



Danny O. Collins

December 6, 1956 - April 12, 2024

Legacy of Life

Danny O'Keefe Collins was a loving family man and a positive presence and source of light to so many. Raised in the South, he was a military veteran whose service brought him to San Diego, Calif., the sunny city he called home for more than four decades. San Diego is where his two children Natasha and Dimetrus Collins were born and raised, he married his wife, Kathy V. Lewis, reconnected with childhood friends, and built a full life around work, sports, food, music, and fishing.

Danny was born on Dec. 6, 1956, in Richmond, Va. He had nine siblings and was the youngest son of Elreta Gibson Collins and Albert John Collins. Danny attended Armstrong High School in Richmond, where he graduated with the class of 1975.

Growing up on 38th Street in Richmond, Danny had fond memories of the neighborhood Salvation Army Boys Club (SABC). He was a member of SABC, where he found refuge and community and developed his love for sports, basketball in particular. On the court, he played guard, and friends Donald Miller and Herb Doughty, were among his teammates. He was also close with Paul Hobson and Daryl Harris. They loved to sing songs by old-school groups like The O'Jays and The Delfonics. The front of SABC was their

stage. They sang at night after the boys club closed. Danny was always the lead singer with Paul and Daryl backing him up. His childhood buddies remained lifelong friends.

Several years after high school, Danny joined the U.S. Navy on Oct. 31, 1980. Working in aviation maintenance administration and management, his duties included issuing work orders and scheduling aircraft inspections. During his tenure, Danny was eventually stationed in San Diego, but beforehand spent time in the Philippines, and in 1984 found himself in the middle of what could have been a major international incident or worse. Danny was aboard the USS Kitty Hawk, traversing the Sea of Japan when the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier unintentionally collided with a Soviet attack submarine late at night. The 80,000-ton Kitty Hawk sustained negligible damage, but the accident immobilized the 5,200-ton submarine. This was Danny's favorite story when recounting his military experience. It was in the midst of the Cold War and it was a tense and thrilling several days, he said, before the Soviets could dislodge the vessel and tow it home without incident. After nearly eight years of service, Danny was honorably discharged on Jan. 30, 1988.

In San Diego, Danny spent most of his civilian career working for the San Diego County Department of Planning and Development Services in the Code Compliance and Sustainability Planning divisions. Over the course of 19 years, he dealt with building plans and permitting issues, sewage, and well system maintenance in outlying areas, and later focused on water testing for contamination at beaches. He retired in 2018.

Danny loved spending time with his kids and Kathy, who he lovingly called, "Pooh." He regularly went to jazz concerts, out to dinner, and bar hopping with close friends who fondly referred to him as "DOC," an enduring nickname based on his initials. He was also fueled by phone calls home to his family in Richmond and always looked forward to visiting Sacramento to see Kathy's

family, including the Caldwells.

Although Danny was not a regular churchgoer, Kathy is a long-serving member of Bethel A.M.E. Church, where the pastor and congregation admired Danny tremendously. He often helped prepare and serve food at Bethel on special occasions and he felt a connection with the church. In 2019, Danny officially became a member of Bethel.

He always maintained his childhood affinity for basketball. For more than 25 years, from 1992 to 2019, Danny officiated basketball games and counted fellow referees JB (Jim Brown) and David Freeman, among his friends. Danny initially served as a referee at the high school level working with the San Diego County Basketball Officials' Association and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). A talented and dedicated official, Danny was one of the few selected to officiate a state final in Sacramento (June 2006). He was also tapped to officiate college games for the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference. Later, he served as a referee for recreational center games.

Danny was also known to get out on the court himself, meeting his childhood friends Herb and Donald at the gym for pickup three-on-three basketball games. They were all past their prime and once some younger competitors commented that they smelled Bengay. Danny and his crew had used the ointment on their knees and other joints. Despite the humorous slight and their advanced age, they went on to beat three different teams in a row that day relying on their well-earned skills and long knowledge of each other's game.

