



Max Collier

May 20, 1926 - July 16, 2013

Max Collier, 87, Topeka, died Tuesday, July 16, 2013, as the result of injuries suffered in an automobile accident. Max was born in southern Indiana May 20, 1926, the son of Charles and Alta Collier. He served in the Army during WWII. Max received a BA from Franklin College, Franklin IN and an MA from Indiana University. He taught history at Alderson-Broadus College, Phillipi, West Virginia, and at Morningside College, Sioux City IA, where he coached the Forensic Team. Max also taught at Washburn University in Topeka. For years Max had Mesa Verde Airport where he gave flying lessons and worked on airplanes. He also raised registered Black Angus cattle. Max is survived by his wife, Almira Collier; their son and wife, Floyd Allan and Judy Collier; and two grandchildren, Mark and Amanda Collier. He was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers, Mitchell, Charles H. and Marvin Collier. Family will greet friends from 6 to 7 p.m. Sunday, July 21, 2013, at West Side Baptist Church, where a Memorial Service will follow at 7 p.m. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions are suggested for cancer research at the University of Kansas Cancer Center or the American Heart Association.

Tribute Wall



“ *Max Collier*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Max was a kindhearted man with extra patience. He will greatly be missed but the memories will live on.
"Nehemiah 8:10 " the Joy of The Lord is our Strength"
God Bless All of you!*

Connie Christenson - August 14, 2013 at 12:35 PM



“ *I worked for Max during my senior year(69) at Seaman High and until I left for the Navy the next year. Coming back every 5 years for our class reunions I would make the pilgrimage to Mesa Verde and see my mentor. Always a smile, some word of wisdom and a comical quip to challenge my mind was my reward. My family sometimes wondered why that was so important to me. I will miss that dearly. Max played a huge roll in my career choice of aviation. I'll retire from an airline in a couple of years. Sorry to hear of the loss of your/our loved one.*

Galen Spaulding - July 23, 2013 at 11:48 PM

DH

“ *Almira: I was sorry to learn of Max's passing. I remember well those days at Washburn and Mesa Verde, helping build the hangers with payment in flying lessons, and the many personal hours we all spent together, some happy, some not so. But Max's support was always welcome and helpful -- as way yours. Over the years I would stop by Mesa Verde hoping to see Max but as I remember only twice in the last 20 years or so did I find him at home. Again, very fond memories both from the classroom and the personal relationship. My best wished to you.*

Dan Holt

Dan Holt - July 23, 2013 at 08:17 AM

LH

“ *In the late 80s and early 90s my husband spent many many hours at Mesa Verde working with Max and flying. My young son loved visiting Max who always gave him plenty of attention, let him sit in the planes, and gave him rides on his lawn mower. My favorite memory was when he took me in a ride in his glider. It is an experience I'll never forget. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. Lois Herr (James West)*

Lois Herr - July 22, 2013 at 10:49 AM

JH

“ *Good Morning Max, It was always the greeting no matter what the time of day. I really enjoyed Max and Mesa Verde during the late seventies and eighties. I would pack a bologna sandwich and an apple, then come over to Mesa Verde to learn about and work on my Cessna 120. I had stopped by just to see Max a few months ago and he still had the friendly smile and welcome greeting. I am very sad for his loss and extend my sympathy to his Family.*

John Hupe

John Hupe - July 21, 2013 at 08:57 PM

MF

“ *Our sincere sympathy and prayer our with you
We came to know Max though this farming,we bought prairie hay
from Max for a few years*

Dwaine Mellies and Jeff and Connie Mellies

Mellies Family - July 21, 2013 at 07:44 PM

CL

“The Energy Crisis '74 was major news as I guided the 7ECA Citabria downwind to yet another touch-n-go at Mesa Verde airport. Now opposite the mid-field, the corner of my eye caught something move; instantly I saw the engine tachometer had dropped to zero, though the engine was running fine (the tachometer cable had broken). I hollered over the engine noise to Max Collier ("Mr. Collier" to me) the tach had just died. He responded, "The engine still running?"

"Yes," I came back with.

"Use your ears."

So we went on to accomplish a couple more touch-n-goes without the tach. In this way I remember Max Collier.

I worked for Max in the summer of 1974, trading my labor for flying time in his Citabria (7ECA) and his Cessna 150. At 16 years old, I longed to follow my father's lead and become a pilot; Mr. Collier provided the means to begin the journey.

The Mesa Verde airport was like a history lesson and safety seminar all wrapped up in one. Right next to the gas pump in front of the hangar was a pile of wreckage that'd once been a Cessna 182 someone had flown into a thunderstorm. The weed-strewn wreckage was a constant reminder not to tangle with thunderstorms. Inside his hangar, in every nook and cranny, were bits and pieces of airplanes and airplane history only Max really knew. Many years later, when I was overhauling my own airplane's engine, I had a question and called him about it...he not only knew of the part I spoke of but had a couple of them laying around.

In a world where 16-year-olds saw pilots as high-tech girl magnets, imagined with sparkling teeth and aviator sunglasses, Max showed me America's real pilots were college professors and part-time farmers, average guys and gals who thought not of speed but of just

defying gravity. They came to buy gas in airplanes from World War II and fresh from the showroom. They were Republicans and Democrats, crop dusters and skydivers, teachers and mechanics-- all tied together by a common love of flight and the flying machines. Max provided a catalyst--Mesa Verde airport was a meeting place where wrenches were turned while hands described arcs and turns of imaginary airplanes as tales were told of flights past.

To be sure, if you were 16 and wanted to work for flying lessons, Max ensured you held up your end of the deal. In my mind are flashbacks of summer days spent inside the tail cone of a Piper Cherokee scrubbing corrosion off a counterweight or pulling the interior out of a Beechcraft Musketeer. There was assisting him mounting an inverted fuel system can into a Monocoupe as he modified the airplane with the engine out of a Citabria Decathlon that'd been the unfortunate victim of a tornado. There was pushing brooms and dropping markers while riding on a corn planter (an ancient farming technique meant to thoroughly coat one's scalp with dirt). But the reward came when Max would casually say, "Why don't you go preflight the Citabria."

Like (and probably mostly due to) Max, that 1974 small airport experience has led me down an aviation career spanning nearly 40 years. From F-16's to Cessna 150's, I've worked on, owned, and flown all kinds of airplanes and, now, I look at retiring from the military part of it in the near future. Max's legacy has come almost full circle.

After another lesson full of touch-n-goes, Max told me it was time to go in but this particular time he asked me to stop at the end of the runway. He got out of the airplane and said, "Why don't you take it around once and then come back to the hangar." With an empty seat behind me, I nervously watched Max walk a short distance away and turn to watch. As done so many times before, I lined up with the runway, pushed up the throttle and brought the stick back slightly to start the climb. Across the end of the runway was a line of trees, which I looked down on and thought to myself, "Wow. Now I

have to save my own life.” I’ve often wondered how many of his other students, with a freshly cut-off shirt tail, could recall thinking the same thing.

Thanks,

Clint Lowe - July 21, 2013 at 04:34 PM

KL

“ *I will always remember Max. He gave me my first flying lesson, and he was a great friend to my Father, Al Livgren. My prayers are with you.*

Kerry Livgren

Kerry Livgren - July 20, 2013 at 06:31 PM

CF

“ *Our sincere sympathy to all the family. We share in your sorrow.*
Sincerely,
Cheryl and Jon Flair

Cheryl Flair - July 19, 2013 at 02:37 PM