



John Francis Babbitt IV

JUN 24, 1923 - JUL 22, 2024



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FLORAL HAVEN

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John Francis Babbitt, IV, an international businessman and entrepreneur, passed July 22, 2024, to be with his Lord and Savior. He was born on June 24, 1923, in Louisville, Kentucky, son of the late John Francis and Dorothy Matthews Babbitt and was known throughout his life as Jack Babbitt.

Babbitt is survived by his loving wife of 39 years, Jo Lewis Babbitt of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and three children with his former wife, Helen, who passed away in 1985; Julie and her husband Charles Rolle, John F. Babbitt, V, and his wife Terry and Susan Lybrand; six grandchildren, Steven Lybrand and his wife Mary, John F. Babbitt, VI, Erika and her husband Dan Montell, Ryan Kozlowski, Nicole Swallow, and Sara and her husband Stevin Graham; plus eleven great grandchildren, John F. Babbitt, VII, Ty and Shelby Montell; Olivia, Charles, Emma Lyn, Georgia Rose, Fox, David, Joanna and Sydnie Graham.

Babbitt enrolled at Purdue University in 1942, but before the end of the first semester he enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet. After going through extended physical and mental tests, he was classified as a pilot trainee and successfully completed various stages of learning to fly single and twin-engine aircraft. He was commissioned as a pilot with the rank of second lieutenant at Stewart Field, West Point, New York, and completed his flight training as a B-17 bomber pilot. In 1944, he and his nine-man flight crew boarded the Queen Mary, headed for assignment with the 570th Squadron, 390th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force at Framlingham, England. After several missions, Babbitt was selected to be a lead pilot and headed up squadron and group formations bombing German targets. He completed 29 combat missions, plus one humanitarian mission dropping food to the Dutch as the war in Europe wound down. While serving in Europe, Babbitt was awarded 5 Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross and attained the rank of Captain. Following the war, Babbitt remained in the Air Force Reserve and was called up for duty in the Korean War, but could not serve, because he was working as an engineer on the hydrogen bomb project.

In 1945, Babbitt was honorably discharged from active duty in the Air Force and again enrolled at Purdue University, where he became a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and graduated



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with honors as a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honorary Society in February 1948. He immediately joined The Girdler Corporation in Louisville, Kentucky as a Process Engineer and served in many engineering and marketing capacities. He later joined Chemical Construction Corporation in New York City and moved to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1958. When First Mississippi Corporation was formed, becoming President in 1960; negotiating a long-term natural gas supply contract with Texaco, which was basic to achieving the financing, construction and operation of two large ammonia plants and downstream fertilizer facilities at Donaldsonville, Louisiana.

First Mississippi became very successful with its fertilizer operations, along with plants it built and operated producing basic aromatic chemicals. In 1971 when the company achieved revenues of \$100,000,000, he joined The Williams Companies as President and Chief Operating Officer of their fertilizer company, Wilchemco, which later became Agrico Chemical Company. Agrico was phenomenally successful and Babbitt was appointed to the board of Williams with the title of Executive Vice President.

In 1979, Babbitt left Williams to form his own company, Devco International Company. Devco formed several domestic and international companies, which designed and built sulfur processing facilities in Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Thailand and other countries; while building, operating and marketing the product from two such plants in California and a third plant in Australia. Devco was also responsible for the marketing of ammonia produced in a plant it financed, built and operated located in Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada.

Babbitt sold his engineering and construction company, Devco USA, in 2005, but retained an interest in several other Devco companies. He served on the board of Hillcrest Medical Center for a number of years and was Chairman for two years. He also served on the board of The Master's University and Seminary in California; received an honorary Doctorate Degree in Business from Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. He was also very active in the Boy Scouts, serving as Chairman of the local Council for two terms and served on the board of The Little Lighthouse while it was raising funds to build a new facility to educate and train children with special needs.

Babbitt was a devoted Christian. He and his wife, Jo have donated funds for many Christian missions planting churches internationally, supporting local and foreign churches and seminaries graduating indigent pastors. They also supplied the initial funding that made possible the construction of Christ Chapel on the campus of Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. As well as many other related programs and projects where they have tried to be good stewards of the funds God has blessed them with for His Glory.



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A memorial service will be held at the Woodland Acres Baptist Church at 10:30 AM on July 31, 2024, followed by burial at Floral Haven Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, if you are so inclined, please make any donations to The Master's Seminary, Little Lighthouse Tulsa, Hillsdale College, or the charity of your choice.




