



## Walter Burns Collier

November 28, 1925 - September 16, 2014

We salute the passing of a man who proved himself for 88 years to be a hero of his family, his faith, and his country. Walter Burns Collier was born to Nancy Hasseltine Burns Collier and Homer Eugene Collier on November 28, 1925 in his Grandmother Burns' home in Cameron, Texas. He was the second of three sons, with an older brother Homer Eugene Collier, Jr. and a younger brother James Robert Collier. The family lived in Mumford, Texas, and the boys graduated from Hearne High School.

Walter began his college education at John Tarleton College, but interrupted his studies to enlist in the U.S. Marines during World War II, where he was attached to the 5th Amphibious Corps, the 2nd Separate Engineering Battalion. When he served on Iwo Jima, he witnessed the American flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi both times, and spent some of his foxhole time writing letters to his high school sweetheart, Margaret Irene Gode "Boots", who was studying at Mary Hardin-Baylor College at the time. After the war ended, he was assigned Occupation Duty in Sasebo, Japan and Tientsin, China. When he returned stateside in 1946, he spent a brief period of time working as a surveyor. He recounted that he literally "walked from Hearne to the Panhandle of Texas" in this job. He married Boots on August 17, 1947 and resumed his college education at Texas A&M University in College Station, graduating in 1950 with a degree in Civil Engineering.

The very next week, he began a 39-year career with the Texas Highway Department. He first worked in Pearsall, then Cotulla, Texas, and was

transferred to San Antonio in 1954, where he rose to the position of District Maintenance Engineer for District 15. A highlight of his career was in 1989, when he was named the recipient of the prestigious Gibb Gilchrist Award for outstanding contributions to Texas transportation. The award cited development of skid resistant surfaces, creation of a tractor with a lower safer center of gravity, and the development of the state's first Ice Plan. Another achievement mentioned was the formation of the Courtesy Patrol, among the first of its kind in Texas.

He was active in Baptist Temple church from 1953 to 1961, where he was ordained a deacon in 1961. He later served faithfully for many years at Castle Hills First Baptist Church as Deacon Chairman twice, chairman of the Building Committee, School Committee, and numerous other committees and leadership positions. In his spare time, he was also an avid hunter and fisherman.

He was married for 33 years to Irene "Boots", who preceded him in death on October 15, 1980. Following her death, he married Lucille Hentzschel Birdsong in 1982, and they were married for 32 years. He is survived by Lucille and by his five children and their spouses: Lesley Gale Collier Wyse and husband Jody, Carolyn Inez Collier, Steven Walter Collier and wife Terri, Robert Eugene Collier and wife Cami, and John David Collier and wife Laurel. Grandchildren are Tamara Dawn Wyse Wells and husband Kacey, Jedediah Matthew Wyse and wife Katie, Cally Lauren Vick, Maggie Lanae Vick, Courtnay Vick Wallen and husband Kevin, Christopher Lee Vick, Jason Steven Collier and wife Amanda, Cassidy Grace Collier, Dalton Burns Collier, Davis Graham Collier, Zachary Avery Collier, and Noah Benjamin Collier. Great-grandchildren are Addison Lee Wells, Macie Kate Wells, Beryl Avonlea Wyse, Colton Jason Collier, and Lyla Kaye Collier.

Walter was also loved by Lucille's children and grandchildren: sons Randle Birdsong deceased and Terry Birdsong, daughter Betsy Engel; grandchildren Deanna Porter and husband Jim, Meggan Birdsong, Aaron Birdsong, Serena Birdsong, Shane Hughes, Corey McCay and husband Richard; great-

grandchildren Ashley, Lilly, Ellie, and Cortese.

#### SERVICES

A visitation will be held at Mission Park North Funeral Chapel in San Antonio from 5 to 7 p.m. on Monday, September 22. The memorial service will be at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, September 23 at Castle Hills First Baptist Church. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Castle Hills First Baptist Church 2220 N.W. Military Hwy., San Antonio, Texas 78213 or to the charity of your choice. The family would like to express appreciation for the tender care given to Walter during his last four years by Daniela and Sam Butuza, Simona and Caesar Amarandei, and Right At Home Senior Care. You may sign the on-line guest book at [www.missionparks.com](http://www.missionparks.com) under the obituary section.