



## Jimmy Newton McCollum

November 24, 2020

### Jim (Grandpa Bear) McCollum's Story

Jim was delivered by a midwife in Arkadelphia, Arkansas on June 16, 1937. During the first 5 years of his life, the family lived in Friendship, Huber Springs, and Searcy, Arkansas. By first grade, Ashdown, Arkansas had become his hometown. He graduated from High School there in 1955 as president of his senior class. He enjoyed all sports, especially football. He humorously told about setting a track record that his brother beat the following year. He loved to tell about early in the morning following graduation, his dad put him on a train headed for Twin Falls, Idaho to work for his uncles, executives at Simplot, a global diversified agrifood company. They put him to work driving a truck and working in the warehouse. In the fall, he attended Idaho State College at Pocatello for one year with the intent to major in geology, but before his sophomore year he enlisted in the Navy instead.

Assignments on the SS Pictor, the SS Hornet, and the isolated Naval base in Adak, Alaska gave him a repertoire of stories which he delighted in sharing. During the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, while the US was protecting two small islands strategically situated between Taiwan and Mainland China, his ship came under enemy fire. While in Adak, he found his love for broadcasting as a DJ at the military TV station and often bemoaned the fact that his extensive record collection was stolen there. At the end of his four year enlistment he

was honorably discharged as a Petty Officer 2nd Class. Upon reenlistment, he would have been Petty Officer 1st class, having already met the requirements for that position.

He decided that was no life for a man who wanted to marry and raise a family, so after discharge, he and several friends who had played Navy football together decided to pick a centrally located college and show up for football. Central Missouri State (now UCM) in Warrensburg, Missouri was chosen. Only two showed up and neither actually played, but it was there, at a Baptist Student Union event, he met the love of his life Melba Eloise Higgins. They were married at the end of their Sophomore year on June 6, 1961. Mitchel Ray McCollum, was born March 17, 1962 during their Junior year. Jimmy graduated with a major in Political Science summer term of 1963. He was president of the summer class, and later would serve a term as President of the Alumni association.

While in college supporting a family, he worked full time at KOKO AM in Warrensburg. He continued after college, soon becoming its General Manager. Later, his title included Vice President of Johnson County Broadcasters. During the first 11 years at KOKO the family resided in Leeton, Missouri. During this time, Mitchell died in a car accident in '67 and two daughters were born: Amber Lee in '69 and Velvet Jill in '71. The family moved to Warrensburg in 1974 where Summer Ann McCollum was born in '76.

Jim was active in civic affairs during his years at KOKO. Among other interests, he was chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's Industrial Development Committee and later became president of that organization. Always politically active, in 1974 he ran as a democrat for The Missouri House of Representatives from Johnson County. He lost by a slim margin in this Republican stronghold, but two years later under his leadership as Jimmy

Carter's campaign manager, Johnson County elected Democrat president. Soon after, dramatic changes in the Democratic Party moved him away from that affiliation.

Sports Broadcasting for KOKO was both part of his managerial responsibilities and an avid hobby as he traveled everywhere doing color commentary or play-by-play for both the CMSU (now UCM) Mules and local High Schools. In the years after graduation, he was president of the the Quarterback Club and the 100 Club. He was so proud the day someone alerted the broadcast booth of his attendance at a Kansas City Chief's game and he heard his name boomed out over the loud speaker as KOKO was recognized for being a long time affiliate of the Kansas City Chiefs Radio Network.

In 1980 the family moved to Clayton, New Mexico to manage KLMX for Johnson County Broadcasters. Later he would buy the station. The site is now home to 3 stations: Crossroads Christian Radio (KLMX AM 1450 & 104.5 FM) and KLMX FM 97.5, "The Bear", as Jim has fondly been called throughout his broadcasting career.

Throughout his radio career, Jim mentored many young men and women and was so proud when they went on to have successful broadcasting careers.

In 1988, he moved to Houston, Texas, joining his brother-in-law, Bill Higgins, in the credit card processing industry doing Marketing and then owning his own sales office with Retriever. He continued to oversee his radio station affiliations in Clayton, New Mexico and other places.

