



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

Memorial Tribute to

ROBERT ALEXANDER COLLINS

Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering

February 28, 2020

Be it resolved –

THAT the Council of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering record with sincere regret the death on December 1, 2019 of Professor Emeritus Robert Alexander Collins.

Professor Collins's professional life was very much related to the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, beginning in 1950 when he enrolled in First Year Civil Engineering, and ending with his passing almost 70 years later. Following graduation in 1954 he undertook post-graduate studies at the University of Illinois where he received his master's degree in 1955 and his doctorate in 1958. Professor Collins joined the academic staff in 1958 and was one of the first in Civil Engineering to have completed a doctorate. He brought to the Department a strong background in structural analysis, mathematics, and the relatively new field of computer programming.

Over the course of his academic career he supervised more than twenty-five graduate students. Equally important were his contributions throughout his career to many other graduate students as a computational specialist. This unique level of expertise led to Professor Collins undertaking a number of assignments as a consultant to civil engineering firms. An assignment that stood out for him was his use of complex computer computations in the design of the Ontario Pavilion at Expo 67. Over the years he served on a number of national and international committees related to programming languages and to a lesser extent, stress analysis.

Throughout his career Professor Collins was always available to counsel students and this in turn led to him being a regular member of the Faculty's Committee on Examinations. Beginning in 1974 Alex took on a leading role at the survey camp for students entering Third Year and he continued with this activity for more than 20 years.

It is difficult to express adequately the admiration that his colleagues had for Professor Robert Alexander Collins. His extraordinarily retentive mind, his willingness to serve as needed, and his wisdom, gave him his essential grace.

Professor Collins is survived by Arden, his wife of 64 years, his children, Allison, Scott, Arliss, and Anne, and his grandchildren, Alexander and Samantha.

Be it further resolved –

THAT this tribute to Professor Emeritus Robert Alexander Collins be inscribed in the minutes of this Council meeting, and that copies be sent to his family as an expression of the respect and gratitude of the members of Council.

Prepared by Professor Emeritus Peter Wright