



Thomas Jude Baker

November 7, 1946 - March 2, 2023

Reverend Thomas Jude Baker of McCalla, Alabama ended his earthly journey after a battle with a rare kidney disease – membranous glomerulonephritis.

Tom was born on November 7, 1946 in Kinsley, Kansas to Newton Joseph Sr and Esther Johanna Baker. The eighth of 11 children, he was the seventh of seven sons. Tom was predeceased by his parents and five brothers – Robert James Baker, Daniel Joseph Baker, Alvin Julius Baker, Samuel Jerome Baker and Edward Julian Baker and sisters in law Carol Baker, Rosie Baker and Jeannie Baker. He is survived by his wife of -----years, Phyllis Smith Baker, sons David Allen Baker (Valerie) and Paul Andrew Baker, granddaughters Lena Mae Baker and Callie Denise Baker, siblings Newton John Baker Jr and Joan Elizabeth Ford of Kinsley, Kansas, Eva Marie Scherer of Wichita, Kansas, Theresa Anne Cheeves of Hutchinson, Kansas and Mary Martha (Rick) Boman of Clay Center, Kansas, sister in law Linda Baker of Lewis, Kansas, brother in law JK(Beverly) Smith of Island, Ky and sister in law Charlene(Robert) Burger of Port Charlotte, Fl, along with a host of nieces and nephews.

Tom attended the first eight grades at St Nicholas School in Kinsley, Kansas and was graduated from Kinsley High School in 1965. Plans for attending the University of Kansas to study art were interrupted when he was told that he was coming up on the draft list. He joined the Army with his brother Eddie. They were assigned to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO where another brother, Alvin was also serving in the Army. After basic training, Tom

and Eddie were assigned to Ft Knox, KY. The Vietnam War was raging, and civilians were working alongside military personnel on the Army base. Tom, Eddie and a buddy from Chicago all wanted to date Phyllis Smith who was working there during her summer vacation from studies at the University of Ky. They tossed a coin, and Tom won the toss. Tom proudly served his three years at the reception station in Ft Knox, KY working as a clerk typist. He achieved the rank of E5. In 1968, Tom was honorably discharged from the Army, but decided to seek employment in Louisville, Ky instead of returning to Kansas. In October of 1969, he and Phyllis were married. Taking advantage of the GI bill, Tom studied computer programming then started working toward a degree in business administration. He worked full time in the computer department of First National Bank of Louisville and studied full time at Jefferson Community College and later Indiana University Southeast. In 1978, he received a BS in business administration from Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, Indiana.

Tom had been raised in the Catholic faith, but was always questioning his faith and seeking to know more. He found what he was looking for in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He was appreciative of his parents and the Catholic teaching of his youth that had taught him to revere God, to live a good moral life and to respect the Bible and its authority over his life, but he fully embraced the truth of Ephesians 2:8 that it is by faith you are saved by grace and that is the gift of God. He joined Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, KY and grew rapidly in his faith. At Walnut Street church he was ordained a deacon, taught 9th Grade Sunday School and served on church committees. In 1980, he and Phyllis felt the call to serve the Lord on the mission field and were appointed as career missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (now IMB, SBC). They arrived in Madrid, Spain on May 1, 1981 and began language study immediately. Tom's job was to handle the financial, legal and logistical affairs of the missionary families serving in Spain. As he went about the business of securing visas, making travel arrangements, securing housing and

transportation for the two dozen families in Spain, Tom could connect with so many Spaniards who identified as Catholic, but really didn't understand their faith. He also served through five local churches in Madrid, teaching Sunday School, leading children's clubs and Vacation Bible School, as well as participating in evangelistic outreaches.. On his first two stateside assignments back in Louisville, Ky, he studied at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1991, he received his Master of Divinity degree with an emphasis in missions. The same year, he was ordained to the gospel ministry by Walnut Street Baptist Church. He pastored a Spanish speaking church, Jesus Vive (Jesus Lives) in Alcala de Henares for six years. Tom's greatest joy was working with children and youth. While pastoring the church in Alcala, he had the privilege of baptizing a family from Czechoslovakia who had fled the country ahead of the falling Communist regime. On a hot summer day, he baptized them in a cold stream in the mountains near Madrid. In November of 1991, he was able to visit this family in Toronto, Canada where they had emigrated.

