



## Thomas Howard McCollum

May 1, 1935 - June 16, 2024

Thomas Howard McCollum, known affectionately as Tom, passed away on June 16, 2024, at the age of 89 in Troy, Texas. Born on May 1, 1935, in Amarillo, Texas, Tom's life was marked by a spirited dedication to his career and a love for music and technology.

Tom embarked on a distinctive career path as an ocularist, a specialist in the creation of artificial eyes. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was a noted member of the Ocularist Society and moved to Temple, Texas, from California around 1975. Together with his wife, Barbara, Tom ran an eyeglasses shop before becoming the Head of the Contact Lens Department at Scott and White, where he worked until his retirement in 1998. Renowned for his skill, Tom could craft a glass eye that would bring comfort and confidence to his patients, which even included A-list celebrities!

Outside of his professional life, Tom was a passionate musician and an avid gamer. He was a talented multi-instrumentalist who especially loved playing bluegrass music. When he wasn't playing his bass, mandolin, piano or harmonica, he enjoyed playing computer games. Tom also shared many hours with his grandsons teaching them about DOS and guiding them through the challenges of classic games like Duke Nukem and DOOM. To add to the excitement, if their mom came into the room, the game was quickly changed to SkiFree, which was much more tame!

Tom is survived by his brothers Max and Danny McCollum; his daughter Tanya and son-in-law Mike Roberts; sons Cameron and Curt and daughter-in-law Shelly; grandchildren Craig and his wife Amy, Kyle and his wife Brandie, Allie, Ty, Lexie, Landon, Michael, and Madison and great-grandsons Connor, Jackson, Finley, Tyler, Kyle, Ryan, and Dylan. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Barbara, and his parents, Howard and Denise McCollum.

Tom's legacy is carried forward not only in his professional achievements and artistic passions but also in the rich family life he nurtured and cherished. His memory will be held dear in the hearts of all who knew him.