



## William David Baird

July 8, 1939 - November 15, 2024

William David Baird was born at Saint Anthony's hospital in Oklahoma City on July 8, 1939. He departed this life at Dallas, Texas on November 15, 2024. David was the youngest of two sons born to Faye Shinn and Everett William Baird. He grew up in Edmond, Oklahoma. During high school he was president of the student council, an outstanding debater, and played the cornet and baritone in the band. He worked as a dishwasher in the Grill Café later in the evenings and during the summer at the state capitol building and grounds.

David took an AA degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he also served for five years on the staff of Representative John Jarman, member of Congress from central Oklahoma. Subsequently, he completed a BA degree at the University of Central Oklahoma at Edmond, and a Masters and Doctorate in history at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

David's first teaching position in history was at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. After ten years, he took a similar position, serving also as chair of the history department, at Oklahoma State University at Stillwater. In 1988, he moved to Pepperdine University at Malibu, California, to take the position as Howard A. White Professor of History, and later as Chair of the Humanities Division and Dean of Seaver College. He retired from Pepperdine in 2016.

As a historian of the American West, David wrote or co-wrote sixteen books. His more notable books included *Peter Pitchlynn, Chief of the Choctaws* (1972); *The Quapaws: A History of the Downstream People* (1980); *The Story of Oklahoma* (1994); *The Quest for Distinction: Pepperdine University in the Twentieth Century* (2016); and *Churches of Christ in Oklahoma: A History* (2020). He also served as president of the Western History Association; president of Phi Alpha Theta, the history honor society; and as secretary-treasurer of the Pacific Historical Association. For more than fifty years, David was also an active member of International Rotary. He was also a life-time and fifth-generation member of Churches of Christ, serving as an elder of the University church in Malibu for more than twenty years.

David married Brenda Jane Tacker, a native of Wagoner, Oklahoma, on November 24, 1961. Jane was a new student at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond needing a ride to church. David picked her up, and continued to pick her up for the next 63 years. To their union came Angela Jane Baird and William Anthony "Tony" Baird, now of Dallas, Texas, and Westlake Village, California, respectfully. Other survivors include son-in-law Brad Cheves and daughter-in-law Shaya Karkau, and grandchildren Phillip Kyle Cheves, William Conner Cheves, and Keaton Charles Cheves; and Ashleigh Payton Baird, William Justus Baird, and Brooklyn McKenzie Baird. Other survivors include nephew Mark Allen Baird and his family. The family expresses our appreciation to the many caregivers, physicians who cared for David during his years of courageously fighting Parkinson's Disease. Pepperdine University will host a Celebration of Life service, TBD.