



J.J. Collmer

Jan Collmer is honored for a lifetime of distinguished service to the community. He is a native of Dallas and a 1952 graduate from Jesuit High School. He is twice a graduate of this institution. He first earned an Associate of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1954 and was a member of the Corps of Cadets. He later returned to The University of Texas at Arlington and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics in 1963.

In 1954, Mr. Collmer enlisted in the Navy, completed flight training and served as a Fighter Pilot. He departed active duty in 1958; but remained active in the Naval Reserves, NAS Dallas until 1966 and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander. His love for aviation continues. An accomplished aviator, he has performed stunt-flying routines at numerous air shows and is a member of the Confederate Air Force, International Council of Air Shows, Experimental Aircraft Association, and the International Aerobatics Club. He is a former Director of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and currently Chairman of the DFW Airport Marketing Committee. As President of the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field, he led the campaign to showcase the history of flight for the metroplex.

His contributions to the community are profound. He is the immediate Past-Chairman of the Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the Board of Advisors of the International Resource Trade Center and is on the Executive Board of the Dallas Council on World Affairs. He has served in a variety of trustee and board positions in educational institutions including The University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas at Dallas, and the University of Dallas. A highly successful businessman, he held key positions at Texas Instruments and was President of Varo, Incorporated before starting his own company. Since

1978, Mr. Collmer has been Founder and President of Collmer Semiconductor, Inc., a Dallas electronics import, marketing, and manufacturing firm.

Mr. Collmer and his wife, Suzanne, reside in Dallas, Texas. They have three daughters, Kathryn, Sheryl and Deborah.

OBITUARY

Mr. Joseph Jan Collmer

Born DECEMBER 6, 1934

The soul of Joseph Jan Collmer took flight one final time as he departed his earthly life on January 13, 2015. He died peacefully at home with his family, nearly a year after being diagnosed with an incurable blood disorder. Jan remained happily engaged in most of his regular activities but the disease caught up. His last months were a stouthearted example of the pristine beauty possible in a soul open to humility and grace.

Jan Collmer was born in Dallas on December 6, 1934 to Joseph G. and Rosemary Collmer. He worked hard to attend Jesuit College Prep, where he learned to be “a man for others.”

In 1954, he earned an Associate’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from Arlington State College, and promptly entered Naval flight training in Pensacola, Florida. He loved the cockpit from the moment he first climbed in.

Jan married his college sweetheart, Suzanne McKeivitt in 1955, and the two moved to Brunswick, Georgia where their first child was born. Jan retired from active duty in 1958 as Lt. Commander and continued as a reserve pilot at NAS Dallas until 1966. He enrolled at UT Arlington and while working days at Texas Instruments and Varo Inc., earned his B.S. in Mathematics in 1963. Hard work and long hours never daunted Jan Collmer.

In 1979, he founded Collmer Semiconductor Inc., which grew from a one-man office into a thriving corporation employing hundreds.

His 50-year business career was complemented by professional and civic associations including Southwest Securities, American Electronics Association, Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Young Presidents Organization, Dallas Council on World Affairs, Rotary, Texans for Lawsuit Reform, Zale Lipshy University Hospital and the Texas Aerospace Commission, among others. He was a board member and chairman of many organizations, most notably Chairman of the Greater Dallas Chamber and the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

Jan believed that education was the key to a successful life and greatly desired to see young people offered a chance at excellence. He personally provided scholarships for individual students and served on the boards of Jesuit College Prep, Ursuline Academy, Dallas County Community College District Foundation, UT Arlington, UT Dallas and the University of Dallas, among others.

Jan was inspired to share the lessons he’d learned during his broad career and in 2012, published a book, “Go Start Something: Live Life on the Edge.”

Jan had the heart of a pilot and was always grateful for the ability to fly. He took up aerobatics as a hobby, then achieved international notoriety for his airshow performances all over the

country. He introduced thousands of enthusiasts to aerobatic flight from the cockpits of his Pitts and Extra 300L aircraft, hoping to ignite their interest in science, math and engineering. He was a member of the Quiet Birdmen, Confederate Air Force, Navy League, Experimental Aircraft Association, International Council of Air Shows and others, serving on the board of many of them.

One of his proudest accomplishments was the creation of the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Dallas Love Field, which he co-founded with William Cooper and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson. He joyfully gave his heart to the Museum and even to his last days, encouraged his nurses and doctors to take their children to visit the collection.

Jan was proud to serve on the UT Southwestern Medical School Board of Visitors, Catholic Foundation, UTD History of Aviation Collection, Dallas Museum of Natural History and his beloved Frontiers of Flight Museum. He was also very devoted to his Junto and Forum groups, associations of many years' duration.

Multitudes of awards were conferred on Jan, including Distinguished Alumnus of both Jesuit and UT Arlington, George Haddaway Aviation Achievement, the Charlie Hillard Aviation Excellence Award and the Award for Special Achievements in Aviation from the International Council of Airshows, among many others.

Jan had a great love of nature, which he passed on to his children, as well as his love of music and art. He was an accomplished artist himself, in watercolor, pencil and ink, as well as brilliant nature photography. He was a gifted storyteller, with an unflagging sense of humor, the undisputed king of joke marathons that sometimes arose when he encountered another jester. To his very last day, he entertained his family and caregivers.

Jan Collmer was an incomparable blessing to all his family and friends around the globe; he gave himself completely to others. In his last days, his exemplary character shone brighter than ever. He is survived by his wife, Suzanne; daughters Kathy Scharplaz, Sheryl Collmer and Deborah Collmer; grandsons Daniel and Thomas Scharplaz; brother Robert and his wife Judy Collmer; beloved in-laws Kenneth Imy, Jerry and Becky McKeivitt; and many close nieces, nephews and their families. He was preceded in death by his parents, and siblings Mary Imy, Alyson Marquett and Stephen Collmer.

His family wishes to express overwhelming gratitude to Dr. Robert Collins and the devoted staff of the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at UT Southwestern who gave such expert and loving care. We are also thankful for the timely help of Faith Hospice and the enduring love and prayers of his many devoted friends.

Memorial Mass on Monday, January 19 at St. Rita Catholic Church, 12521 Inwood Road, Dallas at 10:00 am. In lieu of flowers, the family requests remembrances to Frontiers of Flight Museum, UT Southwestern Hematologic Malignancies Program (PO Box 910888, Dallas, 75391) or Jesuit College Preparatory School.

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/dallas-tx/joseph-collmer-6278479>

