

**PERSONAL INFORMATION AND**  
***Curriculum vitae***  
**OF JOEL WYMAN COLLINS, JR.**



I was born December 8, 1943, the fifth of six children to Joel Wyman and Anne Pickens Collins. I attended the public schools in Chester, South Carolina, until the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, when I went off to Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia. After one year there, I skipped 12<sup>th</sup> Grade and entered Clemson University. I earned the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Troop 62 in Chester on November 14, 1957, approximately a month before I turned 14. Also, in 1957, my family was selected as Chester's First Family of the Year. Each civic club in town was asked to nominate a family. A group of citizens then made the selection. It was a big deal. Somewhere I still have a copy of the front page newspaper story about our being the First Family of the Year.

While at Clemson University, I changed my major from Ceramic Engineering to English. This required me to take many additional courses. I graduated with 144 credit hours, substantially more than the minimum requirement. I served as the President of the Chester County Clemson Club and Secretary of the Student Body during my senior year. I was selected for the most prestigious organization on campus, Tiger Brotherhood, a membership which one retains for life. Also, during my senior year I was selected as my fraternity's Greek of the year. In the spring of 1965, I attended a meeting of the Southeast Inter-Fraternity Conference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. While there, I made contacts with the national fraternities and brought back information which I shared with Dean of Students Walter Cox. It was shortly after that

Clemson elected to allow national fraternities to come on campus. My fraternity which had been known as Phi Kappa Delta, became a member of Kappa Alpha order

I entered The University of South Carolina School of Law in the fall of 1965. I am proud to be one of the graduates of the Class of 1968, a class so prominent there was once a television story about it. The year I graduated, the Viet Nam War was raging and lawyers were scrambling to obtain appointments to the Judge Advocates General's Corps, less they be drafted and forced to serve as "grunts." I had earned a commission in the United States Army, Infantry Branch, at Clemson. I obtained a deferment to go to law school. In 1968, I applied for a branch transfer to JAGC and was successful. This was a big deal for me and I was much envied by my classmates. In order for me to make it to the JAG school for the basic class which started in mid-September, I had to be a member of the Bar. Normally, Bar results are not published until later in the fall. To solve that problem, I contacted Chief Justice Joseph Moss of York, explained my situation, and asked his advice. He made arrangements for my Bar exam paper to be graded out of turn. I learned I had passed. He arranged to have me sworn in by myself. I am the only member of my class who was sworn in on September 11, 1968 about six weeks ahead of the others. Right after being sworn in, I went to Charlottesville, Virginia, for the JAG school.

Upon finishing the JAG school, my first tour of duty was at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. While I was there, my son Joel was born at the base hospital. I recall he was the only baby born that day (July 29, 1969) because there were relatively few soldiers at that base at that time. While at Fort Leavenworth, I tried about fifteen cases. One of them was a murder case which I tried by myself. The case was United States v. Lassiter. I won a conviction. I was only 25 years old at the time.

While at Fort Leavenworth, I received orders for Viet Nam. I was assigned to the United States Army Americal Division, the largest infantry division in the history of the United States Army, based at Chu Lai in I Corps. Also on my wall, is a certificate recognizing me as a member of the I Corps Bar Association, signed by Colonel M.G. Truesdale of the United States Marine Corps. I Corps was in the far Northern part of Viet Nam, close to the North Vietnamese border. While in Viet Nam, I received the Army Commendation Medal and the Bronze Star Medal, both of which are on the wall in my office. I am especially proud of the Bronze Star because not many Army lawyers receive that award.

While I was in Viet Nam, my Executive Officer was Major Mike Downs. He was a great friend. He told me that in exchange for all my hard work, he would get me any assignment I wanted for my remaining two years of military service. He was the one who put me in for the Army Commendation Medal in recognition of the large number of cases I tried. I recall him telling me one night that he thought one of the best assignments for any JAG officer is the United States Military Academy. I decided to go for that and he made the arrangements. I soon received orders to report to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where I spent my last two years of military service. I was an Assistant Professor of Law, teaching Constitutional Law and International Law. While there, I wrote a small book, published by the USMA Press, entitled "The Junior Officer's Guide to the Legal Aspects of Command."

Upon being discharged from the Army, I joined the American law firm of O'Haire and Fiore, headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. My office was a satellite office in the City of Fuerth, a suburb of Nuremburg. (As you will recall, the famous war crimes trials after World War II occurred in Nuremburg.) While in Germany, I represented American GIs in court martial cases. I also represented Americans with claims against the United States Army, and German companies with procurement-related or construction-related disputes with the American Government.