Throughout life, Jim's faith in God was his strength. He accepted Christ as his personal Savior as a boy during a revival at the First Baptist Church of Ashdown, Arkansas. He and his wife were active members of the Baptist

Church everywhere they lived. Since moving to the Houston area thirty plus years ago, they have been active in Graceview Baptist Church of Tomball, Texas.

Grandfather Isaac Newton McCollum was the greatest influence in his life. Days, even weeks, were spent at his grandfather's place, then a self sustainable farm in Columbia County near Emerson, Arkansas. The farm has been continuously owned and operated over 100 years by the same family since 1898. As such, it holds the honor of being an Arkansas Century Farm. Here Jim learned his life priorities of faith, family, country, and hard work. His grandfather was a visionary who divided the farm equally among his children, stipulating that it only be sold to family members. After turning the land into a tree farm, the eleven children incorporated the business and became stockholders in the newly formed McCollum Land Company. The move insured healthy, sustainable use of the land and perpetuation of family togetherness for future generations. Family reunions officially became stockholder meetings. The place became Lake DeGray Resort State Park near Arkadelphia, Arkansas. The annual reunion was the highlight of every year and Jim shared his enthusiasm with his family, encouraging their participation in every way possible, even engaging a nanny to accompany the trip to make it easier on his daughters. Now the grandchildren have years of their own memories and always anticipate seeing their cousins at reunions. The sustainability of this reunion is due partly to the fact that the McCollum Land Company purchases rooms at the Lodge for all stockholders as well as meeting rooms and many other activities for young and old alike.

When the subject of retirement came up, he was always quick to say he would never retire. He stayed active in radio stations, rental properties, and the McCollum Land Company until his illness three years ago.

Jim was a storyteller with a unique voice and a fantastic memory. He

remembered stories told him by his great grandmother and other family members that came before him. He could see significance in the ordinary things others might take for granted. What he read, saw, and experienced made strong impressions on him. For instance, even as a very young child, the memory of his uncles leaving for WW2 and the celebration when all returned home to the family farm safely was vividly imprinted in his mind. The family has lost a story telling historian, but it is prayerfully hoped his heart and values will live on through his future generations.

Blessed is the man

..... whose delight is in the law of the LORD.

..... He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

Psalm 1: 1-3 (abbreviated)

Jimmy Newton McCollum is preceded in death by father and mother, Charlie Newton McCollum and Doris Fagon McCollum; father-in-law and mother-in-law Harry Belomy Higgins, and Mary Eloise Chamberlain Higgins; his only son Mitchel Ray McCollum, & His only brother Wayne Pascal McCollum.

Jimmy Newton is survived in death by his wife Melba E. McCollum, Daughters Amber Lee Nowak, Velvet Jill Phillips and son-n-law Demetrius Phillips, Summer Ann McCollum, Brother-in-law William Harry Higgins (Sandi Ramirez), sister-in-law Janice Clark Haenel McCollum; 6 Grandsons: Thomas James Haisten (wife Rachel Nicole Haisten), Connor Newton Nowak, Alexander Spence McCollum, Noah Mitchell Bertinot. Alex Aleman Phillips (Jewell Sudduth), Dominique Denzel Phillips (wife Mallory Phillips), 4 Grandaughters: Anna Rene Haisten, Jade Alis Phillips, Hannah Elizabeth Bertinot, and Faith Nicole Nowak. 9 Great Grandchildren: Nathan Alexander Urrutia, Reece Alexander Kelsall, Benjamin James Wariner, Tristan Bear

Haisten, Daisy Grace Wariner, Rhone Jude Haisten, Damien Avery Phillips, Josiah Alex Phillips, Tye Mitchell Haisten, and numerous loved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

# Previous Events

## Viewing/Visitation

NOV **28**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Graceview Baptist Church  
25510 TX-249  
Tomball, TX 77375

## Funeral Service

NOV **28**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Graceview Baptist Church  
25510 TX-249  
Tomball, TX 77375

# Tribute Wall

AS

“ Jim was one of the most kind and sweetest men ever. He always went out of his way to make me feel welcome whenever I would visit with you all. It was not because of being polite as a business gesture. It was genuine; because he cared about your friend’s well being and comfort. He made a stranger feel his warmth and made that memberable. In fact, occasionally he would make the same story memorable again upon my next visit. Boy, he could tell stories better than most anyone.

