



## Lee Baxter

September 19, 1925 - August 27, 2015

Lee Baxter, 89, of Avoca, Wisconsin, died peacefully with his family and dear friends at his home, in Avoca on Thursday, August 27, 2015. Lee was born on September 19, 1925 in Richland County, Wisconsin, son of Leland and Thalia (Ewers) Baxter.

Lee served in WW II from 1944 to 1946 in the Navy as a signalman First class aboard the USS LSM 183. After the war, he returned home to work in the family cheese business. He married Betty Hayes in 1950 and they had one daughter, Cheryl. Lee became the Avoca rural mail carrier from 1959 until 1988. People appreciated Lee for the many acts of kindness that he did on the route. He also played an important part in Betty's dance school. He loved working with the children teaching tumbling, and they loved him. One of Betty and Lee's favorite things to do was to waltz across the dance floor together. His pride and joy was following his daughter Cheryl and his grandson Ellington in their professional careers in Los Angeles. He loved football and was an avid Packer fan. Lee was a member of the American Legion Post 335 of Avoca, a 50 year member of the National Rural Letter Carrier's Association and belonged to the Avoca Methodist Church. He was a former member of the Avoca Development Corporation and Lee and Betty were involved with many local celebrations. He loved the view of his Avoca hills and the beautiful valley that he lived in.

He is survived by his wife, Betty; daughter, Cheryl (George) Baxter-Ratliff; grandson, Ellington Ratliff; brother, Lionel (Joanne) Baxter and nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, and sister, Phyllis Livingston. .

Funeral services will be at 11:00 a.m. Monday, August 31, 2015 at the Trinity United Methodist Church, 400 E. Seminary St., Richland Center. Rev. Jeanne Jones will officiate. Burial will be at 3:00 p.m. Monday at the Avoca Cemetery, Avoca, Wisconsin, where military rites will be accorded. Friends may call from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. Sunday at the Clary Memorial Funeral Home, 26777 Jelland Dr., Richland Center, or from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the service on Monday at the church. The Melby Funeral Home & Crematory, Platteville, along with the Clary Memorial Funeral Home, Richland Center are serving the family. Memorials may be made to the Lee Baxter Memorial Fund. Online condolences can be made at [www.melbyfh.com](http://www.melbyfh.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG **30**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Clary Memorial Funeral & Cremation Service, LLC  
26777 Jelland Drive  
Richland Center, WI 53581  
(608) 647-6390  
josh@clarymemorial.com  
<https://clarymemorialfuneralhome.com/>

## Visitation

AUG **31**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Trinity United Methodist Church

## Funeral Service

AUG **31**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Trinity United Methodist Church

## Burial

AUG **31**. 3:00 PM (CT)

Avoca Cemetery  
Village of Avoca, Iowa County  
Village of Avoca 532-6831

# Tribute Wall

RT

“ Always saw Lee and Betty on the bleachers watching Dave wrestle. Our family sends our heartfelt thoughts and prayers. May you rest in peace, Lee.

Randy Thermes - October 12, 2015 at 08:44 AM

TW

“ You and Lee have brought so many happy memories to children over the years. I know I will never forget and now my children are as well. Thank you for sharing your lives with us. He will be greatly missed by all. Our heart and prayers go out to you and your family. Tara and John Weitzel and family

Tara Weitzel - August 31, 2015 at 08:01 AM

AV

“ I remember Lee teaching our three little ones, ages 4, 4, and 5 tumbling and stretching. Our oldest, of course, had to always get it just perfect! She wanted to please Lee and do it just right. She would practice it at home, as would the twins, and they would always be anxious to show him what they could do the next week. They loved him so. He was a wonderful, wonderful man and touched everyone he met. I remember when I was married, we were trying to learn the waltz, and Lee waltzed with me to teach me. He was a wonderful waltzer, and it was so easy to learn it from him! He will be dearly missed by so very many. However, as I look up at the stars, I know he is shining brightly! My prayers are with you, Betty, as will in the times to come now. My condolences also to Cheryl, their wonderful and dedicated daughter. Love, Ardie.

