

01-05-1998 Huntsville AR – Ralph Baker – LEO – Flood Auto Low Water Bridge



# OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE



REMEMBERING ALL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT'S HEROES

<http://www.odmp.org/officer/15029-sheriff-ralph-francis-baker>



### Bio & Incident Details

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>Age:</b> 59               |
| <b>Tour:</b> 27 years        |
| <b>Badge #</b> Not available |
| <b>Cause:</b> Drowned        |

**Sheriff  
Ralph Francis Baker**

Madison County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas

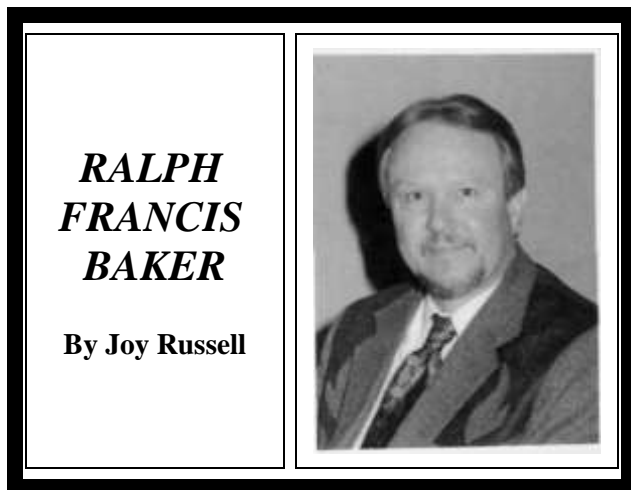
### End of Watch: Monday, January 5, 1998

Sheriff Ralph Baker drowned after his cruiser was washed into a flooded river while he was searching for a stolen vehicle. He was attempting to cross a low water bridge which was covered with water. After the cruiser was washed into the creek it flipped over trapping him inside. He was found still in his seatbelt.

Sheriff Baker had been employed with the Madison County Sheriff's Department for 27 years, 25 of which as the sheriff.

He is survived by his wife and two children.

<http://www.argenweb.net/madison/joyarticles/ralphbaker.htm>



Ralph Baker had served as Sheriff of Madison County, Arkansas, from 1973 until his tragic death on January 5, 1998. Sheriff Baker lost his life in the flooded waters of White River near St. Paul in the early morning hours while investigating the theft of stolen property in the area. Born on September 1, 1938, at Fleming Creek in Madison County to William "Bill" Baker and Evangeline Veroucchi Baker, Ralph was a life-long resident of this county and has been described as a legend here in this county. Ralph was a board member

of the Arkansas Sheriff's Association, a member of the National Sheriff's Association, a member of the Sheriff's Boys and Girls Ranches, Inc., and a 1971 graduate of the Police Academy in Camden. Survivors are his wife of 47 years, Noretta Burrell Baker; two daughters, Billie Whorton and Patricia Feltner, both of Huntsville, one sister, Barbara June Burton of St Paul, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Friday, January 9, 1998, at the St. Paul High School Gymnasium with a crowd estimated to number about 2000 gathering to honor Sheriff Baker. The funeral procession passed through Huntsville as hundreds of school children and friends stood at solemn attention as the hearse led by law enforcement officers passed by. Law enforcement officers came from all over the state to pay their respects to Sheriff Baker, who was remembered as someone who never backed away from trouble. Ralph Baker was laid to rest in the Brashears Cemetery, following a twenty-one gun salute fired by seven Madison County deputies.

Sheriff Baker's death has touched Madison County residents with a great sense of loss. During his terms of office, Madison County's law enforcement department had been developed into one that all of Madison County could be proud of. For years the vehicles of Madison County residents could be seen with bumper stickers which said "RALPH CARES". Now because of Sheriff Baker's untimely death, many residents feel as Rev. Roy Cain stated at Ralph's funeral when talking about a replacement for Ralph... "Don't waste your time looking for someone like Ralph, because they don't exist".

A letter of condolence from President and Mrs. Bill Clinton said, "May Ralph live on in your good memories of him". Madison County residents, as well as Ralph's family, may find some comfort in those memories and in knowing that Ralph will forever remain a part of Madison County's history. Sheriff Baker will not soon be forgotten and there is no need to say more than two words about his service to Madison County.. RALPH CARED'.. *Published in the MADISON COUNTY MUSINGS, Spring 1998*

## Ralph Francis Baker

<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=14934910&PIpi=3561729>

Birth: Sep. 1, 1938    Death: Jan. 5, 1998

INSCRIPTION: (Shierff badge with "Ralph Baker Shierff Madison County) married March 3, 1956. Shares stone with Noretta



(on back) They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles..." Isaiah 40:31



He was born near St. Paul, AR the only son of three children born to William McKinley Baker and Evangeline Verruchi Baker.

He passed away when he attempted to cross Baldwin Creek Road near St. Paul, a low water bridge after a big rain. His car was swept off the side of the bridge, turning over and crushing the top of his car. It then went on downstream and landed upside down on down the river. Ralph was still inside the vehicle with his seatbelt on.

The force of the water pinned him in his car even after the windshield was broken out and debris came in. (This data I summarized from the front page of Madison County Record dated Jan 8, 1998. Most of the entire front page plus some of the other pages was dedicated to him and the accident.) He had been Madison County Shierff since about 1972 until his death.

**In Memory of  
Sheriff Ralph Baker**

9-1-38 — 1-5-98

This picture is dedicated to the brave man who unselfishly gave the ultimate gift – his life.

This is our way of letting the community know that we do care and we do remember!

Even in a profession where uncommon valor is common you stand out above the rest.

Your family and friends

36-1tc

**Burial:**

[Brashears Cemetery](#)

Saint Paul  
Madison County  
Arkansas, USA

Family links:

Parents:

[William McKinley Baker \(1898 - 1977\)](#)

[Evangeline Baker \(1909 - 1977\)](#)

Created by: [Rosa Cline](#)

Record added: Jul 14, 2006

Find A Grave Memorial# 14934910