In 1975, after a little over two years in Germany, I applied for and was hired as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of South Carolina. I had also earlier applied for a job teaching at Clemson University. They made me an offer also. While it was a difficult choice, I concluded that my greatest opportunities lay in the practice of law, rather than in teaching. I believe I made the right decision.

While an Assistant United States Attorney, I handled many high profile white collar criminal cases, including the case against Dr. Alan George Thurmond (Senator Strom Thurmond's brother), who was convicted of Medicaid fraud; Senator Ralph Gasque of Marion County, who was convicted of defrauding the Federal Manpower Program, and Attorney Hemphill Pride, who was convicted of HUD Housing Program fraud. All three of these cases were highly publicized and were lengthy jury trials. I was the first AUSA in South Carolina to indict and convict a physician for Medicaid fraud. All total, I had at least ten such cases. I also tried and convicted the notorious Hawkins brothers for large scale marijuana smuggling from Jamaica. That too was a lengthy, hard-fought trial. During the time I was an AUSA, I received two Distinguished Service Awards from the Attorney General of the United States, a Special Achievement Award and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Drug Enforcement Administration. When the former United States Attorney, Tom Lydon, refused to go forward with a case I had worked on for many months, I resigned. This was a Medicaid fraud and conspiracy case against the highest ranking people of the South Carolina Department of Social Services who I was prepared to prove had deliberately allowed fraud to go unchecked, mainly because it was paid for almost entirely by the Federal Government. The lead defendant would have been Dr. Archie Ellis, former Pastor of the Columbia First Baptist Church. When Roger Milliken learned of my resignation and the reasons for it, he offered me a job. As I look back, maybe that is one opportunity I missed out on. Instead, I took a job with Nelson Mullins, Greer & Scarborough Law Firm. I still have the wonderful letter of recommendation written for me by former United States District Judge Robert W. Hemphill, also of Chester. After two years with Nelson Mullins, I was made a partner. But after the third year, I concluded there had to be a greater opportunity for me elsewhere. I withdrew from the firm and established my own practice in a small rented office on Assembly Street. The ground floor was the office of Congressman Floyd Spence. My office was upstairs. Pam Miranda, my former Secretary at the U.S. Attorney's office, agreed to come and be my Secretary. We bought a new typewriter, and the first day it overheated because it was sitting on the carpet on the floor and overheated. I will never forget the sight of Pam sitting cross legged on the floor typing letters and pleadings for me in the very early days.

On April 1, 1984, Stan came over to join me and we formed the firm of Collins & Lacy. We still celebrate April Fool's Day as our anniversary.

Over the years, I have held a number of positions which I would categorize as community service. I was the lay leader at Salem United Methodist Church for eight years. For several years, I taught the middle school Sunday School class. I am a charter member of the Rotary Club of Lake Murray-Irmo, which was organized in 1989. In 1996-97, I served as President of the Club. In 2001, the Club selected me to receive the award of Rotarian of the Year. I am a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, which means I have made numerous financial contributions to the Rotary Foundation. At last count, I had made fourteen other people Paul Harris Fellows. Two of them are lawyers in our firm, Robert Goings and Rebecca Halberg. I also made our former firm Administrator, Bruce Beatty, a Paul Harris Fellow. I have also made my Executive Assistant, Patty Cavanaugh, a Paul Harris Fellow.

I am a member of the John Belton O'Neill Inn of Court, an honorary organization which includes judges, law professors and law students. I am a member of the Department of Juvenile Justice organization known as Friends of DJJ. In recognition of my support, they have given me two awards, the Champion for Children Award, which I received in March of 2006 and the Bridge Builders Award which I received in December, 2007. These plaques are in my office.

I am a member of the Fourth Circuit Judicial Conference. Lawyers become members of this group on the nomination of a Federal Judge.

Over the years, I have had a number of supportive roles at my *alma mater*, Clemson University. I am an IPTAY Life Member. I received the College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Graduate citation. I served many years on the College of Liberal Arts Alumni Advisory Board, which later became the Humanities Alumni Advisory Board. I chaired that Board for approximately ten years. I served several years on the President's Advisory Board. I established and funded the Joel W. Collins, Sr. Scholarship for English majors. I established and funded the Anne Pickens Collins Scholarship for History majors. I established and funded the William T. Howell Pre-Law Society. I currently remain the Alumni Advisor to the Society. I receive the Clemson Fellows Award in 2001. This was an award by the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities. I received the highest award given by the Alumni Association, the Distinguished Service Award in 2001. These plaques are in my office.