Ardie Vallem - August 31, 2015 at 12:55 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Lee Baxter.



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August 30, 2015 at 04:43 PM



“ I have known Betty and Lee for most of my life. I love them dearly, and hope that in Betty's hour of need and in the days ahead her faith in Christ will lift her up and give her the strength to overcome any challenges that may come her way.

*Don Rogers  
Alpine, Utah*

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**Don Rogers** - August 30, 2015 at 10:26 AM



“ I began my dance career with Betty and Lee. My condolences and sympathy go out to the whole family. Thank you for being there for me at the very beginning.

*Jenny Zumpf*

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**jennifer zumpf** - August 29, 2015 at 07:38 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Lee Baxter.



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August 29, 2015 at 07:26 PM

SN

“ Susan Wisniewski & Steve Nikolai purchased the Secret Garden Basket for the family of Lee Baxter.



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**Susan Wisniewski & Steve Nikolai** - August 29, 2015 at 07:08 PM

TS

“ He touched so many lives, including mine. Sending blessings, hugs and prayers to you all.

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**Terrie Anderson Sandmire** - August 29, 2015 at 04:49 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Lee Baxter.



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August 29, 2015 at 04:29 PM

CA

“ There are not adequate words to express how much we loved Lee. The area has been truly blessed by both Lee and Betty. I enjoyed every dance recital that Liz was in from age 5 thru graduation, but there was that one really special one that Lee and Betty talked Chuck into being in (tutu and all). Chuck talks so fondly of the bowling alley days after Betty's evening classes in RC. Healing prayers from both of us.

*Chuck and Cheryl Allbaugh*

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**Cheryl Allbaugh** - August 29, 2015 at 01:31 PM

SW

“ *Sara Williamson lit a candle in memory of Lee Baxter*



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**sara williamson** - August 29, 2015 at 12:59 PM

SW

*God bless you Cheryl, Betty and family....what a wonderful man, what a lovely- sweet couple you were Betty! such great Love you shared. My thoughts and prayers go out to you now.*

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**sara williamson** - August 29, 2015 at 01:00 PM

SM

“ *Dear Betty, Cheryl, George & Ellington,  
Our sincere and deepest sympathy in the passing of such a beloved husband, father, and grandfather. Lee is considered such a dear friend to generations of dance students in so many communities that his kind, gentle, loving nature will continue to be remembered by all the lives he so positively touched.  
Our third generation (granddaughter, Gabi), just had her dance photo published in a magazine. So not only is she a super good/adorable dancer, she received this honor as well! This can be attributed to Lee & Betty and the positive role they played in our live.  
. .all the way back to 1968!  
Please know that our love and prayers are being sent to you!*

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**Sonja & Mike McCaskey** - August 29, 2015 at 11:45 AM



“ *My daughter has been in dance for over 4 years and Lee's presence has been felt. For every recital, the sight of Lee in the audience brought smiles to all of us. Our thoughts and prayers go out you all through this difficult time. The Mumm Family*



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**Elaine Mumm** - August 29, 2015 at 10:37 AM

DM

“ *Betty, Cheryl and family*  
*Our deepest sympathy for your loss. Lee was a great man and I have many fond memories of him as a young girl. I remember him as our mail man and a helper to all the dance recitals. He loved to talk and made everyone he met feel special.*  
*My sons and husband also had the pleasure of meeting him and getting to know him. He was loved by all of us. He lived a full, rich life and created special memories for everyone.*  
*When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.*  
*May the concern and sympathy of those who care help you through this difficult time.*  
*Dawn, Ray, Garrett and Isaac Morris*

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**Dawn and Ray Morris** - August 29, 2015 at 10:01 AM

JD

“ *My condolences to the family. Lee was one of the most personable and friendly man I have ever met.*  
*Jean DeLaMater*

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**Jean DeLaMater** - August 29, 2015 at 09:13 AM

CF

“ *Corpora Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Lee Baxter.*



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**Corpora Family** - August 29, 2015 at 09:06 AM

