



Paul M. Collins

February 22, 1949 - July 24, 2022

Albany, NY-Paul M. Collins, 73, died peacefully at his home in Albany, New York on Sunday, July 24, 2022. Born on February 22, 1949, he was the proud son of Howard and Françoise Collins.

Paul was a graduate of Vincentian Institute in Albany and was an active alumnus of his cherished alma mater. He attended the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he majored in history, graduating cum laude, and became steeped in the ideals of Jesuit social justice. Throughout his life, Paul devoted himself to serving the next generation of Crusaders as President of the Holy Cross Club of Eastern New York. Paul earned his juris doctorate from Albany Law School, where he was salutatorian of the class of 1974.

The same year, he began a courtship with Lea Champion. They married in 1976 and embarked on a life-long journey together, bringing four children and six grandchildren into the world. Paul loved animals and, with Lea and his kids, looked after ducks, rabbits, fish, and the occasional lizard. He was especially fond of his dogs, particularly Wyatt and Sierra, who were always at his feet, looking for their next snack.

Paul began his career in law as an Assistant Corporation Counsel in Albany, working his way up to Executive Deputy Counsel until his departure in 1985.

He spoke fondly about his time as a “baby lawyer” and frequently recounted that the most memorable days of his legal career were working with Erastus Corning II, Tom Whalen, and the staff and attorneys in Corporation Counsel.

From 1985-2005, he was an attorney at Hinman Straub P.C., eventually becoming a principal partner, where he focused primarily on civil litigation and swung a decent softball bat. After a short time working at Sheehan, Greene, Golderman, Carraway, and Jacques, Paul served as Deputy Special Counsel to the New York State Board of Elections and argued several times before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

After six years with the Board of Elections, Paul was finally ready to retire, but could never take down his shingle. Instead, he occasionally practiced law for the remainder of his life, helping others with whatever their needs may be, and always giving back to those less fortunate than himself.

A lifelong Democrat, Paul began serving the public as an Albany County legislator in 1983, after winning a hard fought primary contest. A representative well ahead of his time, Paul’s accomplishments as a legislator included ushering the passage of the first diversionary program for drug addicts, funding an adolescent drug treatment facility, rebuilding the pool at Lincoln Park, and protecting the rights of members of the LGBTQ+ community. He took special pride helping to solve the everyday problems of his constituents during his 27-year career as a civil servant. Committed to social justice, he was a true man of the people.

Paul was an active member of the New Scotland Avenue and Albany communities. He was a devoted member of the Catholic Church and was a regular at the 8:15AM weekday masses in the Mater Christi Parish. He was the first President of the St. Teresa of Avila School Board, and helped plan the annual bazaar, where he held court at the raffle station with his beautiful wife,

Lea.

At Westland Hills and Central Babe Ruth, Paul coached his sons' baseball teams. Though the teams were often a rag-tag bunch of underdogs who seldom came out on top of games, he had a positive influence on innumerable young men well after they left the playing field, as well as those that did not play. Quiet in this type of work, he touched the lives of countless young people by finding them jobs, or keeping them out of the criminal justice system.

When he was not coaching or watching his daughters and sons excel in their pursuits, Paul was busy ensuring the Central Babe Ruth properties were well maintained, concessions were filled, and teams were plentiful, as President of the league. This love of the game carried over to his lifelong devotion to the New York Yankees, which he shared with his father, Howard. Paul spent many a weekend with his family and friends taking in a ballgame (and we all learned not to call him during a Yankees' game).

As his children aged out of sports, Paul began substantial involvement with numerous local charitable organizations. He was especially proud of his work with Catholic Charities, providing service to people in need and advocating for justice. He was a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. One of his greatest achievements was serving as Chairman of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, and he loved showing off his grandchildren at the Hall after the parade. Paul also organized the "Dick Connors" lunch at the Hibernian Hall, which brought community members together to break bread and discuss matters of history, politics, and culture. Paul took great pride in his Irish Catholic identity, visiting the Emerald Isle on numerous occasions and soaking in Irish culture.

Always quick with a joke, he was an embodiment of Irish-American wit.

Surprising to some, Paul had a sailor's mouth and passed it to his four beautiful children. He taught his kids, grandchildren, nephews, and nieces the ins-and-outs of being a trickster, under the Cape Cod moonlight. He would literally give you the shirt off his back, but few would take him up on that offer since he was known to wear the same shirt for days on end. He was an avid angler and lover of nature, and particularly enjoyed spending time outdoors with his brother Dave. His devotion to the environment was such that he would eat food well past its expiration date, rather than have it end up in a landfill – a true humanitarian. Some of his best memories were spent on the golf course with his brother Pete, and he took considerable pride in his two holes-in-one.