Events


John Francis Babbitt IV

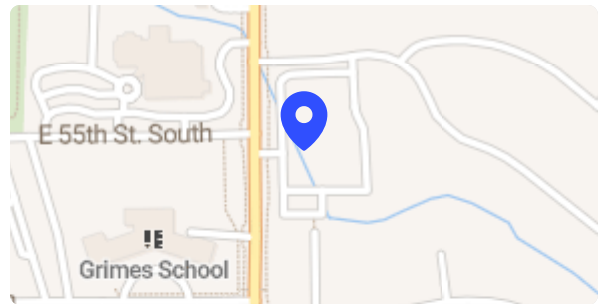
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Celebration of Life Funeral Ceremony


 **Wednesday**, July 31, 2024

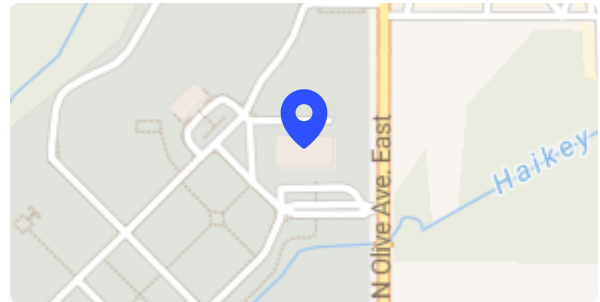
 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM CT

 **Woodland Acres Baptist Church**
5511 South Harvard Avenue, Tulsa OK 74135



Cemetery Details

 **Floral Haven Memorial Gardens**
6500 S 129th E Ave, Broken Arrow OK 74012





Tribute Wall

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Steve Shadrach posted:

My wife and I loved Jack dearly along with his amazing wife, Jo. We met them around 1985 and stayed in touch all those years, occasionally staying in their home in Tulsa. They prayed, loved, and supported us and our ministries in so many incredible ways. We will never forget Jack, a role model to me in so many areas of life. I shared a tribute to him on my Facebook page, if interested. <https://www.facebook.com/steveshadrach> I lift up Jo and the whole family right now.

August 15 at 11:09 AM



Beth Flannery posted:

I met Jack while walking in the neighborhood; I would finish my walk there so I could admire the house and grounds. One day he happened to be picking up his mail, giving me the opportunity to express my admiration. His welcoming and curious nature struck me, as well as the class that many men of that generation seem to possess - he reminded me of my own parents, also from that time period. I left our conversation feeling quite warm, and will miss running into him during my walks. I am deeply sorry for your loss.

August 3 at 3:42 PM



Laurie W. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of John.



August 1 at 5:45 AM



Anonymous sent a Lily and Rose Tribute Spray to the Babbitt family.



July 30 at 9:31 AM



Harry & Alice Sledge sent a Fairest of All to the Babbitt family.



July 30 at 6:46 AM



Tribute Wall

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Blessings From Steve Shadrach And Via sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 6:33 PM



On Behalf Of Grace Community Church sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 2:44 PM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 11:14 AM



Confy Jackson posted:

My best friend Sydnie loved Jack & will be a part of the welcome home . All my heart & prayers to Jo & family. Cindy Jackson 🙏

July 29 at 8:23 AM



Sam And Barbara Rader July 30 at 11:21 AM

So sorry for sweet Jacks passing.Sam and I will send a donation to Crossover Community Impact. OurPrayers are with you! Sam and Barbara Rader



Anonymous sent a Magnificent Life Spray to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 7:57 AM





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 7:03 AM



Johnny, Stephanie, Scotty, Matt Miller sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Babbitt family.

July 29 at 5:28 AM



All The Devco Australia Family Xx sent a Rose Remembrance to the Babbitt family.

July 28 at 2:30 PM



All The Devco Australia Family Xx planted a Memorial Tree in honor of John.

July 28 at 2:30 PM



Kelley Williams posted:

I worked for Jack at First Mississippi, and succeeded him as CEO. He was a visionary leader. He turned a troubled company around and positioned it for future success. First Mississippi had the highest total return to shareholders of all listed US companies in the decade of the 1970's. I respected and admired Jack's calm persistence in the face of adversity and criticism. I hold him in high esteem as a mentor. And will miss him as a friend. May the Peace of Christ be with all who loved him. Kelley Williams

July 27 at 1:46 PM



Anonymous sent a Divine Light to the Babbitt family.

July 26 at 11:34 AM





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Terry B. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of John.



July 26 at 11:34 AM



Frank Muller posted:

Jack has been a dear friend, a business partner, a solid Christian, and a heroic American! God will quickly welcome Jack home! Thank you for showing me the right way to live. I will miss you deeply! Respectfully Frank Muller

July 26 at 10:35 AM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Babbitt family.



July 26 at 10:30 AM



Julie posted:

Jack will be very much missed by many. He was a true gentleman, scholar and charming individual. Sending prayers and love to Jo and the entire family. With love, Julie Neitzel

July 26 at 10:26 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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