



Yes, it's true; Colonial Freight Systems, Inc. of Knoxville, Tennessee is closing after almost 80 years. However, this is not the case of "*another one bites the dust.*" The owners have simply decided to retire. Colonial has had many wonderful profitable years and has continued to thrive during and through Covid-19.

The unprecedented market for used equipment provided the opportunity for the McBride's to take advantage of the timing for their retirement. Tom and Ruby McBride have been running Colonial for the past 25 years (Tom for 17 years and then Ruby for the last eight and a half) with the help of their many dedicated and loyal employees, agents and lease operators. Colonial will stop delivering freight at the end of August because that is when the tags expire. However, the office will remain open until all bills have been paid and all business has been handled.

Colonial has transitioned some of their dedicated divisions and lease operators to Purdy Brothers in Loudon, Tennessee. Employees are being paid a severance and Colonial is assisting in transitioning employees and remaining lease operators to other companies. Words cannot describe what an amazing family of dedicated employees, agents and drivers that Colonial has been blessed with over the years. We want to extend special thanks to all of our customers, lease operators, agents, employees and business partners who have stood with us over the years and through this transition to retirement. You truly are "our family".

Clarence Elbert McBride (Colonial's founder) began his first venture into "For-Hire Transportation" at the age of six. A nearby neighbor had a billy goat with a cart which Clarence overheard him to say he wanted to sell. Having seen his father write checks at the local bank, Clarence understood at that early age that there was a connection in commerce and the little slips of paper at the bank. He promptly asked the neighbor to accompany him to the bank so he could purchase the goat and wagon. The neighbor, being both amused and impressed, decided to go along with this dead serious child. So, at the bank, Clarence, who had not yet learned to write, picked up a blank check, made a scribble across the check and the

deal was struck. Later the neighbor presented Mr. McBride, Sr. the check with the demand for \$6.00. Naturally, Clarence got a thrashing that night, but he was allowed to keep the goat and wagon. He promptly contracted with the local railroad station to haul the mail from the depot to the local post office. His love for transportation continued from that moment all through his life until he passed away in 1996.

In 1943, Clarence McBride purchased CFFL (Colonial Fast Freight Lines) – a small Alabama intrastate flatbed operation for a total of \$11,000.00 for the intrastate certificate and all equipment. World War II was going on and Clarence had to literally build with his own hands various trailers and put together odds and ends of tractors in order to haul freight. He hauled loads from Ingalls Shipbuilding in Birmingham to their facility in Mobile. By the end of the war, Clarence had 12 tractors and 14 trailers (mostly hand built). For the first time, he felt that he had a grip on something he could build for the future.

Colonial has been through many changes and challenges over its history, but getting into the refrigerated space has been the most rewarding. Clarence and his wife, Lura, had the foresight to see that the refrigerated market would provide stability for the family and always be in demand because “*people gotta eat*” no matter the condition of the economy.



Clarence and Lura McBride were true entrepreneurs. They weren't afraid to take on any challenge as long as they had each other. At one point, they bought a fleet of small planes and Lura was giving flying lessons.



Colonial extends a special tribute to all the McBride family members who have worked at or been a part of Colonial through the years along with the many employees, past and present; lease-operators and drivers; agents and terminal managers, and business partners who have been there for us during the good times and the not-so-good times. We also extend a special thanks to our wonderful customers of many years who provided the amazing opportunity for Colonial.

And, as deserved, we saved the best for last, to our many wonderful lease operators and drivers; we cannot describe how much you have meant to Colonial. You have stood with us through all the tough time, especially recently during Covid, and you never complained. Covid opened the eyes of the whole country so they could see "*trucking is the backbone of America.*" We are so proud to have known each and every one of you. You will always have a warm place in our hearts.

Thank you to our entire Colonial family for our wonderful careers!!!

Ruby McBride  
President and C.E.O.

Tom McBride  
Chairman of the Board