University to honor Bill Collins. In early 2005, the Chapter BOG, in association with the OSU Foundation, approved the conversion of the Central Oklahoma Chapter Memorial Scholarship Endowment in Mechanical Engineering at OSU to the William J. Collins Graduate Research Fellowship Endowment with some \$34,000 to be added to the fund. Bill was very pleased when told of this action shortly before death on July 27, 2005.

At a special meeting of the ASHRAE Board of Directors in October 2005, a Resolution was approved, in memory of Bill, recognizing his many contributions benefiting mankind. The resolution was placed in the BOD archives. (*See BOD Resolution on page 23.*)

Formal action to consummate the Collins Endowment Agreement was completed in September 2006. A bronze plaque with Bill's image was placed near the entrance to the School of Mechanical Engineering at OSU and a formal reception was held at OSU with Carlen Collins, Chapter representatives, students and faculty. Establishment of the Fellowship was also featured at a Chapter Meeting in February 2007, attended by Professor Larry Hoberock, Head, School of Mechanical Engineering, OSU, Carlen Collins and a number of ASHRAE wives, Figure 35.



Figure 35. Larry Hoberock, MAE Head, OSU, Carlen Collins, Faye McQuiston, Collins Fellowship Presentation, Chapter Meeting, OKC, 2007.

During 2007, Bob Vermillion, Harry Rountree and Faye McQuiston gathered material and prepared the documentation to nominate Bill Collins for the ASHRAE Hall of Fame. The Nomination documents were submitted to the Honors and Awards Committee on March 14, 2008. Presidential Members Damon Gowan and Bill Goodman submitted supporting letters in April 2008. The Honors and Awards Committee and the BOD approved the nomination and the presentation was scheduled for the Winter Meeting in 2010 in Orlando, Florida. Carlen Collins attended the meeting and accepted the award, Figures 36 and 37.

When asked about his greatest contribution to ASHRAE, Bill replied, "I never really thought about anything other than making all our lives better; however, if I have to be specific, I guess the Research Promotion program has done more than anything else for the betterment of humanity."



Figure 36. President Gordon Holness Presenting Collins ASHRAE Hall of Fame Plaque to Carlen Collins, Orlando, FL, 2009.



Figure 37. Carlen Collins Accepting the Collins ASHRAE Hall of Fame Plaque, Orlando, FL, 2009.

Bill, the best thing I did for ASHRAE when I was President was to appoint you in charge of Research Promotion.

Frank Bridgers
Society President, 1970-71

RESOLUTION

Whereas:

God in His infinite wisdom and mercy has taken from our midst our beloved and esteemed member

William J. Collins Jr.
Presidential Member, Fellow ASHRAE, Life Member

Whose leadership in developing financial support of ASHRAE's research program led to improved technology benefiting the quality of life for people around the world and for which he was recognized through establishment of the Society's William J. Collins Jr. Research Promotion Award;

Who as ASHRAE president in 1975-76, encouraged our membership to commit to personal development so as to help solve the issues facing society;

Who challenged ASHRAE to extend its technical guidance to the industry and the public for the continued conservation of our energy resources; and who launched a wide-ranging educational program to help the design community implement the Society's energy conservation standard;

Who led by example in volunteering for nearly 60 years in numerous and varied roles and to whom the Society presented its highest honor, the F. Paul Anderson Award in recognition of his notable achievement;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

That the Board of Directors of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers at its meeting of October 29, 2006, observes the passing of William Collins with great sorrow and that this official resolution be placed in the records of this Board of Directors' meeting, and that a copy of the same be forwarded to the members of his immediate family.

The following poem, a favorite of Bill's, expresses his philosophy perfectly:

The Bridge Builder
by
Will A. Dromgoole

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
But he turned when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.
“Old man”, said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide—
Why build the bridge at the eventide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head:
“Good friend in the path I have come”, he said,
“There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be,
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.”

* * *

