

## Mutations

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"We are in a race against time because of these mutations. And in that race, we are falling behind," said Mara Aspinall, a biomedical diagnostics professor at Arizona State University.

The problem echoes the country's catastrophic stumbles early in the pandemic, when a lack of testing allowed the virus to spread widely. Currently, only a tiny fraction of all positive coronavirus tests in the United States are forwarded for further sequencing.

Genetic sequencing is important because the coronavirus, like all viruses, mutates as it moves through people. Many changes are inconsequential and do not alter the transmissibility or severity of illness. But without knowing what strains are moving through the population, the mutations that matter may pop up undetected.

For months, scientists have been sounding alarms and trying to ramp up genetic sequencing of test samples, but the effort has been plagued by lack of funding, political will and federal coordination, health experts and state officials said.

More equipment, staffing and funding is needed to increase sequencing, experts said, and the federal government has yet to create the infrastructure and procedures needed to receive, process and share that data on a national scale. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky said Friday the government is increasing the level of sequencing nationwide.

"We have scaled up surveillance dramatically just in the last 10 days, in fact. But our plans for scaling up surveillance are even more than what we've done so far," Walensky said.

Ultimately, the country needs real-time data — similar to the dashboards now used to track daily cases, hospitalizations and deaths — to track variants and their prevalence across the country. While sequencing alone won't stop the spread of more dangerous variants, it gives the country warning and a chance to act as they become more prevalent.

"None of that exists right now. We're incredibly behind compared to other countries," said Janet Hamilton, executive director of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. "We have no idea what is out there in our country. We don't even know what we don't know."

### Ramping up

The U.S. effort is so underdeveloped that it's impossible to say exactly how many virus cases are sequenced daily.

On Jan. 5, a CDC official told The Washington Post that the country was averaging roughly 3,000 sequenced coronavirus genomes a week. This week, CDC officials said the U.S. is now averaging roughly 7,000 a week.

In addition to the sequencing being done by academic and commercial labs, the CDC is having states send in coronavirus samples so that the agency itself can eventually sequence up to 750 per week. CDC has also contracted universities to scale up their sequencing to "thousands per week," Walensky said.

CDC has warned the variant — found in the United Kingdom, which British scientists said could be up to 70% more transmissible — could become dominant in the U.S. by March. Walensky said the CDC can only tell if that projection is accurate by reaching higher rates of sequencing.

The U.S. ranks 38th out of 130 countries reporting whole-genome sequencing data as of late January.

### Unheeded warnings

Even before the emergence of mutations such as the variants first discovered in South Africa and the United Kingdom, U.S. experts had been warning for months about the need for a national standard for genetic surveillance.

In May, the CDC launched a surveillance program for the coronavirus called SPHERES (SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing for Public Health Emergency Response, Epidemiology, and Surveillance). But, in practice,

the program relied on a patchwork of random academic labs contributing genetic sequencing on a volunteer basis.

A July report by the National Academies of Science said that "poor funding, coordination, and capacity" had led to a "patchy, typically passive, and reactive" U.S. sequencing effort.

"There weren't funds to do it," Hamilton said.

Last month's stimulus bill included funding that could help ramp up genetic sequencing, health officials said. Biden administration officials said the president's \$1.9 trillion proposed spending plan also includes much needed funding for genetic sequencing.

Many public health labs have recently begun sequencing or have partnered with academic institutions to do so, said Scott Becker, chief executive of the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

"Everyone is getting involved, but we need a standardized approach for how to do it, how to report it. We can't have scientists coming at it from every which way," Becker said. In a call with CDC officials Thursday, his group and others urged the federal government to standardize such processes, he said.

### OBITUARY

## Kathleen Emma St. Clair

June 3, 1934 - January 19, 2021

Kathleen Emma St. Clair passed away on January 19th 2021 in Bend Oregon. She was 86 years old. She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great-great grandmother. She was also a life-long friend to many.

Kathleen was born in Milwaukie Oregon on June 3, 1934. It was in Milwaukie where she met Norman F. St. Clair, the true love of her life. Kathleen and Norman were married December 19, 1952 where they began their family and lived until 1977 when they purchased Wickiup Junction Store in La Pine Oregon. Kathleen was a proud partner and business owner alongside Norman for 32 years.

Kathleen was preceded in death by her husband Norman and her oldest child Kathie Shephard. She is survived by her other three children Vicki Russell (Tom); Jeffrey J. St.Clair; and Patty Lemapu (Kimo) as well as 7 grandchildren; 14 great grandchildren; and 3 great-great grandchildren. Kathleen was the rock of the family, she loved each and everyone of us and we all felt her love deeply. The most important things in her life were her faith in our Lord and her family.

