

**BRAIN HEALTH:** Talk launches winter speaker series

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or even nonsense — to keep our brains active, learning and growing.” His life’s work more than qualifies him as an expert on the subject. Collins graduated in 1964 from UC Berkeley in English literature, where a poem by Emily Dickinson directed him toward a research career in academic neurology.

After receiving his medical degree from Cornell Medical College, he trained at the National Institutes of Health and then held a faculty post at Cornell-New York Hospital while doing research at Rockefeller University. Rockefeller had a small research hospital but no neurologist. Scientists there asked Collins to run a clinical study on a potential treatment for multiple sclerosis.

“The study was robust enough to prove conclusively this new treatment did not work! Science keeps us all honest and moving forward,” he said of that time.

After a stint as faculty at Washington University in St. Louis, he became chairman of neurology at the UCLA Medical Center in 1987, where he led the movement to make it a research department.

After retiring in 2002, Collins and his wife, Valerie, a quilter and painter, moved to Sisters in 2005 to the home they had purchased on the edge of Indian Ford Meadow. It was the panoramic view from the house of the mountains, meadow and trees that originally captured their attention.

Since moving to Sisters, Collins has planted himself deeply in the community. In 2011 he and Cal Allen lit the spark that has grown into the Sisters Science Club, where Collins serves as president. The interest in science generated by their efforts has given rise to multiple opportunities for the community and the schools, including the annual science fair in February, public lectures on a wide range of current scientific topics, and rewarding challenges for students at all levels.

A lesser-known side of the doctor is his interest in the arts. He is a sculptor and has had shows in St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Sisters. In 2014, his novel, “Rodnie Jones,” was published. The story is described on Amazon as a page-turner about a retired neurologist, his young medical student with a dark cultural past, and the hubris

that can take us down self-destructive paths.

The Diane Jacobsen Speaker Series was established by FOSL to honor a beloved, dedicated elementary school teacher who died of cancer. Her fourth-grade teaching about the Oregon Trail made history come alive for generations of Sisters students.

Jacobsen was a fully involved member of the Sisters community, including her position as a member of the Sisters library board. Her efforts were central to the construction of a larger library — the building now housing the Sisters Chamber of Commerce. The original library, now the Maida Bailey building, was one of her favorite places in Sisters. As a FOSL volunteer, she worked on the annual book sale and headed the FOSL

selection committee for the annual graduating senior scholarship award.

For all of her work on behalf of Sisters, she was the recipient of numerous community awards, including the Chamber’s Citizen of the Year. In memory of her years of service to the Boy Scouts, a portrait of Jacobsen in her pioneer clothing was donated by Scout Troop 139, to hang outside the elementary school library. The inscription partially reads, “Diane Jacobsen, a legend in her own time. Educating Sisters children from 1979 to 2008.”

The annual FOSL speaker series continues to honor the memory of a very special woman. This year’s talks are health-related, with future presentations on exercise, nutrition, and end-of-life care.

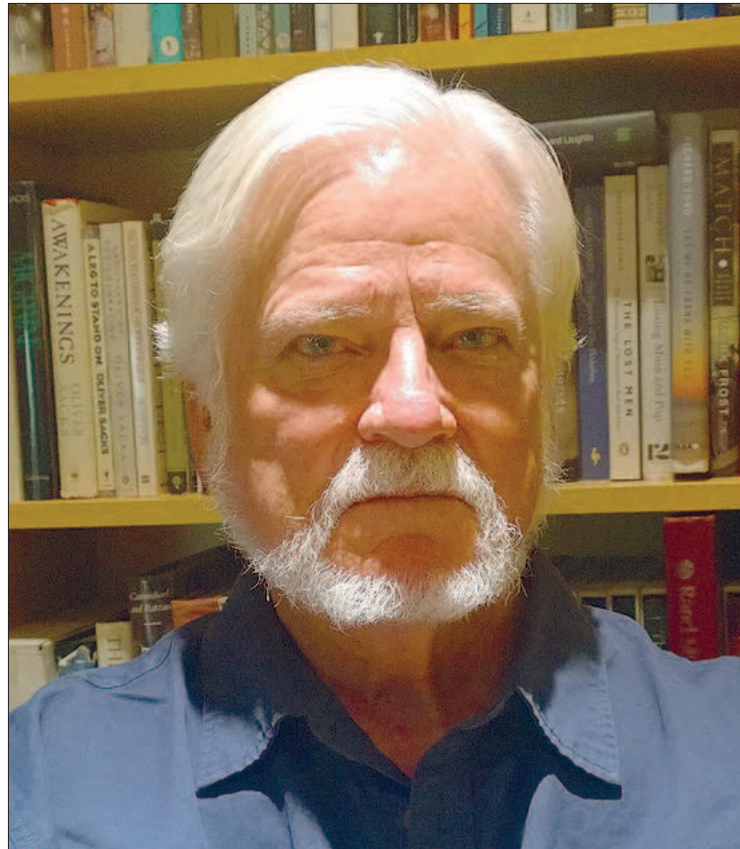


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Robert Collins M.D., retired neurologist and Sisters resident, will speak on “Secrets for a Healthy Brain” on January 10 at the Sisters Library.

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