The University of South Carolina School of Law awarded me the James Petigru Medal, also known as the Compleat Lawyer Award, Platinum Level (for members of the Bar admitted thirty years or longer). It is in my office.

In 2007, I developed a comprehensive historical, philosophical, political and legal course on the United States Constitution. I taught it as a volunteer during Maymester at Clemson. With the introduction and recommendation of Dean Jack Pratt, I have agreed to teach this course to students of the South Carolina Honors College at The University of South Carolina starting in the Fall 2010 semester. Anyone wishing to read my Syllabus on this course can find it in our computer system.

Perhaps my greatest commitment has been to the American Board of Trial Advocates. I have been a member of that organization since 1992. I served as the South Carolina Chapter

President for about two years. My predecessor in that office, Billy Epps, had to resign due to a reorganization of his firm. I stepped in and served his year as well as my own. During that time, we established the practice of conducting a Masters in Trial Program and Black Tie Awards Dinner which continues to this day. I was the South Carolina Chapter representative on the National Board of Directors from 1995 to 2003. A large bronze tiger figurine on my desk was given to me by ABOTA in recognition of my service on the Board of Directors.

I was elected to the Board of Trustees for the ABOTA Foundation in 2004. I later became Secretary to that Board. I served as President of the Board of Trustees of the ABOTA Foundation in 2008. In 2009, the ABOTA Foundation awarded me the Masters in Trial Award. This award is given to only one ABOTA member annually.

Also in 2009, the South Carolina Chapter of ABOTA gave me the Chapter Service Award. At the presentation ceremony they announced this will become an award made from time to time by the South Carolina Chapter and will be named for me from now on. I consider this to be one of my greatest honors. As part of my work with ABOTA, I, with the assiduous support of Patty Cavanaugh, organized and served as Program Chair for the James Otis Lecture Program presented at the South Carolina State House on Constitution Day of last year. Another such program is planned for this year. It will be held also in the State House on September 17, 2010.

In 2008, I was asked to chair a committee known as “Great School 08” to generate support among the members of the public for a school bond referendum greatly needed in Lexington – Richland School District 5. As Chair of that committee, I worked with many people in the Irmo and Chapin area. Despite the fact that two prior bond referenda were defeated, the 2008 bond referendum was passed by a wide margin.

I am an Admiral in the Irmo Navy, a mostly social organization of men in the Irmo area. I have been a member of the National Safety Council Board of Directors for many years. I served as President of the National Safety Council Board of Directors from January of 2005 to June of 2006. During my year as President, we adopted and began sponsoring the Alive @25 Program, which teaches young drivers and passengers to be safer so that when they turn 25, they will still be alive.

Last year, I established a scholarship at The Citadel in memory of the late United States District Judge Falcon B. Hawkins. I also established an award at The Citadel which is known as the Falcon G. Hawkins Leadership Award. Both the scholarship and the leadership award are given to a veteran student. Judge Hawkins was a veteran student when he attended The Citadel in the 1950s.

In 2009, I established and funded a scholarship at Winthrop University known as the Collins Sisters’ Scholarship. It honors my three sisters, JoAnne C. Dixon, Nancy C. Anderson and Margaret C. Boshamer and also my wife, Rhonda P. Collins, all Winthrop graduates.

I am rated AV by Martindale-Hubbell. I am listed in Best Lawyers and Super Lawyers. I have a rating of 10.0 in Avvo, an on-line lawyer rating service. I am a Fellow of the Litigation

Counsel of America. I am a Fellow of the International Society of Barristers and currently serve as the South Carolina Membership Chair for ISOB. There are only six South Carolina lawyers in ISOB.

From 1996 until approximately 2006, I served on the Board of Directors of the International Society of Primerus Law Firms. Our firm was the first South Carolina firm to join Primerus. I was also the Southeast Vice President and served as the National Membership Chair for Primerus. Others in our firm, especially Gray Culbreath, have assumed leadership roles in the International Society of Primerus Law Firms.

In 2010, I was asked to serve as a Trustee on the Walker Foundation which supports the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.