She is and always will be deeply loved and missed.

### OBITUARY



## Margaret Mary Hollinger

September 24, 1927 - January 5, 2021

Margaret Mary Hollinger passed away peacefully on January 5, 2021 in Portland, Oregon. She was truly a special woman to so many in her community and a mother. Her love and kindness was always a beacon of inspiration for her family.

Margaret Mary Weinheimer was born in Fredricksburg, Texas on September 24, 1927. She had a happy childhood surrounded by many cousins and her three siblings, Louis, Dortha, and John ("Zeo"). She had fond memories of climbing trees in her family's peach orchard and working behind the candy counter at Dooley's Five & Dime. She moved to California as a young adult and there she met her husband, Bill Hollinger, whom she married in 1956.

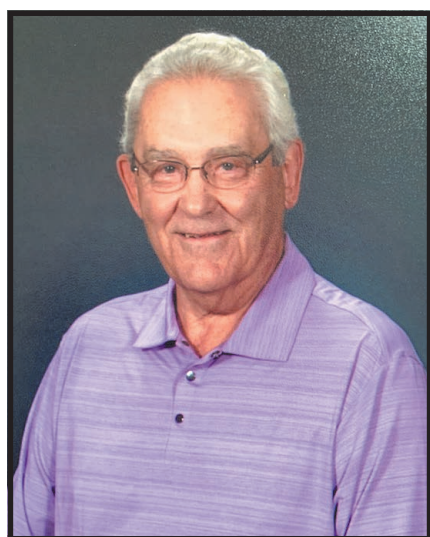
Bill and Margaret settled in San Diego with their four children: Kuipo, Bill Jr., Shawn, and Kevin. In 1976 the family moved to Bend, Oregon where Margaret lived until 2016. In Bend, Margaret developed a love for the outdoors, and enjoyed skiing, hiking, and camping. She was part of the St. Francis hiking group for many years, enjoying the close friendships and the beauty of Central Oregon. Margaret was an accomplished soprano and sang in the choir at St. Francis of Assisi church in Bend for many years.

Margaret is survived by her son Shawn Hollinger and his partner Mary Rayoum, and her son Kevin Hollinger, his wife Meg and their three children: Haven, Ruby, & Zeo Hollinger. A celebration of life will be held at a later date when it is safe to do so.

### OBITUARY

## Weston (Wes) Colbo

July 14, 1934 - January 12, 2021



Weston (Wes) Colbo was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

Wes had a big voice, a big heart and gave big love. He left this world on Jan. 12, 2021 due to complications from COVID-19. Wes was 86 years old, residing in Tigard, Oregon at the time of his passing.

Wes made this world a better place. Upon entering a room his presence was felt, his humor was witty, and he had an innate ability to bring people together. Born on July 14th, 1934 in Tacoma, Washington, he was the oldest son of Carsten and Rachel Colbo. He attended St. Leo's (1949) and graduated from Bellarmine Prep High School in 1953. Wes cherished his friendships and stayed connected throughout the years with many former classmates. After high school, he went on to serve in the Army from 1954-1956.

Wes met the love of his life, Dee (Dolores) Helf, in the summer of 1950. They were destined for each other, later becoming high school sweethearts. They were opposites, but a perfect match. In October of 1956, they married at St. Patrick's Church in Tacoma, Washington. They were devoted, lifelong partners and faith remained at the center of their 64-year marriage. Their true and everlasting love story included the blessing of four children, Diane, Mike, Jeanne and Julie.

Wes and Dee eventually moved to Seattle, Washington. It was there in 1961 that Wes found his true calling in retail. He started at House of Values and then found career-long success at Payless Drug Stores. He managed several stores in the Seattle area. In 1975, Wes received a promotion and relocated his family to Bend, Oregon. He was manager of the Bend Payless Store until his retirement in 1995. Wes loved people; especially the Bend community. He had a big personality, appreciated a strong work ethic and held customer service as a top priority. He was a mentor to many and took pride in seeing others succeed. All four of his children worked as his employee, an experience that brought laughter and tears, valuable life lessons and memories to cherish forever.

Wes was also known to many as "Coach." Growing up, he participated in several team sports, a passion that later turned to coaching. Wes coached Seattle CYO baseball and basketball teams for St. Mark's in the 1960-70's, as well as youth football. As a coach, he was exceptionally proud of being invited to take an All-Star Babe Ruth Team from the Seattle-Bellevue area to Japan in 1974.

