

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on March 19, 2013 honoring

Leonard F. Collins

Leonard F. (Ted) Collins was Superintendent of Chino Public Schools from 1928 to 1946, the longest of any educational leader in the position in the community's history. Character building was a priority of Mr. Collins.

Mr. Collins spent almost three decades in the local schools as a teacher and principal before his final retirement in 1957. He was a kindly man of strong moral character, who stressed the same attributes among staff and students. His motto was, "Serve the King, and Never Be a Quitter!"

He was instrumental in developing the schools to a higher standard through a period of enrollment increases and building expansion. He was recognized for this throughout the state, according to the local editor writing after Mr. Collins' death on January 12, 1976. Mr. Collins presided over the unification of the Chino School District in 1939, when the elementary and high school districts and the Pioneer School District at Rincon were merged. His goal for high school students was to "develop health, to achieve worthy character, to acquire vocational fitness, and (during World War II) to serve our country in her hour of greatest need;" as was cited from his Superintendent's Message in the Chino High School yearbook.

Mr. Collins was born in a log cabin near Rapid City, South Dakota, son of an impoverished preacher-farmer. The family came to Monrovia, California, when he was 7. Early on, he took the nickname Ted after his idol, Theodore Roosevelt. After high school graduation, he went east to Oklahoma where he started his teaching career in a one-room school house.

Mr. Collins returned to California where he married his high school sweetheart, Mable Relph. He graduated from L.A. Normal School and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from USC and a Masters degree from UCLA.

After two years teaching in Cudahy, he was hired by the Burbank School District and served there 11 years, rising to superintendent. Chino hired him in 1928. After stepping down from the superintendent position in 1946, he taught and served as an elementary principal at the Cal Aero and El Rancho Elementary schools.

Locally, he was active in numerous organizations including Boy Scouts, Rotary, Masons, Toastmasters, his church, and the Dale Carnegie Club of Pomona.

He and his wife Mable had two daughters, Bertha and Mable, and a son, Ted.