In 2004, Tom and Phyllis moved to the United Kingdom where Tom was in charge of logistics for the office that ministered to IMB personnel in North Africa and the Middle East. At Reigate Baptist Church in the county of Surrey, just south of London, Tom worked with a program of outreach to local youth as well as serving on the welcome team and being a part of the men's ministry. After 32 years with the now International Mission Board, SBC, Tom and Phyllis moved to McCalla, Alabama in October of 2011 to be near their sons and their families. Desiring to continue serving in any way that he could, Tom worked for nine years as the janitor at First Baptist Church of McCalla. Tom enjoyed teaching the Hearts and Hands Sunday School class, working in the nursery and singing in the senior adult choir at Grace Life Baptist church where he was a trustee. His church family and mission family were always important to Tom and in his last days, they surrounded him with love and support. When his illness kept him homebound, he was asked where he would most like to go

and what he would want to do. His answer was that he would want to go to church!

His celebration of life will be at Grace Life Baptist Church in McCalla on Friday, March 10, 2023 at 1 PM. McCalla Funeral home is in charge of arrangements. Burial will be in the National Cemetery in Montevallo, Al. Expressions of sympathy for Tom may be directed to the International Mission Board Lottie Moon offering (3806 Monument Ave. Richmond, VA 23230) or to Grace Life Baptist Church,(5911 Old Tuscaloosa Hwy, McCalla, Al 35111).

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 9. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

McCalla Memorial Funeral Home
4780 Letson Farms Parkway
Mc Calla, AL 35111
(205) 477-4888
info@mccallamemorialfuneralhome.com

A Celebration of Life

MAR 10. 1:00 PM (CT)

Grace Life Baptist Church
5911 Old Tuscaloosa Hwy
McCalla, AL 35111

Tribute Wall

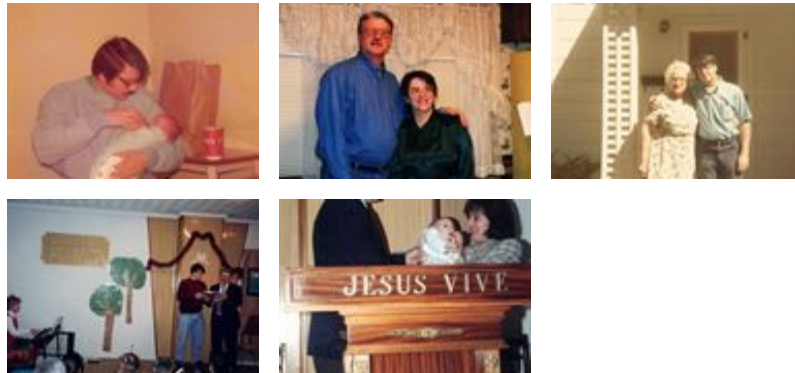
BB

“ Dear Phyllis, We are heartbroken at the loss of Tom. We have thought of both of you often as we reflected on the times we worked with you. Both of you were always so welcoming and affirming to us. You had such gentle spirits and servants hearts. We count it a privilege to call you co-laborers and friends. We are praying for you and are holding you close in our hearts. With love, Brenda and John Bayer

Brenda and John Bayer - March 08, 2023 at 01:00 PM



“ 82 files added to the album Life Tributes



McCalla Memorial Funeral Home - Traditions - March 08, 2023 at 12:24 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Thomas Jude Baker.



March 07, 2023 at 10:23 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Thomas Jude Baker.*



March 07, 2023 at 05:28 PM



“ *Remember Tom and Phyllis visiting my folks in Illinois. Phyllis' grandpa and my grandpa were brothers, so they often brought her dad so the cousins could visit. And, mom always looked forward to hearing their many stories concerning their time spent in Spain. Tom and Phyllis were such a joy to be around - I always thought the perfect couple! Sending our deepest sympathy to Phyllis, their sons, and all the family. Can't imagine how much Tom will be missed - he was such a kind and caring man. God bless.*

Barb and Dick Hein - March 07, 2023 at 04:45 PM



“ *Tom was a wonderful God loving Man, the first time we meet him at church we felt so welcomed and loved. May God be with this wonderful family.*
Myra & Larry Aldridge

Myra - March 07, 2023 at 01:09 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas Jude Baker.*



March 07, 2023 at 01:00 PM

SC

“ *Stamen Cholakov lit a candle in memory of Thomas Jude Baker*



stamen cholakov - March 06, 2023 at 03:42 PM

JS

“ *I was wife to JK, his brother in law. I remember Tom. I always thought he was an exceptional person then. His obituary said all I needed to know what a amazing person he was. He truly served his God and everyone whom needed him. My condolences to his wife Phyllis and sons, Other family and friends. A life well done*

Janet Smith - March 06, 2023 at 01:55 PM