*Bear would chat about simple things of life rather than merchant business. Although he had some of the most loyal clients and all the bragging rights if he chose. But he just didn’t. I believe we may actually still service accounts for gift cards that he must have referred decades ago. He preferred reminiscing about the life experiences. I still hear his unmistakably unique voice sharing everyday stories as if he were recapping a good movie. Well, at least you would know that he was sure it was a good movie. Because if you were beside him; then you couldn’t help but to listen. He told of days as a radio voice; or a story of his pals in the service , or what his day was like with his home (I think he talked about a ranch). He used to talk with Vic Brewer from my office because they both were radio celebrities or disc jockeys or performers or something. Boy, that’s so long ago now!*

*Like everyone he cared for; nobody would dismiss Bear easily. As I sit to write this note I feel like that big guy with his big heart and smile is standing here and knowing what I’m saying and I can hear his sweet gentle unique country voice asking me if there’s anything he can do for me while you’re busy running the show.*

*Boy, where do the years go? Where do the good times turn to memories and old stories? Merle Haggard reminds us that The Good Times Ain’t Over; And The Good Times Are Still Yet To Come.*

*Bear. The Bear. What a Perfect Title for Such A Big Guy with a Huge Heart.*

*Please know that although I wasn't with your beautiful family I have described the Bear to my wife, Monica, and we truly send our love and stand out on our balcony over the dark night ocean and speak a soft prayer to our Father God in name, memory and honor of the Bear; and if there's one thing we know for sure it's that Bear's where The Good Times Are Eternal. It's where only the good folks go! And; you can be sure that Saint Pete is listening to a great story right about now.*

*George Jones said, "We Only Remember What We Can Recall"; and my Ole Pal, "You Are One Of My Most Favorite Memories Of All".*

*May God Rest Your Soul in Peace my Dear Friend. You deserve it. Amen.*

*From Aaron Sorgman*

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**Aaron Sorgman** - November 30, 2020 at 10:26 AM

SB

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Sara Purtle Bergstresser** - November 30, 2020 at 09:13 AM

SB

*Jimmy Newton McCollum brings Carl McCollum, family patriarch, to the McCollum Reunion at DeGray Lake in Arkansas.*

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**Sara Purtle Bergstresser** - November 30, 2020 at 09:18 AM

SB

“ The founding member and leader of the "Walkerville Wonder Boys" has passed from us. Jimmy Newton's vibrant personality and booming voice regaled the McCollum Family with his stories and kept us connected to each other. From pond updates to Grapette to tales from the family farm, he drew us together. For this, we will be forever grateful. Rest in peace, Cuz! The DeGray Debs will not forget you...Sara Purtle Bergstresser

Sara Purtle Bergstresser - November 30, 2020 at 09:08 AM



Velvet Phillips - December 02, 2020 at 12:36 PM

KT

“ I remember most his talks with Summer and I when we were kids up to no good, him watching football on a Saturday yelling at the TV, hanging out at the radio station in Clayton, and Jim sitting between Summer and I at church on Sunday mornings because we would talk to much. He was a father figure for me when my father died and a truly great man. He will be missed. May he Rest In Peace.



Kim Trumbull - November 28, 2020 at 12:39 PM



What nice words, Thank you Kim.

Summer McCollum - December 03, 2020 at 01:50 AM

RD

“ Always loved his visits to Clayton and all the great stories he told. Rest in peace Bear. You were an honorable man.

Rosie DeHerrera - November 28, 2020 at 09:38 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jimmy Newton McCollum.*



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November 26, 2020 at 12:45 PM