PETE BAKER
1932 – 2013

Tributes paid to former musician, window cleaner and Times columnist

“HE WAS loyal to Queen and country but only second to Coalville.”

That’s the way Pete Baker’s children have described their popular father and Times columnist following his death last week.

Pete passed away peacefully at his home, last Wednesday (November 13) aged 81, after a short battle with lung cancer.

Children Tina and Mark Baker have paid tribute to him and said they were drawing comfort from the fact that he had lived a “very full life” with “no regrets.”

“He said that he didn’t need to make a bucket list because he’d already done everything he wanted to do,” revealed Mark, 54.

“He certainly enjoyed life to the full, no doubt about that and although he had problems with his knees and breathing in later life, he had a happy and content man.”

Born in Hugglescote in 1932, Pete spent most of his life as a self-employed window cleaner in the town, where he became known as a “jolly person” and “general man about town.”

“The enjoyed cleaning windows not because he liked putting water on a window and cleaning it off, but because of the interaction,” revealed Mark.

“He was one of the easiest people to talk to and always had time of day for anyone no matter what age, especially children,” Tina added.

“He loved banter and could debate anything. He was widely read with a keen interest in learning and in particular local history.”

Following his retirement, he enrolled in courses at Coalville Technical College including those in IT and sculpture.

Although not a formally educated man, Pete was widely read with a keen interest in learning and in particular local history.

“Underneath he was a lot softer than people gave him credit for,” said Mark.

Alongside his profession, Pete was also an accomplished musician who played in various bands in the area from the 1950s to the 90s.

He provided double bass in the Bobby Gray Orchestra before moving on to bass guitar in the popular Leo Amis Trio band.

It was during this time that he met his wife Jean-Mary (nee Hall) who he married in 1957 and later shared two children.

Son Mark went on to become a teacher while Tina is a successful TV presenter turned fitness instructor.

Although he was never called up to serve on the frontline, his culinary skills were tested and he worked as a cook for the soldiers who were set to serve in the Korean War.

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“He’s given my speech the thumbs up. It’s long, winding but much like dad’s writing, gets to the point at the end.”

Due to his popularity, Mark and Tina have decided to let dad’s writing, get to the point at the end.

“People thought the world of him. I’m not saying he was Mother Teresa but I think you’d struggle to find any- one with a bad word to say about him,” said Tina.

“You can judge a book by its cover but I think you’d struggle to find anyone with a bad word to say about him,” said Tina.

“Underneath he was a lot softer than people gave him credit for,” said Mark.

“He wanted his voice to be heard and to have an affect on people’s lives, which he did.”

“Letting letters back was what he loved the most. He kept every single one and was very proud of how popu- lar his column became.”

Pete’s funeral has been arranged for 11am on November 29 at St John the Baptist Church in Hugglescote.

Due to his popularity, Mark and Tina are preparing for the possibility of there not being enough space to fit everyone in the church.

“We’re looking into having a screen outside, just incase,” said Mark.

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In lieu of flowers, Pete, who leaves behind partner Joyce, along with Tina and Mark, has asked for dona- tions to be made to Cancer Research...