A great void will be left in the lives of all he touched, but the greatest void will be left in the lives of his family. Paul was the beloved husband of Lea (Campion) Collins, with whom he just celebrated 46 years of marriage. He was the loving father of Paul (Lisa) Collins, Patrick (Erin) Collins, Kelly (Dan) Webster, and Katie. Of all of Paul's accomplishments, his greatest joy was his grandchildren. The memories he forged with Rose, Maggie, Madigan, Grace, Danny, and Michael are bountiful. He adored spoiling them at Jack's Diner, watching them swim at the pool, taking them to Cape Cod, and enjoying the new family home in Glen Lake, which is a legacy he left his family in the most "Paul Collins" way possible.

Paul is also survived by his brother, Dave, cherished in-laws, and beloved nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Peter, and sister Ginny.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend Paul's Funeral Mass 11:30 am Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at the Parish of Mater Christi, 35 Hurst Ave., Albany, NY 12208. The family requests masks be worn inside the church during the Funeral Mass.

To view the Mass please visit [YouTube.com/C.ParishofMaterChristi](https://www.youtube.com/C.ParishofMaterChristi)

The Rite of Committal will be held at St. Agnes Cemetery, Menands, NY immediately following the Mass.

A Celebration of Life will then follow at the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 375 Ontario Street, Albany, NY 12208.

To leave a message for the family please visit www.McveighFuneralHome.com.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Paul's memory to the Father Peter G. Young, Jr. Foundation <https://www.pyhit.org/> 134 Franklin St, Albany, NY 12202.

Cemetery Details

St. Agnes Cemetery

48 Cemetery Ave
Menands, NY

Tribute Wall

DD

“ I did not know your father, but saw him briefly at your penning at MC, and I have read his obituary. What a remarkable person he was so full of life and so giving. Having him as father surely has been a blessing to you which will continue with you for your remaining journey. Peace,
David Van Deusen

David Van Deusen - December 07, 2023 at 11:07 PM



“ Paul M. Collins

October 08, 2023 at 09:24 PM

DS

“ I'm so sorry I was unable to attend the services and the celebration of life today. Paul will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.
Darius

Darius Shahinfar - August 02, 2022 at 06:36 PM

KF

“ Kelly, sending you love from the Fousts. Your dad sounds like a truly loved and wonderful man. Remember your happy memories forever. ❤️

Karen and Walter Foust - August 02, 2022 at 05:16 PM

RM

“ Lea - was shocked to hear of Pauls passing last night. Our condolences to you and your family. Bob & Charlanne McDonough

Robert McDonough - July 31, 2022 at 03:56 PM

BZ

“ *My condolences to Paul’s loved ones. He was a true gentleman...*
Benita Zahn

benita zahn - July 31, 2022 at 07:53 AM

MM

“ *I have known Paul since joining the Catholic Charities family. He was always a wealth of information during our meeting but just as importantly he always had a wise crack to slide in when things got a little boring. Paul has been an amazing advocate for the folks we serve and also our employees. I will forever be indebted to him for teaching me to navigate when dealing with the “Mother Ship” & will miss his support and expertise.*

Mary Marro-Giroux - July 30, 2022 at 07:52 PM

BH

“ *Lea and family, I am so sorry for your loss. Please accept my heartfelt sympathies during this difficult time. My thoughts are with you. Bernice*

Bernice Hopkins - July 29, 2022 at 08:30 PM

PS

“ *Lea and family,*

Betsy and I were saddened to learn of Paul’s passing,

I first met Buck as a teenager when we played hard fought basketball games on the Collins Court. He only got playtime because he was Dave’s little brother.....also, I think, Francois made us.

On my many visits to Albany and at Holy Cross events over the years, I would sometimes run into him and his outgoing welcomes always lifted my spirits. His upbeat and affable manner were his trademarks.

We will say a special prayer for him and each of you.

Paul T. Sullivan

Paul Sullivan - July 29, 2022 at 03:49 PM

PC

“ *Lea and family,*

I am truly sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time.

Peter Crummey - July 29, 2022 at 01:02 PM

TM

“ *Rest in peace, Bucky. You did good*

Tom McCabe - July 29, 2022 at 10:52 AM

CG

“ : *"A truly wonderful parent and public servant!"*

Charles Touhey and Alice Green - July 29, 2022 at 10:41 AM

CF

“ *The obituary is a beautiful tribute to a scholar, husband, father, grandfather, humanitarian and spiritual presence. Paul and I lived on Brookline Avenue and attended Vincentian together. I did not know Paul in school, but got to appreciate him more at the Hibernian Hall in later life. When I read of Paul's devotion as a family man, and generosity to the community, I know the world is a less rich place with his passing. My sincere condolences to Lea and the family.*