After he retired, Danny slowed down a bit and indulged in the freedom to make his own schedule. Known for being very tidy, he fell into a joyful routine of chores, errands, and grocery shopping; daily mischief hanging out with his close friend and neighbor Joe Espindola; and weekly fishing trips with Donald

at local lakes. Cuyamaca Lake was his favorite, where he caught lots of catfish, trout, and bluegill. Danny was a great cook. He was a master of barbeque and frying whole turkeys, but nothing beat the flavor and taste of his freshly caught fish.

Danny battled health challenges later in life. In 2009, he was diagnosed with lymphoma and, five years ago, fought stomach and esophageal cancer. He underwent extensive treatments and defeated cancer twice. Danny was cancer-free when he died peacefully in the afternoon on April 12 at age 67. He was sitting on his back porch in his favorite chair where he could always see hummingbirds faithfully hovering nearby at his bird feeder.

Sadly, Danny had just returned home to Richmond in November to attend the funeral of his brother Mikcal Collins. In addition to Mikcal, Danny was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Elliott John Collins and Albert Floyd Collins; sister Allison Collins; father-in-law Paul N. Valentine; and sisters-in-law Hope Hasan, Dorretta Collins, Paulette Collins, Cynthia Valentine Waters, and Donna Valentine.

He is survived by his wife Kathy V. Lewis; daughter Natasha Collins; son Dimetrus Collins; stepson Bryant Hicks (Angela); grandchildren Khalil and Saniyya; brothers Allen L. Collins Sr., Larry L. Collins (Linda), Dennis R. Hasan, and Norman Washington (Emma); sister Janet Rivers; sisters-in-law Paula Valentine and Victoria Valentine Griffin (Chris); and a host nieces and nephews, cousins, and other cherished friends and beloved family members.

Cemetery Details

Virginia Veterans Cemetery at Amelia

10300 Pridesville Road
Amelia, VA 23002

Previous Events

Celebration of life with live streaming

MAY 2. 1:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home -Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Tribute Wall



“ *March Funeral Homes created a To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Danny Collins, Please Click the Link below. in memory of Danny O. Collins*



March Funeral Homes - May 01, 2024 at 02:54 PM

DP

“ Uncle Danny trusted and supported the love and care of his nephew Jabbar in my hands and treated me like I was a blood relative as did the rest of the family. Our visit to San Diego in 2014 was a great time and we vowed to make it happen again. He shared all aspects of his life with us on social media and responded lovingly to all our post of birthdays, achievements, goals and accomplishments. This last visit with out him there in San Diego was a beautiful closure for me and Jabbar to see his last accomplishments, goals, and Hobbies. I sat and took in the peace and serenity his back patio offered even with a visit from Humming birds feeding from his feeder. I am glad to know he was at peace. Meeting his family, friends and all that loved him as we said our good byes, left me with a peace that everything is and will be alright. Our sincere condolences to Aunt Kathy, Natasha, Demetrius, Bryant, Uncles Lloyd, Larry, Dennis and all of my extended Collins and Hasan family. Our Prayers and Love to you.
Sincerely, Darryl (Jabbar Hasan), Kevin (Dominque), David and Dad (Morrell Jr) Price Houston TX.



Darryl Price - May 01, 2024 at 02:59 PM

DP

GONE FISHING!

Darryl Price - May 01, 2024 at 03:03 PM

MJ

RIP My Friend

Michael Anthony Johnson - May 01, 2024 at 10:18 PM

DP

The service was very nice and shined light on a well Loved and well lived life. Everyone who spoke, the music selections and Honors from the Navy. Great job Uncle Danny is Pleased.

Darryl Price - May 02, 2024 at 02:42 PM

RA

“ *My sincere condolences to the Collins family. May God bless you during this time of bereavement. Rocky Augustine, VF 2 Bounty Hunters*

Rocky Augustine - April 30, 2024 at 02:56 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - April 29, 2024 at 11:19 AM