



News Release

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October 2, 2009
NR09110

Caribou's Donald Collins to be inducted into Northern Maine Construction Hall of Fame at NMCC ceremony October 20

Aroostook County - As he marks six decades since becoming the fourth generation member of his family to operate the S.W. Collins Company, well-known and highly respected County leader and businessman Donald F. Collins has been named the 2009 inductee into the Northern Maine Construction Hall of Fame.

Collins will be honored during a ceremony and reception on Tuesday, October 20, at 5:00 p.m. in the Mailman Trades building at Northern Maine Community College. Established in the fall of 2007 on the NMCC campus, the Northern Maine Construction Hall of Fame was created to recognize key individuals who have contributed both to the profession and have served as mentors to others entering the profession.

“Don Collins has not only committed his life to the betterment of the construction industry and to small business in our state, but has worked tirelessly to provide opportunity for the people of our region. His many accomplishments and exemplary work ethic are wonderful examples for our students and others who will pass his photograph each day,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley.

Collins was born in Caribou in 1925, the second of four sons of Samuel and Elizabeth (Black) Collins. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Maine with a Bachelor of Arts in business administration in 1949, he joined the family business as general manager and later succeeded his father as president of the company.

Donald Collins is credited with diversifying and expanding the S.W. Collins Company through the 1950's, 60's 70's and 80's. For several years, he also managed the Collins Construction Company, selling lots from the original Collins farm and building houses on them.

Founded by his great-grandfather Samuel W. Collins in 1844 as a lumber sawmill, Donald Collins transitioned the company to what it has grown to today when he designed and built a home retail center which opened in 1980 and drew “do-it-yourselfers” in addition to contractors. Although he continues to serve on the board of the S.W. Collins Company, Donald Collins retired from the business in January 1992.

His interest in the industry extended beyond Aroostook County. He was active in the Retail Lumber Dealers Association of Maine, including serving as its president. In 1985, he was named the association's first Lumber Person of the Year.

A proud Veteran, Collins served in the infantry during WWII and was wounded twice in the Battle of the Bulge. He earned a Purple Heart, Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Bronze Star for his heroism and is a life member of the Veteran's of Foreign War and American Legion posts in Caribou.

His public service has included holding a number of elected positions, including serving as mayor of Caribou, in the Maine House of Representatives and for four terms in the Maine State Senate. He and his brother Sam Collins of Rockland were the first brothers in Maine history to serve simultaneously in the Maine Senate.

Collins has been involved in numerous business, community and educational organizations. He has served as president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Caribou Hospital District, and the Caribou Rotary Club. He has also served as a director of the former Aroostook Trust Company and Maine National Bank, the Maine Mutual Fire Insurance Company, the Maine Community Foundation, Maine Public Broadcasting, and Maine Public Service Company.

A strong supporter of his alma mater, the University of Maine, Collins served as chairman of the University of Maine Foundation. He also served as a member of the University of Maine Board of Visitors and as the president of the University of Maine at Presque Isle Foundation.

Collins' extraordinary leadership and community service have earned him many honors, including Caribou's Citizen of the Year in 1975. He was also recognized on the state level as the Maine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Business Leader of the Year and by the Caribou Rotary Club as a Paul Harris Fellow in 1987.

Donald Collins is married to the former Patricia McGuigan. The couple has six children; two sons, Sam and Gregg, are president and vice-president of the S.W. Collins company, carrying on the family tradition.

The wall of honor featuring the inductee photos is located inside the main entrance of the Mailman Trades Building in the corridor that students, faculty, staff and visitors use to enter and exit the building daily. According to Trade and Technical Occupations Department Chair Brian McDougal, the space is ideal, because students and prospective students of the college regularly have the opportunity to see the faces and learn the stories of some of the "legends" in the construction trades, and in turn better understand that similar career success is possible for them.

The inductees honored to date represent prominent construction business owners and industry leaders, as well as alumni and retired faculty of NMCC and its forerunner Northern Maine Vocational Technical Institute.

They include 2007 honorees Stanley “Bub” Anderson of New Sweden, co-founder and an owner of County Electric; Hollis Burgess, a former long-time instructor in the residential construction program at NMCC, who was honored posthumously; Tim Doak of Caribou, co-owner and president of B.R. Smith Associates, Inc. Surveying and Engineering in Presque Isle; Rick St. Peter of Caribou, owner of Patrick St. Peter and Sons; and Richard “Dick” West of Holden, first a sheet metal (present-day welding and metal fabrication) faculty member and then department chairperson for the trade and technical occupations department at NMCC. In 2008, Richard Nadeau, Jr., president and treasurer of Presque Isle-based A & L Construction Inc., and Raymond and Timothy Todd, treasurer and president respectively of R. L. Todd & Son, Inc. of Caribou, had their photos unveiled.

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Donald F. Collins