



James Edward Baker

JUL 2, 1927 - JAN 28, 2021



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James Edward Baker (Jim) passed away on January 28, 2021. He was preceded in death by his lovely wife, Virginia (Gingie) in 1997. He is survived by six children: Matthew and wife Marie of Austin, Christopher and wife Beth of League City, Peter, Stephen, Timothy and husband Nelson, and his one and only apple-of-his-eye daughter, Juliet and husband Rick of Fort Collins, Co. Also surviving are ten grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Born in 1927 in Parkersburg, West Virginia, Jim graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY in 1949. He then joined Lykes Bros. Steamship Co. and worked in a variety of positions, initially afloat but eventually moving ashore to help raise his growing family. At Lykes Bros, he enjoyed camaraderie and long friendships, many of which embedded themselves in Baker family lore. In 1986, he joined the Port of Houston Authority as Director of Operations and retired in 1992.

During his career, Jim was deeply involved in navigation safety projects on local shipping channels. In earlier years, he was Chairman of the Port Safety and Advisory Council and Chairman of the Captains' Technical Committee of the West Gulf Maritime Association. From 1982 to 1992, he was Chairman of the Houston-Galveston Area Navigation Safety Committee (HOGANSAC), an official advisory group to the U.S. Coast Guard. In this capacity, he was given the Distinguished Citizen Award by the Coast Guard.

He served on two national committees, the Marine Board's investigation into ship piloting practices and the U.S. Coast Guard's committee, VTS-2000, which developed a plan for future vessel traffic systems.

Not content to sit still in retirement, Jim served on the boards of the Houston International Seafarers Center and the Houston Maritime Museum. He was very proud of the four years he spent as adjunct faculty of Texas A&M University, Galveston. He was a volunteer for 8 years with



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the Houston Museum of Natural Science, especially enjoying his time as docent when he would bring and discuss specimens with young students at St. Christopher Grade School.

He served as a Lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Christopher Catholic Church on Park Place Blvd. Jim long considered this his home parish but after a stroke led him to move in with family, he started attending services at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart as well. At the Co-Cathedral he formed new, heartfelt friendships that complemented the old and dear ones from St. Christopher.

Jim was proud of his professional work but to those who met him his legacy was his humor; to those who loved him it was his wisdom, kindness and compassion. Even in his later years, he taught important life lessons by example: 1. Sometimes you need to be the one who makes the changes that keep a loved one in your life. 2. You don't have to give into darkness during the hard times; humor helps. 3. No matter how hard someone may try, you never have to pull their finger.

Per Jim's request, there will be no services. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Houston International Seafarers' Center.



Tribute Wall

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RS

Rob Smith lit a candle in honor of James.

In memory of Captain James Baker, KP '49. Great man and mentor to thousands of Kings Pointers! We were just talking about him today! He was one of the first Presidents of the USMMA Alumni Chapter in Houston. We are looking for a copy of the original charter and I know Jim would have had a copy! His memory lives on! Rob Smith, KP '92703-731-7908 RLSmithJr3@gmail.com

April 19 at 11:54 AM



TA

Terry Austin lit a candle in honor of James.

February 10 at 5:03 AM



JM

Julie Merlino shared 3 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

February 1 at 5:45 AM



SM

Sophia Merlino posted:

Grandad will always be my role model. Everywhere we went, he always had the best reputation with others whether it was at church, restaurants where he would reserve his muscles, or any family event. Hearing his laugh echoing throughout the house would always make me smile because of how contagious it was. I love you grandad, you truly lived life to the fullest ☐ -Sophia Merlino

February 5 at 4:37 PM



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EH

Elroy Hartman posted:

First & foremost my sincere condolences on your lost. I was a young Port Purser back in the early 1960's & I was lucky enough to be assigned with Capt. Baker on our trip to Los Angeles for a payoff. While we were in Capt Baker's room with other Lykes employees we started talking about Disney World & I mentioned that I had never been there before. So low & behold while we were still waiting for the vessel to arrive Capt. Baker told me to get my walking shoes on that he was going to take me to Disney World. I must say it was a long day but a most enjoyable time I had. And over the years I was lucky to be assigned with him several times later in my time at Lykes. My name is Elroy Hartman & I must say that he was one of the nicest men that I had the pleasure of working with over my many years at Lykes Brothers. May God Bless you & your family during these trying times.

February 5 at 2:17 PM

TL

Tom Lightsey lit a candle in honor of James.



February 3 at 3:26 AM

SF

Stephen Ford lit a candle in honor of James.



February 2 at 1:42 PM

RS

Rob Smith lit a candle in honor of James.

Captain Baker was a tremendous leader and mentor to the USMMA Alumni Community in Houston. Always, friendly, always smiling. He will be missed! God Steer Thee Well Captain Baker! Fair Winds and Following Seas! Acta Non Verba!
Rob Smith, USMMA Class of 1992, Commander, USCG (ret).



February 2 at 6:26 AM



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JB

Jessica Bankey posted:

We will always cherish you with never ending love. I have so many memories with you. Your laughter was my favorite. I think one of my favorite things is the stories you told and how you told it. I loved sitting and talking asking questions, you always had an answer. I love you and will continue to tell my children and grandchildren what an amazing man you were.

February 2 at 4:09 AM

PS

Pat Sobocinski posted:

Jim always treated me like family. I loved his chuckle, such a sweet man. He loved going to the Polish restaurant, Polonia. I found that interesting. I shall miss him. Now he's with the Lord and his "Ging". 🙏

February 1 at 5:45 AM

DA

Donald Allee February 2 at 6:35 AM

Captain Baker What an inspiration. Not only did I learn a lot from him, we found time to have a couple of chuckles along the way. He and Gingie were a package and I enjoyed getting to know them both. Fair winds and following seas my friend. Rest peacefully.

EB

Ernest Bezdek February 2 at 6:05 AM

Capt. Baker... A great man, leader, inspiration and innovator! One of my first bosses at Lykes way back in 1976! I always looked forward to seeing him in the halls of the Melrose Building downtown! he always had something nice to say and will be missed! Heaven gained an angel and we lost a mentor and friend! Rest in eternal peace Cap!

PY

Pat Younger February 1 at 6:07 PM

Jim was one of the kindest and spirited men I have known. He teased with no end, joked with twinkles in his eyes, especially when he knew he "had you" and always did his dang level beat at work. He was one of my first buddies when I was on staff at the port and helped me to know an industry that was foreign to me. He will be missed. Rest well my friend.

CE

Celia February 1 at 10:34 AM

My sweetheart ,my love, you were a ray of sunshine at St Christopher's. Loved and respected by all. I will always remember our times working on the weeks collection's. Always hoping it could be more...Rest in peace..and remember I'm still your doll!



Julie Merlino shared 3 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

February 7 at 7:55 AM



King's Point 1999



King's Point 50th class reunion 1999



Salzburg 1998



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring James by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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