

# Harrison County Community Foundation

## R. William Baker Scholarship Fund

With contributions made from many friends and family, Jay and Lou Ann Baker of Indianapolis created a scholarship fund in 2007 at the Harrison County Community Foundation, in remembrance of their father, R. William Baker. The R. William Baker Scholarship Fund benefits graduating seniors of Corydon Central High School. Selection of recipients is based on academic performance, financial need, and participation in community service, band, chorus, athletics or vocational training. A member of the Class of 2008 received the first scholarship from the fund.

Ralph William "Bill" Baker was born February 22, 1931 in Alexandria, Indiana to Clarence (Dutch) and Bernice Kitterman Baker. Bill was a 1949 graduate of Corydon High School where he was a multi-sport athlete. Indiana Central College (now the University of Indianapolis) offered Baker a basketball scholarship, affording him the opportunity to become the first in his family to attend college. He joined the Army in 1952 and was stationed in Germany. Baker later returned to Indiana Central, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1957. He earned his Masters Degree from Butler University. He married Mary Lou LeForce at the Evangelical United Brethren Church in Corydon, on December 31, 1955. Baker taught and coached in Indianapolis before returning to Corydon, where he was a salesman for K.H. Brown and Son. Teaching and coaching lured Baker back to the education profession in 1967, where he taught history, math, and physical education and coached basketball, track and golf at Corydon Junior High School (CJHS). Following the retirement of George Merk, Baker succeeded Merk as principal at CJHS, where he served an additional 17 years before retiring in 1991.

Bill was a member of the Old Capitol United Methodist Church, Indiana State Teacher's Association, National Educators Association, National Association of Secondary School Principals, VFW, American Legion, and a charter member and former president of Corydon Optimist Club. He was also a long-time member, director and past president of the old Corydon Country Club.

Bill died on March 8, 2006 and is buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery in Corydon.

"Our dad was a strong advocate of education and community service," Jay said. "His father passed away when he was 8, and he and his family worked hard so that he could become the first in his family to graduate from college. Our wish is for this fund to help bridge the gap for those needing assistance to attend college."

"Dad was always active in the community and very interested in encouraging students to recognize their potential," said Lou Ann. "Whether many of us realized it or not as students, he related to many of our challenges and distractions and was always willing to provide support. He believed in camaraderie, teamwork and positive approaches in whatever he did, and it is our hope through this scholarship, that other young impressionable students can make the most of the opportunities they might not have considered."