Christine Ford - July 28, 2022 at 02:37 PM

KB

“ *To Lea and all the members of this special family. I think back to those cherished times when St. Teresa's was a strong family parish and the yearly bazaar was something the whole parish came together to support. Your family was one of those that always played a key role in making it such a fun and huge success for the parish! I miss those days and the way it was in so many ways because people seemed to have more time to share time as a parish! Thank you for all that your family did to help in making those memories a cherished time for all of those who were lucky enough to experience them with you. Paul was always so kind and generous in his praise to our family as well, but that was his way with most people, I'm sure. I pray that you may all take comfort in knowing that many people share deeply in your loss and wish you to know that thoughts and prayers are being offered for you. Jeanne and Ken Barnes*

Kenneth and Jeanne Barnes - July 28, 2022 at 11:46 AM

SP

“ *Lea and family,
I have the best memories of Uncle Buck! Especially on vacation on Cape Cod! I watch him and Frank go back and forth, cookout on the grill and learned how to put mayo on fish while cooking it in foil! He was truly a great human and represented the quintessential life of a great Catholic Irishman! Heaven gained a good one for sure!!! You are in my thoughts and prayers!!!*

Stephanie (Casey) Perry - July 28, 2022 at 11:44 AM

LF

“ *Sending our condolences, love and prayers. Our hearts goes out to each of you. May your wonderful memories help you through this difficult time.*

Lori Schrom & The Morigerato Family - July 28, 2022 at 10:59 AM

MS

“ *Absolutely beautiful tribute- such a great, caring, compassionate man, who will be greatly missed.*

meghan shubert - July 28, 2022 at 09:49 AM

VM

“ *Brilliant lawyer and outstanding community leader, better husband, father and grandfather and great friend to so many of us. I am so grateful to Lea and Kelly for allowing Tony, Gary and me to spend some time with Paul last week where we were able to tell stories and remember some of the good old days. God speed.*
Vin McArdle



Vin McArdle - July 27, 2022 at 06:59 PM

DB

“ *2 files added to the album BUCKY*



Dan Buddie - July 27, 2022 at 06:18 PM

JC

“ *My heart is broken. Uncle Buck was one of those people that will never be forgotten. One of my favorite memories is when the Collins and the Casey's would go cut down a Christmas tree. Well one of those years I helped Uncle Buck tie his Christmas tree to the roof and on the way home the tree came off the roof of the car. My thoughts and prayers are with the Collins family.*

James Casey - July 27, 2022 at 06:10 PM

CK

Great memory

Christopher Keenan - July 27, 2022 at 06:19 PM

DB

“ *Bucky: introduced me to running the 440 (funny story); took me under his wing (with Danny Leyden) to learn the required prayers, Latin, and all the Mysteries we had to recite in VI CCD Catholic School; brought me into his study group & taught me to learn & memorize [Regent] essays to pass my World History tests; taught me to water ski; showed me how to “swish” a basketball shot; kept me connected with my VI Track Coach Mr. Carter; a model community citizen for peace & justice, living christian values, and always supporting friendship...one of my 2 oldest buddies from Albany — just a TRUE friend!*

Dan Buddie

Dan Buddie - July 27, 2022 at 05:39 PM

BC

“ *Paul was one of a special kind of person who comes into our lives and never really leaves, even now with his passing. He was “real” in a way few people are and could always be counted on as having your back!*
Beautiful tribute in his obit which captures him so well - he is smiling!

BJ Costello - July 27, 2022 at 04:50 PM

MB

“ Where does one begin to remember the good ole days with Paul in the Albany County Legislator -- he was quite the representative and fought for his causes.

Paul's priority and love were for his beautiful family. God Bless you All

Cherish your wonderful memories each day -- as they will be with you forever.

Mary Lou Bartolotta-Connolly - July 27, 2022 at 03:43 PM

BL

“ *My love to all. I was a classmate of Paul at VI and played many games of hoop with.*

Reconnect at our 50th reunion and had enjoyed many group luncheon. I look forward to seeing Paul one day with our Lord Jesus. Blessings and love to all.

His friend, Bill Leicht

Bill Leicht - July 27, 2022 at 03:20 PM

MA

“ *Kelly, I am so sorry for the loss of your amazing Dad. You are in my thoughts.*

Marna Atkin

Marna Atkin - July 27, 2022 at 03:01 PM

JC

“ *What a beautifully written tribute to a beautiful life. Sending you all lots of love.*

John and Emily Campion - July 27, 2022 at 02:52 PM

A(

“ *Many wonderful memories. ❤️ My heart goes out to you all.*

Aaren Harris (Hatalsky) - July 27, 2022 at 01:41 PM

JC

“ *Uncle Buck will truly be missed. He was a kind and generous person, always quick with a joke or a smile. It was obvious you all were the love(s) of his life.*

-Jack in the Back

Jacqueline Collins - July 27, 2022 at 01:31 PM