



## Mr. William R. Baird

December 29, 1934 - February 4, 2019

William R. Baird, 84, of Akron died on Monday, February 4, 2019 after a lifetime of public and community service.

Born in Akron, Ohio, on December 29, 1934, he was the son of Annabel Ridenour and Samuel Pond Baird. He leaves behind his loving wife of nearly 58 years, Patricia; and daughters, Sally M. Baird of Vienna, Virginia, and Rebecca L. Baird of Surfside Beach, South Carolina; grandsons, Ryan William and Adam Alonzo Foster-Baird; step-sister, Ingrid Douglass; and treasured cousins, Peggy Seniuk, Ellen Arnholter, Julia Biddle, and Laura Peterson.

Bill attended King Elementary and graduated from Buchtel High School in 1952. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Amherst College in 1956, and his JD from Case Western Reserve University in 1959. Following law school, he served in the United States Army and Army Reserves.

Bill had brief forays into private law practice, but public service was his calling. In 1960, he joined the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Concurrently, he served a term as councilman for then-Fairlawn Village from 1960 to 1965. In 1966, he was appointed Law Director for the City of Akron. He was elected as Common Pleas judge in 1976, where he served until appointment to the Ninth District Court of Appeals in 1983. He was re-elected to the appeals court four times, before retiring in 2004. In 2006, he was honored to receive the St. Thomas More award, recognizing his outstanding personal integrity, community service, and professional excellence as a member of the Akron legal community.

Retirement was not something to which Bill adapted easily. Some retirees travel; Bill and Pat raised alpacas at their property in Copley, Ohio. Caring for a herd which peaked at 26, Bill kept busy caring for alpacas and their babies, as well as shoveling a fair amount of alpaca output, until hanging up his shovel in 2014.

Bill loved serving his community and his church, giving generously of his time, talent, and spirit to both. Bringing a deep, deep faith, he was a beloved and active member of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church community for decades. He served in many roles, including leadership on the Vestry and Finance Committee. Bill most loved hands-on work such as numerous Habitat for Humanity projects. His greatest passion of faith was helping to build a school and a church some distance outside of Port Au Prince in Haiti. His commitment

to this mission stretched decades, including numerous trips to Haiti, and fervent advocacy that the Akron congregation continue its commitment to this mission. Church friends have endless funny stories of Bill's adventures in his service to the church.

Since the early 1990s, Bill committed his time to supporting the work of the Copley Kiwanis. He served as Community Service Director, volunteered for the Holiday Food Distribution and flower sale, and built the park pavilions and gazebo. Bill was always a resourceful guy; each year as holidays approached, he could be found prowling around behind stores looking for sturdy boxes to use for the food distribution. Bill's greatest Kiwanis passion was the Summer Music Festival, for which he served as director for more than 20 years. The guy couldn't carry a tune himself, but he loved securing the Bandstand acts, raising funds to pay for the programs, watching Sunday weather forecasts to ensure a dry outdoor performance (how he hated having to move the show inside!), playing emcee to introduce the acts, and then picking up the folding chairs when the shows were done.

A private family burial was held on Saturday, February 9, with a public memorial service to follow at a future date. Should friends desire, memorials may be made to the Judge William and Patricia Baird Endowed Scholarship Fund at University of Akron School of Law, the Haiti Mission of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, or the Copley Bandstand Committee. To share a Memory, Send a Condolence, or Light a Candle, visit the Tribute Wall at [www.billowfuneralhomes.com](http://www.billowfuneralhomes.com) (Billow FAIRLAWN Chapel)

# Comments

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“ My prayers are with your family. Bill was wonderful man and Judge. We looked forward to seeing him at the Copley Bandstand concerts every Sunday. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him  
Polly Dobkn

**Polly Dobkin** - 11 hours ago

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“ Ellen Arnholter lit a candle in memory of Mr. William R. Baird



**Ellen Arnholter** - 14 hours ago

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“ Offering our deepest condolences during this time.

**The Staff of Billow Funeral Homes & Crematory** - 16 hours ago