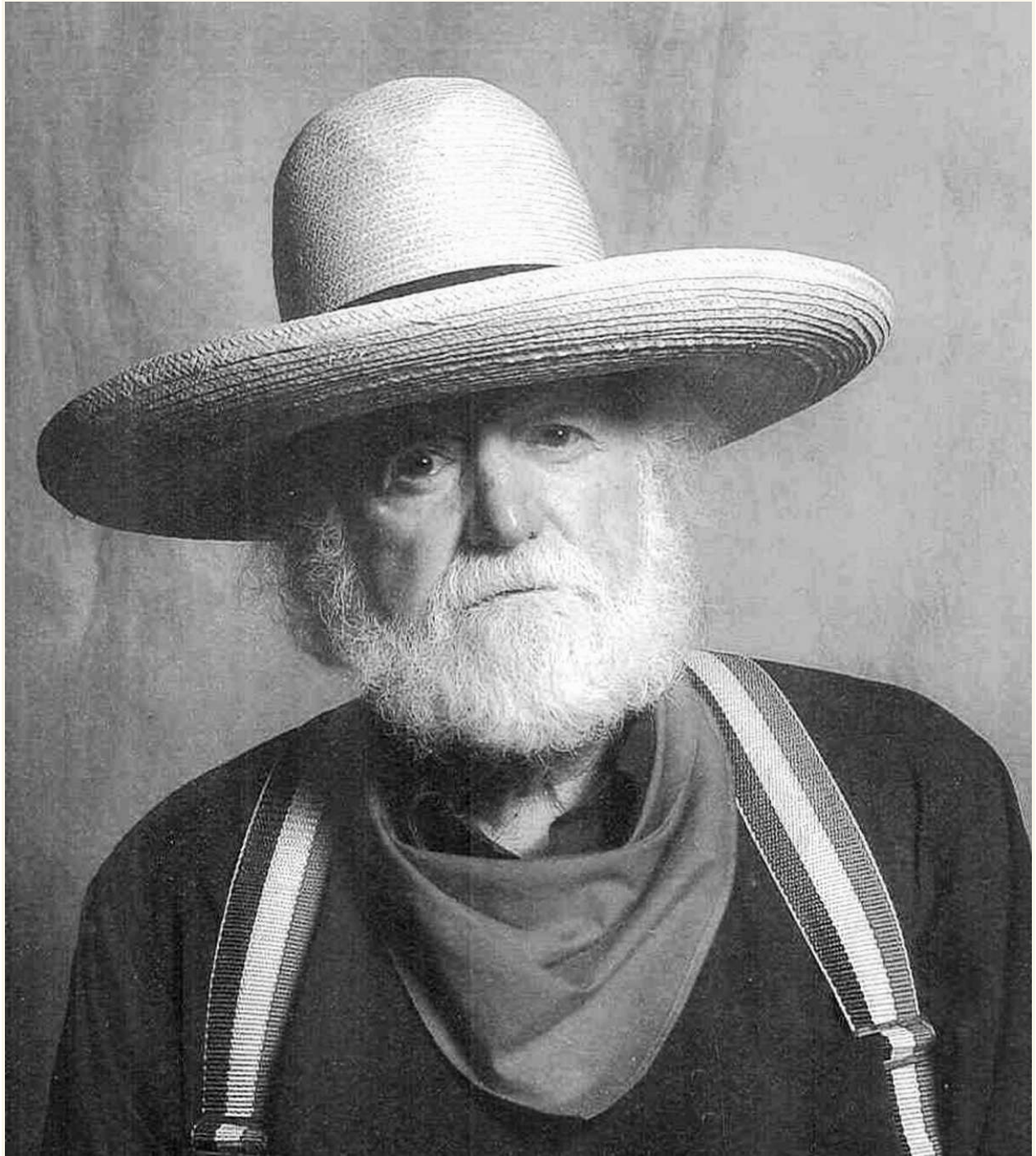


War veteran Collins portrayed Judge Roy Bean

John Henry Collins Sr. worked for Pearl for about 25 years.



Before finishing [Central Catholic High School](#), he left San Antonio in 1944 to become a Merchant Marine at age 17, and joined the Army in 1951 during the Korean War, serving in Germany as an artillery instructor.

Returning to his hometown, Collins began working in the early 1960s as a hospitality manager at Pearl Brewery, and later worked in sales and distribution for the beer-maker.

Many San Antonians and visitors to the city may have come in contact with him in those years, when Collins was serving in one of his favorite roles – portraying the famous Judge [Roy Bean](#), whose image was used in brewery advertising.

Collins died Thursday of pneumonia.

At the brewery's Safari Room, where visitors could get a free beer under the gaze of wall-mounted trophy animals, Collins greeted visitors, took their tokens and served them drinks. His portrayal of Bean, the Langtry justice of the peace known as the “Law West of the Pecos” in the late 1800s, earned him an honorary plaque from then-Gov. [Preston Smith](#).

More Information

John Henry Collins Sr.

BORN: April 27, 1927

DIED: Jan. 6, 2011

MILITARY: U.S. Army 1951-54

PRECEDED BY: His wife, Nita

SURVIVORS: Sons John Henry Jr. and wife Pam, and Thomas Patrick and wife Liz; daughter Margaret Mary Blaise and husband Eugene; and two granddaughters

SERVICES: Funeral Mass will be celebrated 10 a.m. today at the Chapel of the Incarnate Word.

Collins worked for the brewery about 25 years. Later, from 1983-90, he went to work for a Coors beer distributor based in Fort Stockton, which led to his interest in performing in frontier-days re-enactments in West Texas and elsewhere as a member of the [Texas Gunslingers](#). Collins took his Old West look to various chili cook-offs, serving as a judge at competitive events in Terlingua.

“He did a lot of chili-judging out there,” said his son [Thomas Patrick Collins](#) of San Antonio, and he also judged chili cook-offs in Luckenbach and San Marcos.

Upon his return in the '90s to San Antonio, he volunteered as a docent at the Texas Folklife Festival and gave talks to schoolchildren at the [Institute of Texan Cultures](#). He also was active in the [Knights of Columbus](#).

One of his proudest moments came in 2002, when Central Catholic awarded him his high school diploma. He took part in a program that offered belated diplomas to those whose educations were interrupted by military service. Collins' achievement was chronicled by NBC-TV news anchor [Tom Brokaw](#) in a “Greatest Generation” segment.

“Central Catholic put on a beautiful pageant and gave him his high school diploma after 58 years. He just glowed afterward. He really appreciated it,” the son said.

John Henry Collins Sr.

BORN: April 27, 1927

DIED: Jan. 6, 2011

MILITARY: U.S. Army 1951-54

PRECEDED BY: His wife, Nita

SURVIVORS: Sons John Henry Jr. and wife Pam, and Thomas Patrick and wife Liz; daughter Margaret Mary Blaise and husband Eugene; and two granddaughters

SERVICES: Funeral Mass will be celebrated 10 a.m. today at the Chapel of the Incarnate Word.