Wes was a devout Catholic and lived his faith by example. While in Bend, he gave his time and talents generously as an active member of St. Francis of Assisi Church. He supported St. Vincent De Paul for several years, sharing his retail and management skills. He served on the Board of Directors and as President. Wes was always one to befriend and joke with the parish priests, enjoying their company and often inviting them to dinner.

As a member of the Bend Golf and Country Club since 1975, Wes and Dee found a community that brought dear and lifelong friends. Wes loved golf and the social nature of the game. When he was on the course, his group enjoyed plenty of jokes, good stories, with a cold beer or vodka tonic waiting on the 19th hole. Many of Wes and Dee's travels centered around golf, and were shared with several of their closest friends.

Wes loved the outdoors. He enjoyed fly fishing and gardening in Bend. In earlier years, he spent time sailing and cross country skiing. Palm Springs was a favorite yearly destination, as was an annual Labor Day family reunion in Lincoln City. This yearly tradition continued for 16 years, providing a wealth of memories.

Wes was a man who always had your back. He was our hero. We will miss him and are better people because of him. Wes was preceded in death by his parents, his loving brother (Marv), his oldest grandson (Jacob) and nephew (Blake). He is survived by his devoted wife Dee (Dolores) and their four children; Diane Paul (grandchildren Stephanie and Bryan); Mike Colbo (wife Connie, grandchildren Errin and Jessica, great grandson Jackson); Chase (grandson); Jeanne Brunner (husband Joe, grandchildren Kayla and Cooper); Julie Aguilar (husband Tom, grandson Zachary); Denette Colbo (sister-in-law); Sam and Brett (nephews), Caroline (niece).

Pegg, Paxton and Springer are handling funeral arrangements.

Please visit [www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com) to share your remembrances of Wes. A rosary and funeral mass will be held on Feb. 5, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Beaverton at 10:30 am. Burial to follow at Willamette National Cemetery. Due to COVID-19, all events will be limited to family only. Donations in Wes's name can be made to the Alzheimer's Association ([act.alz.org](http://act.alz.org)), or the Gary Sinise Foundation ([garysinisefoundation.org](http://garysinisefoundation.org)).

### OBITUARY



## Leroy "Dusty" Rhodes

December 12, 1925 - January 18, 2021

Leroy "Dusty" Rhodes, 95, of Las Cruces NM (Formerly long time Bend Resident) passed away into Jesus' caring hands while at his son's residence in Madras under Hospice care on January 18, 2021.

Mr. Rhodes enlisted in the U.S. Navy during WWII and received a Purple Heart during combat operations at Iwo Jima but continued to serve in the Navy deployed on his ship until the war's end. Mr. Rhodes also served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and was honorably discharged after the war. After the Korean War, Mr. Rhodes worked the next 20 years for the Burlington Northern railroad out of Bend before retiring and going into the Insurance Business. Mr. Rhodes was the very first State Farm Insurance agent in Bend Oregon retiring in 1988.

During his time in Bend, Mr. Rhodes was extensively involved in local philanthropic, civil, and school organizations. Mr. Rhodes was past President of the Bend Rotary Club, Past Master of Bend Lodge #139 AF & AM, Past Royal Patron and Grand Royal Patron of the Royal Order of the Amaranth (a Masonic philanthropic organization supporting Diabetes). Mr. Rhodes was always involved in one form or another with local sports organizations, whether keeping score for the Bend High and COCC basketball teams, working and arranging downs marker volunteers for the Bend Senior High football games, arranging vans and driving for the local high school baseball and American Legion baseball teams, Mr Rhodes cherished these times the most becoming life long friends with the coaches, families and team players. Mr. Rhodes also volunteered with the Coast Guard Auxiliary frequently patrolling Lake Billy Chinook promoting boating safety.

After retirement from Insurance, Mr. Rhodes and his lovely wife Ione took to the world traveling in various forms, including spending 2 years living on their small boat circumnavigating the East Coast Intra-Coastal waterway.

Mr. Rhodes was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Penelope Ione Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes is survived by his wife Ione M. Rhodes (Married 73 plus years), son and daughter-in-law Carl & Angela Rhodes of Madras, Grandsons Sawyer and Finnley Rhodes, Daughter & son-in-law Diane and Tom Peacor and granddaughter Katie Peacor of WA-DC. Services will be held at a later date in Las Cruces NM. Donations can be made to St. Charles Hospice. Autumn Funeral home was the attending funeral home.