



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT

155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

MEDIA RELEASE

Letter from the family of Sergeant Loran "Butch" Baker

The events of February 26th changed our lives forever. Every police spouse's worst nightmare became my reality when I was told of my husband's in-the-line-of-duty death. The details, emotions, and circumstances surrounding the events of Butch's death have become surreal and definitely overwhelming.

The presence and incredible support from all county emergency responders was seen and felt by my family. My son, a Santa Cruz Police Department Community Service Officer, was working when his father was killed and it will take time for him to heal. My daughter is a Trauma Critical Care Nurse in Texas. Realizing she might be alone when we called to advise her of the tragic events we chose to contact the local police department for support. Without hesitation they immediately sent a police officer to be with her when she called home. Following the notification the police officer stated that out of respect for Butch he would stand watch outside her door throughout the night. The officer remained at that post until my daughter left for the airport the following morning. My daughter has since returned to Texas and was again greeted by their Victims' Advocate who afforded her with local grief counseling and support contacts. Knowing they would be there for her when I could not helped to ease my mind. The police department's actions and gracious support are sincerely appreciated from a mother's heart.

I mourn my husband, not for the police officer he was, but for the loss of my true love, childhood sweetheart, and soul mate. Our lengthy "when I retire" discussions were shattered in an instant along with our hopes and dreams of a beautiful future together. Our family's "normal" is no longer; every day we fumble for a new normal or anything that feels even remotely the same as it was before February 26th. The truth is, nothing will ever feel quite right, but the sincere outpouring of love and support from our Santa Cruz community have given us the strength and courage to carry on. The hundreds of cards, thoughts, and warm wishes are deeply appreciated and acknowledged.

I continue to fill my quiet nights reading the cards and notes sent from all over the country. The children's pictures of their "Hero Butch" bring tremendous pride and strength to my now broken heart. According to the children, Butch now has wings, is in the clouds, has a halo, and sometimes he even wears a cape. They tell me jokes to try and make me feel better or share in their personal story of losing someone special. These heartfelt cards, flowers, and gifts are unique and very special to me and my family. A teddy bear wearing a United States Service Member's Purple Heart was left at the memorial site in honor of the ultimate sacrifice, former Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta gave me a Challenge Coin stating my husband was a true warrior, and Congressman Sam Farr presented me with a condolence letter signed by 33 State of California Congress Members indicating this horrible tragedy has united all of California. Butch and Elizabeth were acknowledged in the Senate by Senator Monning; they have a Congressional Record Remembrance stating they were extraordinary officers; received Medal of Honor Awards from the American Police Hall of Fame and will have their names etched in the marble walls at the Florida memorial.

I've received condolence letters from the United States Secret Service, Director of the FBI, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Leon Panetta stating Butch left a "beacon of heroism and honor that will never be forgotten." Words cannot express my gratitude to everyone who has stepped forward to give me a hug or simply say they are sorry for my loss.

My daily healing is in part due to the nationwide outreach of compassion and kindness. My husband would have been so proud of his community's support and the love shown to his family. Butch spent 28 years protecting his beloved Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz responded with the utmost respect and honor to him and his years of his service. I have lived in Santa Cruz for over 20 years and I couldn't be more proud to call this city my home.

I must formally acknowledge and relay to the community my family's continual gratitude to Santa Cruz Police Sergeant Michael Harms and his family. They continually stand by our sides, support us everyday, and carry out our wishes. We may have lost a husband and father, but gained the love and support of hundreds of Law Enforcement Officers and Emergency First Responders.

I personally thank my cousin Carol Koller for staying with me for the month following Butch's death. She took command of all situations, answered all phone calls, and instantly was nicknamed "Sarge" for her organization, control, and support to me and my family. I could never repay her for the assistance and love she gave during my darkest days. Howard and Renee Skerry immediately came to my aid and also helped me with anything I needed. Kayla Gray has taken friendship to a new level and continually watches over us. Thank you to Loran and Virginia Baker, Sandy Perez and all my family members who came from all over the United States to be with their grieving relative. My relatives were filled with awe and astonishment at the outpouring of love and support from Santa Cruz. It was seen throughout the city and lined the streets, all the way to the memorial service at the HP Pavilion.

I would like to thank Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Congressman Sam Farr, the entire Santa Cruz Police Department and Chief Kevin Vogel, Donna Lind, The Fallen Officers Foundation, Renee Hassna Executive Director Oakland Police Officer's Association, Mike Pool and The West Coast Post Trauma Retreat Center and Peer Counselors, Pastor Rene Schlaepfer, James Durbin, Santa Cruz Warriors, San Jose Sharks and HP Pavilion, San Francisco Giants, Rod Chambers and NASCAR, C.O.P.S. President Tami McMillan, Attorney General Kamala Harris, California Governor Jerry Brown, Santa Cruz Mayor Hillary Bryant, National Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation, California Peace Officer's State Memorial Foundation, American Police Hall of Fame and Museum, Deputy District Attorney Jeff Rosell, Capitola Police Chief Rudy Escalante, Santa Cruz Police Deputy Chief Steve Clark, Watsonville Police Department, Capitola Police Department, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Association, UC Santa Cruz Police Department, Scotts Valley Police Department, Georgetown Police Department, California Highway Patrol, Santa Cruz County Fire Departments, Grief Counseling of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz County Emergency Dispatch Center, AMR, San Jose Police Department, San Jose Fire Department, Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Employee Association, Santa Cruz County Probation Employees Association, Attorney/Fallen Officer Foundation Board Member Larry Brenner, Santa Cruz Memorial, Paradox Hotel, Twin Lakes Church, Superior Alarm Company, Benefits Communication Network, Summit Uniform, Coroner Dr. Richard Mason, Zach Friend, Irma Rios, Karen Goehring, Jackie Tripodi, Wes Grant, Gloria Simpson, Steve and Robin Black, Joseph Heartsner, Dr. James Cartwright D.C., Carl and Patty Kustin, Well Within, Scotts Valley High School, Tammy

Montague, Sue Faria, Kianti's, Chardonnay II Sailing, California Pizza Kitchen, and the countless others who gave their support.

My hope is to show strength to the law enforcement families and resonate the love that has been given to me throughout the nation. I am now walking in the shoes of a police officer widow, I am filled with respect and admiration for my husband and his fellow Police Officer Elizabeth Butler. My family and I join hands and step forward to endue dignity and respect to law enforcement officers for being who they are and for what they represent.

Thank you for the incredible kindness and sincere affection.

Respectfully,

Kelly Baker - Widow of Sergeant Loran "Butch" Baker

Jillian Baker - Daughter of Loran Baker

Adam Baker - Son of Loran Baker

The Family of Loran "Butch" Baker: EOW 2/26/2013

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