



Charles V. Baker

April 17, 1944 - February 6, 2025

Charles VanSant (Van) Baker died in his home on February 6, 2025 at the age of 80 after a long battle with cancer.

Van was born in Denver, CO on April 17, 1944 to Charles and Virginia Baker. He grew up in Estes Park, CO spending many hours exploring Rocky Mountain National Park and surrounding area. The youngest of 4 children, he had three beloved older sisters Virgie, Ruthie, and Betsy.

Van graduated from Estes Park High School in 1962. He went on to attend college at Colorado State University where he met his wife and best friend, Sheila Flanagan. They married in June 1967. Van graduated in 1968 with a master's degree in Range Science. Van and Sheila settled in Ft. Collins, CO where they raised their two children. He went back to school and earned a second master's degree in Industrial Sciences in 1986. His career was diverse and included data analysis for the Natural Resource Ecology Lab at Colorado State University, teaching, customer service, and computer systems administration.

Van was a life-long outdoorsman. He was passionate about land stewardship and conservation as well as woodworking and fixing and building things in general. He enjoyed hiking, photography, hunting, fishing and rock hounding. He was an accomplished craftsman in wood, metal and leather. He made

many beautiful pieces for family and friends. He didn't have a degree in engineering, but he had the mind of an engineer. He could design and build just about anything. He volunteered many hours helping build hiking trails with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, cages for the Rocky Mountain Raptor Center, bird houses and other community projects. He always had multiple projects going at once in his shop and passed that legacy on to his children.

Husband, Dad, Bapa, Brother, Uncle, Cousin and Friend. He lives on in all of us.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Sheila, son Dirk, daughter Colleen (daughter-in-law Michelle), grandchildren Kenzie and Allisha (Brennan), sister Betsy and sister-in-law Kathy, cousins, nieces and nephews, many wonderful friends and two loyal dogs.

In 1966 he saved up and bought his first car, a brand-new Jeep CJ5. The Jeep was a part of many adventures in a rich and generous life. He took his last ride in the Jeep on December 27, 2024.

We love you! "Happy trails to you until we meet again."

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family asks that respects be paid in the form of donations to Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, The Nature Conservancy of Colorado, or Colorado Open Lands - links below.

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies: <https://www.birdconservancy.org/donate/>
(Please check the box for "Dedicate my donation in honor or memory of someone", enter Sheila Baker for notification, and vnsbaker@gmail.com for the email)

The Nature Conservancy of Colorado: <https://preserve.nature.org/page/8152>

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(Please use the same name and email for notification as above)

Colorado Open Lands: <https://coloradoopenlands.org/donate/>

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