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Dr. Richard James Collings

Nov. 11, 1946 - Nov. 2, 2021

Dr. Richard James Collings, of Morganton died Tuesday, November 2, 2021, a few days shy of his 75th birthday.

Born November 11, 1946, in Owensboro, Kentucky, he was the son of the late Milton H. Collings, Jr. and Jean Ladmore Collings and stepmother Gertrude Miller Collings. He was also preceded in death by his brother, John Russell Collings, and his beloved wife of 46 years, Marilyn Linville Collings.

Dr. Collings held a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies from the University of Louisville, the first in his family to attend college. He also earned a Master's Degree in Latin American Studies and Doctorate in Political Science, both from Tulane University. He served stateside in the United States Army during the Vietnam War.

Richard spent his career serving smaller state colleges, where he could pursue his top educational priorities of student-centered teaching and learning. He was President of Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska from 2004 until 2010. He previously served as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Western Carolina University from 1996 until 2004. Dr. Collings was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Kutztown University from 1989 until 1996. He began his career as professor of Political

Science and Assistant Provost at Southeast Missouri State University from 1977 until 1989.

Richard was a caring husband, father, grandfather, brother and educator. He loved God, served as a leader in his United Methodist churches and was active in Rotary Club and other civic and volunteer activities. Richard's dry sense of humor kept the

family laughing and everyone who knew him benefitted from his kind and gentle manner. His career took his family to several cities and towns and he encouraged his family to explore the surrounding area for the best local restaurants, museums, and natural and historic sites.

He is survived by three children, Kelly Collings Hawkins (Seth) of Morganton, NC, Michael Collings (Katherine) of Sylva, NC, and Kirsten Collings (Mark Hays) of Washington, DC and twelve grandchildren: Ethan, Kai and Noah Hawkins; Olivia, Walter, Sebastian, Martha, Isaiah, Victor and Gabriel Collings; Calliope and Daphne Collings-Hays. Also left to cherish his memory is his sister, Adreena Anderson (Tom) of Louisville, KY, and numerous beloved cousins, nieces, and nephews

A celebration of life will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 21, 2021 at First Presbyterian Church-Morganton. As the service will be indoors, we ask that everyone wear a mask and observe social distancing.

In lieu of flowers, please direct memorials to the Dr. Richard and Marilyn Collings Endowed Honors Scholarship at Wayne State College. Make a general donation online at www.wsc.edu/donate and add "Collings Scholarship" in the comment section, or send a donation to: Wayne State Foundation, 1111 Main St, Wayne, NE, 68787

Tribute Wall

Dr. Collings was one of the most prolific influences during my college years at Western Carolina University. My friends and I called him "Uncle Rick". He kept snacks in his bottom desk drawer and we use to raid it now and again! He was thoughtful, kind, and always added something meaningful to a conversation. I am proud to say I was the only student at WCU that had him for a readings class in Political Science (he was the only Latin American specialist). I miss him very much but whomever reads this, remember that he was primarily an educator - and a friend - and his mark on the students he mentored will never fade. Thanks for letting me place a memory here - I hope his friends and family know that I'm just one of a great many who owe him a debt of thanks.

–David Whitaker