

## **Bill Kinney – Bio**

I began collecting gems at the age of seven, when my father took me to a knife and gem show in my hometown of Rome, Georgia. My first purchase, a piece of Goldstone, sparked a lifelong fascination, even though I later learned it was not a natural stone but a man-made composite of plastic and glitter. That early experience ignited a curiosity that has never faded.

From that point on, I made it a habit to search for interesting “rocks” wherever I went. After high school, I was blessed to begin a career with Walmart that allowed me to travel extensively and spending 11 years across the United States and visiting 42 countries internationally. Throughout my travels, I continued pursuing my passion, seeking out unique minerals and visiting renowned museums and markets around the world.

Over the years, I have explored many aspects of gem and mineral collection, including sluicing, digging, high banking, dry panning, and mining for gold, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. This passion has also brought me to the Tucson Gem Show—the largest event of its kind in the world—for 33 of the past 34 years.

Inspired to deepen my knowledge, I pursued formal studies in gemology through GIA and ISG. One of the most rewarding parts of this journey has been helping others understand and appreciate their own collections and inherited pieces. I have assisted in identifying and valuing extensive collections, including one with over 500 unique, custom-made items. Spending weeks carefully evaluating such collections has been both a challenge and a privilege, especially when it allows me to help others discover the beauty and significance of what they own.