



PJ Venture (Cosentino Realty) mourns loss of Baker, director of projects, at age 76

June 25, 2021 - Long Island



Smithtown, NY It is with a heavy heart and a deep amount of sorrow that PJ Venture (Cosentino Realty) mourn the sudden loss of their beloved director of projects John Edward Baker. Baker passed away suddenly on Saturday afternoon June 5th. He was 76 years old.

A well-respected veteran in the commercial real estate industry, Baker played an enormous role in the growth of PJ Venture (Cosentino Realty) and the Town of Smithtown. His passion, expertise and integrity were integral to the success of the company. He was an enormous part of the heart and soul of PJ Venture. His passion for perfectionism and devotion to his work can be seen in each and every building he constructed during his career. Baker's work day started at 3 a.m. He was locally renowned for his 5 a.m. business phone calls. Being a Vietnam Vet, he always said it's better to rise before the enemy. He was an expert in his field and his wisdom extended far beyond that. John

oversaw and supervised the construction of over 1.5 million s/f of commercial retail in the Town of Smithtown. The most notable properties Baker developed include Cosentino Commerce Center (Commack South Shopping Center) located in Commack. This power center consists of 500,000 s/f on 50 acres. This property is home to many tenants including Costco Wholesale, Homesense, Guitar Center, HomeGood's, Marshall's, Sleepy's, Starbucks, Shoprite Superstore and the Tile Shop. Baker also developed the adjoining Crooked Hill Commons in Commack which includes WalMart, Kohls and Home Depot as well as Café Corner and the second Chick-fil-a on Long Island. He also constructed the Lerner Building in Syosset. Baker was in the process of completing the construction of Floor and Décor's second location on Long Island in Commack South Shopping Center and the new Geico headquarters located in Commack's Café Corner.

Baker worked closely with the Town of Smithtown and was able to acquire properties the town wanted to preserve in exchange for the transfer of development rights. He was the driving force behind the preservation of Hauppauge Springs, the historic Harned Sawmill in Commack and the Saam property. Baker also made deals to preserve four acres on Old Northport Rd. in Kings Park and properties in East Hampton. He gave the town many opportunities to preserve land where typically they would not be able to do so at no cost to the taxpayer.

He was well known and a dear friend to many at Smithtown Town Hall.

The Town of Smithtown is a stronger place because of the indelible mark Baker left on it. Baker worked side by side with Peter and Michael for over 35 years and his passing is a significant loss to the company both professionally and personally.

Baker grew up in Dix Hills and was the oldest of five children. Baker has been a resident of Smithtown since 1973 when he married his wife Joanne Baker. Prior to working for PJ Venture, Baker worked for the Local 138 Engineers Union where he operated heavy machinery to complete the South Shore sewer district and Kulka Construction.

He served honorably in the U.S. Army from 1965-1967. He found his passion for building while he studied engineering and construction there. He was a skilled gunman and a lifetime member of Peconic River Sportsman Club and Maidstone Club. His hobbies included clay shooting, quail hunting, fishing, gardening and spending time with his grandchildren. Baker never missed an opportunity to speak about his grandchildren. They were the light of his life. Baker was known for his stories, humor, and selflessness. He always told the truth even if it wasn't what you wanted to hear.

Baker is survived by his wife Joanne, his son Joseph, daughter in law Ashley and grandchildren Madison and Emilia. His wife Joanne said, "He lived everyday doing what made him happy, he was a good man and loved the people that loved him." He was incredibly proud of Joseph and enjoyed taking Ashley on shopping sprees. His lifelong friends include local residents William Loscalzo, Edward McGovern, Edward Henry Sr. and Edward Henry Jr.

Baker was known for his generous heart, unwavering loyalty, and substantial love for his family and friends. He touched countless people with his generosity of spirit in both his business and personal

life. He will be greatly missed by all who were fortunate enough to work with him and call him a friend.

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