

WILLIAM E. BAKER



William, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, veteran, teacher and active volunteer in his community, passed away peacefully on Thursday, April 25 at the age of 94. He leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, wisdom, wit and cherished memories that will forever be treasured by those who knew him.

Born on July 2, 1929 in Paris, Tennessee, William lived a life filled with service, adventure, laughter, and deep connections. In 1937 he made his way to Pittsburgh where he later attended the Stowe school district and in the fifth grade, he met his beloved wife, Theresa. They remained childhood sweethearts through school and were later married in England in 1949. Together they celebrated 69 years of marriage before Theresa passed away in 2019.

In his youth, William served his country with honor and dedication, bravely volunteering to defend the freedoms we hold dear. He joined the Navy in 1948 and auditioned at the Naval Academy for the Admiral's Band as a drummer. He was selected and assigned to the U.S.S. Columbus, traveling to more than 28 countries throughout Europe until he was honorably discharged in 1952. His commitment to service extended beyond his military years, as he continued to support and uplift those around him as a musician. He played in the Pittsburgh Symphony, the West Hills Symphony, the Lamplighter Orchestra and a jazz band throughout Western PA for more than 30 years. He also taught rudimentary drumming to Moon, Montour, Stowe, Coraopolis and Quaker Valley students as a private drum instructor.

Professionally he was a research chemist for Merck (Pittsburgh Activated Carbon) for 40 years. Upon retirement he became involved as a charter captain on Lake Erie and he won numerous citation fishing awards. He and Theresa also lived part-time in Florida where he volunteered as a river boat captain for manatee tours for close to 25 years. It was in Florida that he began taking woodworking classes. He then later joined the Oglebay Woodcarvers Guild and became an instructor. He and Theresa worked as a team of artisans sketching, carving and painting his work. In his free time, he pursued his passions with vigor. Whether it was fishing, woodcarving or tending to his garden, or sharing his love of music with others, he approached each day with a sense of joy and gratitude.

William will be deeply missed by his loving family, including his son Bill Baker and daughter-in-law Mary Ann Baker; and daughter, Beth Zappa and son-in-law Michael Zappa, his grandchildren Stephanie (Matt) Straub, Shannon (Mark) Meyer, Shelby (Matt) Fiori, Christopher (Lauren) Zappa and Ainsely (Jim) Murphy, his 10 great-grandchildren and a wide circle of friends. Though he may be gone, his spirit will live on in the countless lives he touched and the memories he created.

A viewing to honor and remember him will be held on Monday, April 29, 2024 from 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm, at **PITTSBURGH CREMATION AND FUNERAL CARE**, 5405 Steubenville Pike, Robinson Township, PA. Mass of Christian burial will take place on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 10 am, at Archangel Gabriel Parish (Holy Trinity Church), 5718 Steubenville Pike, Robinson Township, PA 15136.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Oglebay Woodcarvers Guild, 1330 National Road, Wheeling, WV 26003-5706 or the American Legion Post 618, 701 Yunker Street, McKees Rocks, PA 15136 in his memory.

Rest in peace Pap. Your kindness, strength, and love will forever remain in our hearts.

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](https://www.post-gazette.com/gb)