

Editorial**Champ L. Baker, Jr., MD: In Memoriam**

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The sports medicine world suffered a great loss March 18, 2022 when Champ L. Baker, Jr., MD, passed away at 75 years of age in Columbus, GA. His passing will be mourned not only by his family and friends, former patients and surgeon colleagues, but by many sports physical therapists.

Dr. Baker was a native of Alexandria, LA. His mother, a nurse, was his inspiration to go into medicine. His undergraduate and medical school degrees were earned at LSU. He was recruited to play basketball at LSU and the 6'5" freshman showed a lot of promise, but in his second year, a 6'5" shooting guard named "Pistol" Pete Maravich joined the team. The NBA was out but sports medicine gained quite an addition.

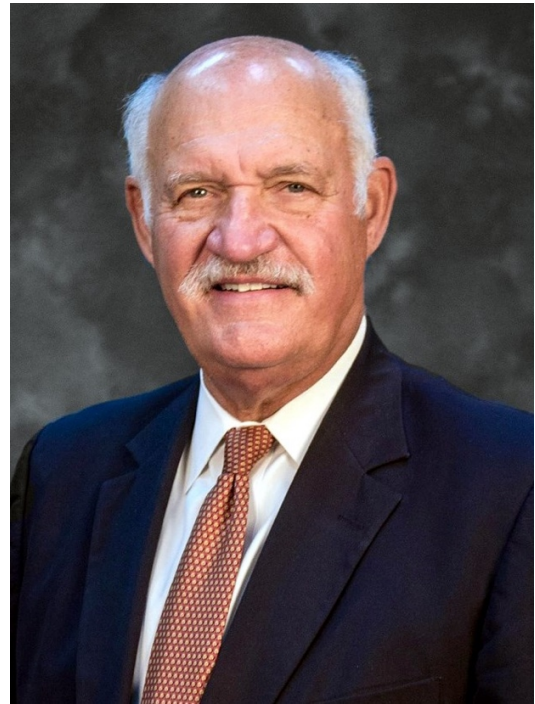
Following medical school, Champ joined the U.S. Army, where he completed his orthopedic residency at Letterman Army Medical Center in San Francisco, CA, and Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children in St. Louis, MO. He later completed a sports medicine fellowship under Dr. Jack Hughston in Columbus, GA in 1979. After retiring from the Army as a Lt. Colonel, he joined the Hughston Clinic in 1982.

He and his wife Sue Ann raised three children which gave him the joy of eight grandchildren.

He served as president of The Hughston Clinic from 1994 until 2000, and was an orthopedics professor at Tulane University School of Medicine and at the Medical College of Georgia. He formerly served as Chair of the Board of Directors of The Hughston Foundation and as program director of the Hughston Sports Medicine Fellowship. He had an extremely active practice in Columbus. Champ served as team physician for numerous local and regional athletic teams, including the University of Alabama and Columbus State University, where he was inducted into the CSU Sports Hall of Fame. He was a volunteer physician for the U.S. Olympic Committee. He started and funded scholarships for students in nursing and athletic training careers.

Nationally and internationally, Champ was active in many professional societies and served as an officer or committee member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American Shoulder and Elbow Society; American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine; American Orthopaedic Association; International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine; and Arthroscopy Association of North America.

He was president of the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, Southern Orthopaedic Association, Georgia Orthopaedic Society, and Georgia Shoulder and Elbow Society. He was inducted into the Halls of Fame of both the Chattahoochee Valley Sports Foundation and the



American Orthopaedic Society of Sports Medicine; he was honored in 2010 by the latter with the George D. Rovere Award for his contribution to sports medicine education and the title of "Mr. Sports Medicine" for his significant contributions to the field. He was also a recipient of the Distinguished Southern Orthopaedist Award from the Southern Orthopaedic Association and the President's Challenge Award from the National Athletic Trainers Association.

But none of this speaks to what he has done for the AASPT and for sports physical therapists over the years. At every instance, when the AASPT needed a speaker, a dissection leader, a panelist or a connection to the AOSSM or AAOS, he was there. Hard to believe that when he was president of AOSSM...during the yearly meeting, with many meetings and presentations he was involved with, he showed up to present at the Academy's AOSSM Pre-Conference course!

Here are comments from some of the Academy members:

"We mourn the loss of Champ, his enthusiasm and dedication to Sports Medicine, and his love of family and friends. We send our deepest condolences and prayers to Champ's wife, Sue Ann and their family."

“He was a good man and giant in Ortho and supporter of our world.”

“I also had the chance to work with Champ’s daughter Sarah up at HSS so we talked about her Dad often. RIP. He was a good man and a huge LSU fan.”

“A true stalwart of sports medicine.”

“NEVER said no to us when we asked him to speak.”

“Impressive gentleman and great role model. He will be missed.”

“Will greatly miss him. He was one of the greats that made You feel special when speaking with him. He always looked you in the eye and was listening intently to what you had to say. Prayers to his family...”

“Another sad day in Sports Medicine to lose a class person and professional such as Champ, he will be missed.”

“Champ will be missed because he was always so supportive of PT and a great gentleman.”

I had the pleasure of working with Champ directly for many years. I can only echo what the Academy members have related above. Champ believed in what sports physical therapists do and how we assisted patients. I traveled around the USA and the world with him teaching in many countries. His easy manner and humor disarmed the “stiffest of folks.” His wit, wisdom, and leadership were legendary. But the bottom line was that he cared for his patients. I was never more honored than when he would refer a patient with only a diagnosis and “TAB FIX.”

– Turner A. “TAB” Blackburn, Jr.

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