

*Forever in our Heart*



*Celebrating the life of*

**Billy Joe Baker, Sr.**

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**April 24, 1935–December 9, 2022**

"My Mission in Life is Not Merely to Survive,  
but to thrive; and to do so With Some  
Passion, Some Compassion, Some Humor,  
and Some Style".

–Maya Angelou

One of the few advantages of dying from a terminal disease, is that you have time to write your own obituary.

I was born in Mineola, Texas on April 24, 1935, and grew up on Baker Street, attended Mineola public schools, graduated from high school in the Navy Academy in 1952. Aside from mopping the decks and eating navy beans everyday this experience taught me how to become a man. When I was nineteen, I reenlisted in the Air Force and traveled around the country. This was during the Jim Crowe days life for us was very tough. After I left the military, I was a lifelong Michigan resident but lived in Chicago too.

In my professional life, I was a brakeman at Railroad Express, Shipping and Receiving clerk at GM and a security officer. I retired early from GM and enjoyed going to the river, casino, playing cards, dominoes, and visiting home. I shared my love for traveling with my children and visited all the states on the west coast.

I was proceeded in death by my generous and loving parents Odis and Ola Mae, my brother little Otis, and sister Enola. I am survived by my wife, Rebecca and our two adult children: son, Billy Jr. and daughter, Michelle. Also, my daughter Patricia, 9 grandchildren (Montrel, Andrew, Eboni, Sheniqua, Diamond, Jacob, Billy III, D'ante, Shante), 6 great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, in-law (Corrine Rodgers), and friends. Me and Rebecca were married on May 11, 1968, I thank you for standing by me to the end. Billy and Michelle, I love you so much and thank you for helping me during my final months. Michelle I'm so proud of you and I know you will do well in law school and remember even the teachers had to learn; no one came in this world knowing everything. I wish you both such good things.

I was given the gift of life, and now I have to give it back. This is hard. But I was a lucky man, who led a lucky life on my terms and for this I am grateful. I haven't been feeling well for a long time, even before I fell ill in 2021 but decided to be grateful about having had a full life, rather than sad about having to die. At any rate, I am at peace. I'm grateful that I got to see my "Jaki" graduate and become a fine young man. I'm very proud of you and want you to do good things in life. I'm very proud of you too BJ despite all odds against you, graduated high school and have your own place. I'm proud of all my family. Ron thank you for everything you have done for me. We treated each other like family. Becky, Billy, Michelle, Jacob knowing and loving each one of you was the best story of my life. I know we will meet again, on the other side.

Billy Joe