SG

“ *Rochelle spent most of her youth years dancing with Betty and I got to know Lee better from the years he brought the cars to my shop while Betty was Still teaching in town.He was trully an amazing man an i always looked forward to his visits .He always had a smile and everything was good even if it wasnt...i always enjoyed talking with him and will miss him scott goplen*

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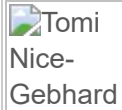
**Scott Goplen** - August 29, 2015 at 08:18 AM

AE

“ *Betty, Cheryl and family,  
We remember Lee helping our daughters tumble and stretch and he would say to Betty, "one more year", that was 34 years ago. We loved him dearly.  
Sorry for your and our loss of him.  
Eggers family*

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**Alan and Kathy Eggers** - August 29, 2015 at 07:50 AM



“ *Betty, As a little girl in your dance studio back in the 80's we were all so blessed to not only be exposed to your lifelong passion for dance but also the loving relationship you shared with Lee. Tumbling time with Lee was just as enjoyable as then proceeding to our dance time. Thoughts and prayers to you and your family. God Bless You all as you celebrate Lee's life. We all look forward to rejoicing and dancing on the streets of heaven with Lee someday. Take Care, Tomi Ann Nice-Gebhard*



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**Tomi Nice-Gebhard** - August 29, 2015 at 05:20 AM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Lee Baxter.*



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August 29, 2015 at 12:26 AM



“ *Lee Baxter was one of the kindest, gentlest men I've ever known, particularly when teaching a non-athletic, chubby little girl how to do a backward somersault. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Betty and Cheryl, as you learn to navigate life without your wonderful husband and father.*

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**Laurie Neumann Swigart** - August 28, 2015 at 11:28 PM

PD

“ I can go back 63 years where my memories began with Lee & Betty 😍😍😍 I was 3 yrs. old and started my dance lessons. Lee & Betty were working together and then the Love bug bit them and they were married. I can remember My parents, the Beckers, & Betty/Lee would do things together. I took dancing lessons for 10 yrs. and then my granddaughter has been taking lessons and now 2 granddaughters are. I love keeping contact with the Baxters. I had such a nice visit with Lee a year ago. New memories are being made with your grandson and R5. The girls go to his concerts when they are in the area 💖💖💖💖💖 What would do without memories 🌹🌹🌹🌹🌹 I send my Love and prayers 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸 You know he will be with you in your heart forever ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨



Love,

Paulette

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Paulette DiVall - August 28, 2015 at 11:19 PM

RF

“ Lee was a grand guy. He worked at Betty's dance shows. Always a great greeting around town. A grand smile. One who will e surely missed.

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Rich Estrem Fuller - August 28, 2015 at 09:18 PM

G(

“ Sorry for your loss! He was a kind hearted hard working man.



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Gina (Swinehart)-Wardell - August 28, 2015 at 08:50 PM

DB

“ Lee will be sadly missed by all who knew him. I will remember him as being so patient when Betty and I would chat for so long after they had lunch at the White House. Seems he was always smiling. Thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Donavoine Bauer - August 28, 2015 at 08:18 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Lee Baxter.



August 28, 2015 at 07:27 PM

MG

“ Dear Betty, Our deepest sympathy to you and your family. I have video of when our daughter Michele Goetsch was 1st in dance and you & Lee helping with the somersaults, etc. Great memories of all those years of dance & what a wonderful team you were. Michele and I had wondered if you were still teaching and we're going to come watch, but life got too busy! Her daughter 4 y.o. Wynter is in dance in Waunakee:) and 2 y.o. Willow will join next year. Hugs & prayers. Mariane & Mike Goetsch.

*P.s. Michele was home last weekend looking for her dance shoes as she has a friend at work that wants to take a dance class*

Mariane Goetsch - August 28, 2015 at 07:04 PM

TS

“ *Tammy Schwingle lit a candle in memory of Lee Baxter* ”



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**Tammy Schwingle** - August 28, 2015 at 05:40 PM