

Owen Howard Colling

April 11, 1939 – December 28, 2025

Cedaredge

Owen Howard Colling passed away on December 28, 2025 in his home in Cedaredge, Colorado. He was 86 years old. A celebration of life will be held at a date to be determined. Howard was born on April 11, 1939 to parents Darl Lavern Colling and Adele Isabel Kimball. He grew up in Rock Springs, Cheyenne, and Laramie, Wyoming graduating from Laramie High School in 1957. He attended the University of Wyoming from 1957 through 1962 earning a BA in Math. Howard was a two sport letter winner in high school and lettered 3 times at UWYO in football and 3 times in wrestling. Growing up in Wyoming allowed Howard to enjoy a steady stream of adventure including camping, hunting, rodeoing, and team building exercises including supporting all local watering holes. He played on the offensive line as tackle for the 1959 Hall Of Fame team coached by legendary college coach Bob Devaney. They ranked in the top 10 in the nation winning the Skyline Conference Championship and playing in the Sun Bowl that year. A favorite story is Howard in a huddle, questioning, "But coach, I thought..." and being interrupted abruptly by Coach Devaney replying, "Howard, don't think. It hurts the team!" After Howard's passing a former teammate shared with his daughter that if you needed five yard's, you ran behind #78. Another example of Howard's contribution to Wyoming sports comes from hearing Howard describe a chance meeting with Coach Bob Devaney twenty years later when Bob boarded a flight Howard was piloting for Frontier Airlines. Coach Devaney had gone on from Wyoming to the University of Nebraska winning two national titles, but that many years later he looked up to see a Frontier pilot, in uniform, and said, "Well Howard! How are you?" Coach Devaney easily recognized his former premier athletes. Howard joined the Air Force after graduating from Wyoming. He trained in the T-37 and the then brand new T-38 talon at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona. He was then based at Forbes Air Force Base in Kansas where he was part of the 343rd Strat Recon Squadron, 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, as part of the Strategic Air Command right in the middle of the cold war. Howard would be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for classified overseas missions while on forward deployment from Forbes in the RB-47. Howard never shared much of those stories other than describing the excellent character and lasting friendships of those who served with him. Evidence of the significance of holding the Distinguished Flying Cross has been witnessed unknowingly by the residents of Cedaredge in recent years in the form of low passes by C-130s and F-16s flown in honor of the aging DFC pinned cold warrior by young men made aware of his presence. The skies over Cedaredge should be a little quieter with Howard's passing. Howard joined Frontier Airlines in 1967 which merged with Continental Airlines and is now United Airlines. He retired in 1998 having flown over 24,000 hours without accident or incident in aircraft including the DC-3, DeHavilland Twin Otter, the Convair 580, the Boeing 727, and 737. While in the Air Force Howard married Janet G. Park of Rock Springs, Wyoming. They were married for 59 years until Jan's passing in August of 2023. At their 50th wedding anniversary Howard made a toast stating, "To fifty years of marriage, best 7 years of my life." All were laughing but none harder than Jan, his best audience. A beautiful tribute to their

love story is that Howard passed away on what would have been their 62nd wedding anniversary. Howard and Jan would move to Castle Rock, Colorado after leaving the Air Force. They made their home there until 1989. While in Castle Rock Howard served on the Board of directors of Castle Rock Industrial Bank from 1975 to 1980. He was President of the Chamber of Commerce from 1971-1973. He served on the Town Council from 1973-1975. He was Mayor of Castle Rock from 1975 to 1976. He always claimed he was Mayor because he missed a meeting. Howard and Jan moved to Portland, Maine for a short stay and then Easton, Pennsylvania for Howard's new pilot base of Newark, New Jersey. After retiring from the airlines in 1998 they moved to Cedaredge, Colorado. Every move Howard and Jan completed created a new friend group that lasted throughout their life. All their friends were loyal members of the back patio cocktail clubs that were inevitably formed in each new geographic location. No friendship was longer lasting than that of his brother Daryl "Sandy" Colling. As Howard's health declined all caregivers and family knew of the importance of preparing and freeing up time for the nightly 8pm call from Sandy. A finale event capping a lifetime of trading wisdom, memories, and humor as only brothers can. If you have read this far in the obituary, you might think the above was Howard's greatest accomplishments. But if you asked Howard his answer would certainly be family. Whether it was his niece and nephew Allison and Jordan or Howard's three children Kevin, Chere, and Kimball. First born Kevin married Mardy South in 1994. Kevin, tragically lost his life as a pilot flying for the Navy Blue Angel flight demonstration team in 1999. Chere married Adam Wasser and currently lives in Cedaredge. Youngest child Kim of Phoenix, Arizona sadly lost her life after a fatal heart attack in 2017. Howard has three grandchildren from Chere: Carter Wasser married to Alexei Cox, Cade Wasser married to Tani Zamarripa, and Callie Wasser. He has 4 great grandchildren: Malachi Park, Mila Ashley, Colling Joseph, and Cam David. We will miss hearing him sing, "keys are in the mailbox, come on in" in answer to our request to visit. His description of every one of his good friends as "pound for pound, the strongest, or best, or smartest..." His questioning of us, "How am I doing?" Or "Did you walk to school or carry your lunch?" And his request to "write if you get work" upon leaving. We will miss Howard's example to us of strength, steadfastness, and love for family. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to Hope West, N. 12th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81506 or New Hope Evangelical Free Church, 17464 Surface Creek Rd, Cedaredge, CO 81413.