

Michael B. Collins

July 16, 1942 - 4 July 2010, 67

Michael B. Collins, age 67 of Seguin, passed away on July 4, 2010. Private services will be held at a later date. Michael was born on July 16, 1942 in Taft, California to Dee Floyd and Frieda Margaret Kramp Collins. He was a graduate of Seguin High School Class of 1960 and received his bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Texas at Austin. He retired from MI Drilling Fluids where he served as a geologist. He is preceded in death by his father, Msgt. Dee Collins, USAF (ret.). Survivors include his wife, Kathy Collins; mother, Frieda Collins; brother, E. Kirk Collins and wife Nina; sister, Claudia Briell and husband Bobby; nephews and niece, Andrew Ridge, Elliot Briell, Valerie Briell, Max Collins and Nik Collins. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of one's choice. You are invited to sign the guest book at www.treshewell.com. Arrangements are under the direction of Tres Hewell Mortuary, 165 Tor Dr., Seguin, Texas, 78155, 830-549-5912.

Published in the Austin American-Statesman on 7 July 2010

Notes by William R. Elliott, 23 January 2020:

Mike Collins was a geologist-caver at UT in the late 1960s, and his caving wife was Linn Collins. He was a UTG caver who had a big old green Chevy 4 x 4 pickup. He was one of my older heroes back in 1968/69, when I first joined the grotto.

Mike was famous for photographing a tigre (jaguar) on a ledge near the entrance of Sótano del Tigre. People sometimes confused him with Michael Collins, the Texas archaeologist.

Mike's earliest trip with the UTG was to Kerr County in January 1962, where Stiles Roberts, T.R. "Tommy" Evans, Merydith Turner and Mike discovered Streicher Cave, 1000 ft. long, with large rooms. Dick Smith, Terry Raines, Mike Collins, and James Reddell visited O-9 Well on February 17-18, 1962. They spent 9 hours mapping the cave upstream, but went no farther than the top of the first waterfall downstream. In seven hours of actual surveying they mapped 3,400 ft.

In 1967 Mike and Linn were in the Houston Grotto, but he was still in the UTG, as in October Mike Collins and Stiles Roberts took six new cavers to Seeker's [Secret] Cave and T.D.'s Blowhole Cave, near Mountain Home. Mike was able to reach the bottom of a pit previously considered bottomless (about 150 ft.) in Blowhole, where he found a side passage blowing air vigorously, just large enough for his left boot.

Mike did exploration and mapping in the Sierra de El Abra around Ciudad Valles, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, like Sótano de la Tinaja in 1966, where the Collins' Passage was named after him. The first regional project of The Association for Mexican Cave Studies was over Thanksgiving 1967 in the El Abra. He explored and mapped in Sótano del Tigre with John Fish, T.R. Evans, Marsha Meredith, Terry Plemons and Janie Calvert Reddell, and with others in February 1968 (see photos).

A 1968 trip went to Huautla, Oaxaca, with Mike Collins, Don Broussard, David Honea, Meri and John Fish, and a van of Canadians.

Photos on page 2:

Upper left. Mike and Linn Collins photo in the San Angelo Standard-Times, 1965.

Upper right. Mike rigging the entrance of Sótano del Tigre in the Sierra de El Abra, along with James Reddell, Joe Cepeda, Jerry Broadus, Linn Collins, and two guides. Feb. 1, 1968, Robert W. Mitchell.

Bottom. Cavers in the woods near Sótano del Tigre, left to right: Linn Collins, Joe Cepeda, Jerry Broadus, Mike Collins, James Reddell. Feb. 1, 1968, Robert W. Mitchell.

