

CROSSED THE BAR

George Robert “Bob” Baker

George Robert “Bob” Baker, 87, passed away at his home in Palm City, Fla., on May 31, 2011.

Born in Olney, Ill., on Oct. 30, 1923, he was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy, of 68 years; a brother, Frank; and a sister. He is survived by his dear companion, Shirley Bellas; and a nephew, Harold Baker.

A 10-letter athlete, he graduated from Lawrenceville Township High School in 1942. Bob first attended the University of Wyoming and later the University of Michigan. While at U of M, Bob majored in business administration and industrial psychology. He served the first 15 years of his career at The Dow Chemical Co. in personnel administration, professional placement and management development. It was during these early years at Dow that he was noted for his pitching skills that helped lead the Dow AC’s to two world championship seasons. Following a stint in Coral Gables, Fla. as director of plastics and packaging business for Dow Latin America, Bob was asked in in 1971 to head Dow’s operations in Japan, the first such director to be appointed in Dow’s worldwide organization.

Bob was the recipient of numerous special recognitions and decorations including the 2nd Class Order of Merit of the Sacred Treasure by H.I.M. The Emperor of Japan, and the US/Japan Fulbright 50th Anniversary Award. He was instrumental in Handa City, Japan becoming Midland’s Sister City. At the time of his retirement in 1983, Bob was president of Dow Chemical Japan Limited and Dow Lepetit Japan Limited.

In 1984, Baker Int’l Associates was formed, building on Bob’s extensive international experience. Given his commitment to furthering international understanding between the two countries, Bob established and funded the Baker-Kanagawa U.S.-Japan Study Foundation. Bob was always happy on a golf course. He played many summer with PGA professional Tom Watson, and won three Hawaiian Open Pro-Ams. Friends will long remember his love of the University of Michigan and most of all his love for people.

A memorial service will be held Thursday, July 14, 2011, at 11 a.m., at Ware Smith Woolever Funeral Home, with The Rev. Wallace Mayton, III officiating. Friend and associates may gather beginning at 9 a.m. at the funeral home. Burial of remains will take place at a later date. Memorials are suggested to Baker-Kanagawa U.S.-Japan Study Foundation, c/o Guy D. Merriam, Chemical Bank, 235 E. Main St., Midland, MI 48640, or The Midland Area Community Foundation for the Dorothy Baker Scholarship Fund, 76 East Ashman, Midland, MI 48640.