

Rodger Baier, 85; private service

Rodger W. Baier, Ph.D., 85, of Morehead City, passed away Thursday, July 23, 2015, at his home.

The family will have a private memorial service at a later date.

Dr. Baier was a distinguished chemical engineer and ocean scientist. He was a loving and beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He was a longtime Rotarian and dedicated community volunteer. He succumbed to metastatic prostate cancer.

Born in Upland, Calif., on Jan. 1, 1930, Dr. Baier grew up in Ontario, Calif., where his love of science and ocean life began. Many summers were spent with his family in Laguna Beach, where he mastered the feat of diving into that beach's famous blow hole at high tide. From an early age, he was also an accomplished gymnast, tennis player and swing and show-tune pianist, and kept these interests alive throughout his life.

He was the son of the late Anita Finke and Willard E. Baier.

He was a chemist and longtime head of research at Sunkist Growers Inc. in Claremont (later Sherman Oaks), Calif. A graduate of Chaffey High School in Ontario, Calif., and the California Institute Technology in Pasadena, Calif., he went to work as a chemical engineer at American Potash and Chemical Corp., in Trona, Calif., and later at Philco Ford Corp.'s Aeronutronic Division in Newport Beach, Calif.

Shortly after graduating from college, he met and married the love of his life, Jeanne Elizabeth Brothers Baier, of Boulder City, Nev., a Stanford University graduate. The two were married in September of 1953 and recently celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary.

Dr. Baier's love of ocean life eventually led him to the chemical oceanography department of the University of Washington in Seattle, Wash., where he received his Ph.D. in 1972, studying lead distribution in the water of Seattle's Lake Union.

In 1972, Dr. Baier took on a teaching/research post at Duke University's Marine Laboratory in Beaufort, where he stayed for five years before accepting the position of associate program director of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration (IDOE) Environmental Quality Program for the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., and moving with his wife to McLean, Va.

Three years later, in 1981, he became the associate program director of NSF's Chemical Oceanography Program, helping to oversee academic oceanographic research projects and funding throughout the country until his retirement in 1998.

Dr. and Mrs. Baier returned that same year to their future retirement home in Morehead City, where they have lived ever since. In his retirement, Dr. Baier devoted much of his time to the

Rotary Club of Morehead City-Noon, serving as liaison and leadership coordinator for the Interact Club, a service-based club sponsored by Noon Rotary, at West Carteret High School. Because of his service and the relationship he encouraged and inspired between the Rotary organization and the service club, the Rotarians made a \$2,000 scholarship donation to the Interact Club in May.

A member of the First Presbyterian Church of Morehead City, Dr. Baier also volunteered his time at the Harborview Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, playing piano during musical therapy workshops there. He and his wife were also avid supporters of the Carteret Community Theatre and were acknowledged publicly on July 18, at The Morehead Center for Performing Arts and Events for their significant contributions and support. The two also volunteered their time as advocates and tutors for low-income children and adults throughout their retirement years.

For those who knew and loved him, Dr. Baier was not only a brilliant scientist and engineer, but an enchanting and entertaining humorist; a talented pianist and accompanist (and even trickster, who could play an opus on piano by heart while lying on his back under the keys); a magician who kept children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren spellbound for hours at a time throughout his life; a lover of limericks, math puzzles and natural enigmas; and an avid ocean swimmer, who regularly enjoyed one-mile workouts in the waves off Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach.

A man of great physical strength and profound intellect, he was also a gentle, loving spirit who endeavored to help others and enhance their understanding of the world around them, and who cherished his wife, family and many, many lifetime friends.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne Baier; sister, Dorothea Baier Ediger; two daughters, Kristen Frasch Johnson and Darcie Preuitt; two sons-in-law, James H. Johnson and Christopher Preuitt; three grandsons, Jesse and Benjamin Frasch and Randall Byers; and five great-grandchildren.

A third daughter, Laurie Anita Baier, was lost in 1978.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that all donations be made to the Rotary Club of Morehead City-Noon Interact Scholarship Fund, Attn: Mark Shouse, Treasurer, First Bank, 137 Highway 24 west, Morehead City, N.C. 28557.

Arrangements are by Munden Funeral Home & Crematory Inc. of Morehead City. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.mundenfuneralhome.net.