



Elmer Baker

February 7, 1929 - February 26, 2018

A kind and honest man of integrity, Elmer Baker was a wonderful man to know and love. No stranger to hard work, he provided well for the family entrusted to his care. One would have been hard pressed to see Elmer idle. Just as friendly as he was outgoing, Elmer formed numerous friendships through the years. He also forged a legacy always to be remembered through his generous nature and loving spirit, and for these things and so much more, he will be dearly missed.

By 1929, the days of the flapper and the infamous Roaring Twenties gave way to hard economic times. Just merely the beginning, the Great Depression was officially launched in a country that had seen much growth and prosperity. Despite these troubling times, Benton and Carrie (Orr) Baker had hope for better tomorrows. This was especially true on February 7, 1929, when they were blessed with the birth of their little boy, Elmer Lawrence Baker.

Born in Dale, West Virginia, Elmer was the second of eventually ten children in his bustling household. He was raised alongside his siblings until the age of 11. Life as young Elmer knew it was never easy. His father worked deep in the West Virginia forest as a logger and also farmed while his mother remained at home as a homemaker. With such a large family in the midst of the Depression, times were certainly difficult, but even so, Elmer had his share of boyhood adventures, including taking his gun to school so he and his brother could go hunting afterwards. At the age of 11 he went to live with neighbors who had no children of their own. They needed help running their farm, and so for a very small wage along with room and board, Elmer learned to harness a horse and plow the fields. During this time, he did everything a grown man did to physically work a farm.

During his teenage years, Elmer made his way to Vicksburg, Michigan at Barton Lake and began living with an aunt and uncle there. Like many young men, Elmer was drafted, where he fibbed on his birth-date and began serving in the U.S. Army. As a heavy equipment operator, he served in the years between World War II and Korea. It was during this time when he met and married Marilyn Bivvins. During their 12 year marriage they

welcomed three children into their lives, Tim, Larry and Beverly. Although his marriage to Marilyn came to an end, Elmer was grateful for the children he shared from this union.

Now being single, he often hung-out at the Phillips 66 Rice Brothers Gas Station shooting the breeze with the locals. Andy Engler worked at the station and at one point introduced Elmer to Marie Dent. As fate would have it, the two hit it off and soon began dating. Before long they were married and together they had one daughter, Lana. Along with Elmer's previous three children, Marie brought her three children, Janet, Donald and Susan into their marriage and together they made a happy, blended family. When the kids were young Elmer acquired some ponies and it was a fun time for all when he pulled the kids around in his pony drawn wagon in the Vicksburg and Schoolcraft parades.

A strong, tireless provider, Elmer worked as a machine tender for Simpson Paper for 36 years prior to retiring. Whether at work or within his community, Elmer was a man who could be counted on and trusted. At home with his family, he enjoyed all different kinds of animals including cows, ducks, geese, chickens, and even a pair of raccoons. He also enjoyed tending to his huge garden and had a love for hummingbirds and various wildlife. Elmer spent time tinkering here and there and could literally fix anything broken. He loved classic country music, and when it came to cooking, he learned to make the most delicious candies and fudge during the holidays. Other than that, he knew how to microwave a good pizza!

He loved the sports of hunting and fishing and always spent a good deal of time with the men in his family doing so. When his wife, Marie fell ill and developed dementia, Elmer lovingly cared for her for ten years until she sadly passed away in 2004. He missed her dearly, but never one to be still, he kept himself busy. With a soft spot for babies, Elmer's 13 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren filled his heart with joy. The love and care of family saw him through, and the friendship of Caroline, his daughter-in-law Carol's mother, was a wonderful source of companionship for Elmer.

A man of character, integrity and honor, Elmer Baker lived each day he was given fully and completely. He never let a day pass without being thankful for the little things in life. He could be strong-willed at times, yet in the heart of Elmer his love of family and unending generosity never waned. Gone but never to be forgotten are the treasured memories he leaves behind.

Elmer L. Baker, of Vicksburg passed away Monday, February 26, 2018 at the age of 89. He is survived by his children: Tim (Carol) Baker, of Colon; Larry (Virginia) Baker, of FL; Beverly (Jim) Currier, of Sturgis; Lana Koole, of Portage; Janet (Daniel) Reitz-Galo, of

Portage; Donald Ely, of Portage; Susan (Dann) Louis, of Three Rivers; 13 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his siblings: Larry (Dorma) Baker, of WV; Marjorie (Floyd) McMinn; Mary Ann (Henry) Richards; Nancy (Brad) Crouse; Barbara (Phil) Tracy; and numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his wife: Marie; siblings: James Baker, Robert Baker, Wayne Baker; and Doris Jean Talkington; and an infant grandchild: Samantha.

The family will receive friends Saturday, March 3, 2018 from 2-4pm at the McCowen & Secord Family Funeral Home, 409 S. Main, Vicksburg (269-649-1697). The memorial service will be held Saturday, 4:00 pm at the funeral home, with Pastor Randy Evans officiating. Please visit Elmer's webpage at <http://www.lifestorynet.com> where you can sign his guestbook and share a memory. Those who wish may make contributions to Generous Hands.