

# James Baker Watson III

**March 25, 1948 - January 24, 2025**

James Baker Watson III, who was our forever loving Uncle Jimmy, passed away peacefully in Long Beach, California, on January 24, 2025. Born John Doe Bistline, Jim was adopted in Los Angeles, California, in October 1948 by adoring parents Ernest and Ruth Watson. In turn, Jim was devoted to them as well as to his big brothers Ernest and Richard, and grew up in a loving family extending from Southern California to Hawaii and later to Northern California. Upon the occasion of Jim's 28th birthday, his Aunt Ethel and Uncle John sent Jim a letter that included the story about how he was named, carrying the proud generational family name James Baker Watson, dating back to his great-grandfather from Yorkshire.

Jim distinguished himself during the Vietnam war, during which he served on the USS Bon Homme Richard in the 1960s, for which he was decorated with the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

After returning from his honorable service, he worked as a driver for GTE in the Los Angeles area for many years. As a veteran driver, and as family was always first for him, no distance was too far to cover when it came to regular holiday visits with relatives throughout California. Every Thanksgiving, he could be relied upon to bring his famous home-made cranberry sauce, and to sit at the piano and belt out Moonlight Sonata, abruptly rising after the first page because "that's all I taught myself." After his retirement from his long and distinguished career at GTE, he made many loving friends in close communities throughout the Los Angeles area. In Chino, he was a familiar and beloved figure regularly meeting friends at the American Legion, at Flo's Airport Cafe, and at a few local watering holes. After Chino, he settled for a couple of years in Long Beach, where he continued to make friends and enjoy the odd gin and tonic.

With his heart of gold and a lion's pride in family, Jim always remembered birthdays. His nephews and nieces looked forward to receiving cheerful birthday cards every year, or phone calls when it became harder for him to send the annual cards. Uncle Jimmy made sure we knew he remembered and remained proud of us.

Jim is predeceased by his parents Ernest and Ruth Watson and his brothers Ernest and Richard Watson. He is survived by nephews and nieces Sean, Richard, Michael, Robert, Moya, and Deirdre; their spouses Mary, Deborah, Leanne, and Fernando; 7 grandnephews and grandnieces; and 2 great-grandnieces.

Memorial services will be held on Friday, April 11 at 2 p.m. at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, California. In lieu of flowers, Jim would favor a donation to an American Legion near you and a toast to his memory.

