



## Justus Nathan Baird III

February 8, 1943 - April 21, 2013

Justus Nathan Baird, III died April 21, 2013 in Arlington, VA from prostate cancer. He was preceded in death by his sister, Deborah Tilson Baird. He is survived by his sister Barbara Baird of Harriman, TN. He was born on February 8, 1943 to Dr. "Betty" Mary Elizabeth Tilson Baird Brown and Justus Nathan Baird, Jr. in St. Louis, MO. After graduating from the Castle Heights Military Academy High School (Lebanon, TN) in 1960, he went on to earn four degrees: B.S. Forestry with a swimming scholarship (U. Georgia at Athens, 1964), M.A. in Entomology including extensive work in central America (U. Kansas, 1968), Masters in Public Health (U. Texas, 1973), and PhD in Environmental Health (U. Texas, 1989). From 1968 to 1971 he was a captain in the US Army, Medical Service Corps, and served in Vietnam, protecting troops from infectious diseases. In his first career, Justus directed public health departments in Houston, San Antonio, and Milwaukee. In his second career, he worked as a board certified financial planner and ski patrol director. Throughout his life he pursued a number of passions: tracing his Scottish ancestry, barbershop singing, investing, sailboat racing, competitive masters swimming, and messing around with computers. His community advocacy included fighting for visitation rights of divorced fathers and improving local environmental planning. A voracious reader, Justus was known for his breadth of knowledge in a wide variety of topics and would threaten anyone who tried to dispose of his copious amounts of reading material. He shared his love of nature through his bountiful gardening, family camping trips, and timeless

photography. He is survived by two ex-wives, Linda Elaine Janson of Houston (maiden name Norling, married from 1970-1980), and Dr. Salpi Adrouny of Atlanta (married from 1991-2012). He is also survived by two children from his first marriage, son Rabbi Justus N. Baird, IV of Princeton, NJ and daughter Dr. Jennifer Baird Humberson of Richmond, VA. Justus cherished his five grandchildren and fostered in them a love for reading, sports, and the outdoors.

A graveside service will be held Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 1:00 pm at Roane Memorial Gardens located at 1400 North Gateway Avenue in Rockwood, TN followed by a memorial service at 2:00 pm at Bethel Presbyterian Church at 203 South Kentucky Street in Kingston, TN.

Donations may be made to the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

JUSTUS NATHAN BAIRD, III  
1943-2013

Prepared by his children Justus Baird, IV and Jennifer Humberson

Justus almost always had a camera with him – and not just a camera, but a camera bag, laden with multiple cameras, a tripod and multiple lenses. So to celebrate his life today, Jenny and I chose to briefly describe 7 lenses on his life, 7 of the most prominent aspects of the way he lived.

Lens #1: The Outdoorsman and Naturalist

Among Justus' many loves was his love of Mother Nature. As a child he explored the woods of East Tennessee, which earned him the right to claim that he has a Tennessee Woodsman's Instinct whenever he was outdoors and sort of lost. Today we laid his body to rest so that it will return to those Tennessee woods.

Justus' connection all parts of nature was deep. In Vietnam, he had a large

pet snake named Martha - we believe she was a python. He loved to spend time with loved ones out of doors, whether it was hiking the Appalachian trail with Jenny, sea kayaking with me in Alaska, or exploring the hidden trails of northern Georgia with Salpi. His backyard in Alpharetta doubled as an extension of the Atlanta Botanical Gardens and a local Arboretum. Justus knew the latin names of hundreds of plant and insect species. He would stop along the trail - or the road - to wonder at something he hadn't seen in a while, or something unfamiliar. And of course, his years as a ski patrol director at Scaly Mountain and Sapphire Valley were, in part, a way to live out his love for being out of doors. Lens #1 is Justus the Outdoorsman and Naturalist.

### Lens #2: The Fighter

In Vietnam, Justus fought to protect American troops from infectious diseases. In Texas, he co-founded a group called Texas Fathers for Equal Rights to advocate for equal visitation of divorced dads. He took Jenny and me to the group's gatherings. He considered it outrageous that judges in Texas would automatically give mothers most of the visitation rights, so he decided to fight back.

In Atlanta he fought for better environmental planning, and was always quick to tell a story about how little common sense there was on the local planning boards. When his health battles began with heart disease, and later prostate cancer, he fought back hard. At one point, doctors gave him a few weeks to live and suggested a shift toward palliative care. Justus responded by declaring that he could take of himself just fine and was ready to leave the hospital. He started to gain weight on his own and lived for another year and a half. Justus was a fighter, for himself, and for justice – spelled I-C-E. That's lens #2.

### Lens #3: The Friendly Competitor

It started with swimming, in high school and college. As a young adult, it was sailing regattas. Then it was the Stone Mountain Chorus - a competitive barbershop singing group, and the Roswell Photo Society - where he won of awards for his photographs. In his 50's, Justus started competing in Triathalons. He ended his competitive career back where he started - as a swimmer. His living room was littered with medals from national level master's swim meets. He set his own standards and strove to exceed them. This is lens #3: Justus loved a friendly competition and the training that went into getting better.

#### Lens #4: The Learner

Justus earned four degrees after high school, including a PhD, and even kept learning after that, when he became a certified financial planner. He was a voracious reader. He devoured the WSJ, professional journals, investment reports, and local newsletters. For decades, his morning

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ritual featured an extended reading session fueled by a giant bowl of cereal with a cup of highlighters nearby. When he began his health battles with heart disease and prostate cancer, Justus quickly became more well-read on his conditions, and the newest treatments, than any of his doctors.

He knew a surprising amount about a wide array of topics, including, but not limited to: car repair; environmental health; geography; botany; medicine - including regular, emergency, and wilderness versions; financial planning; photography; technology; and investing. The only topic I ever discovered that he deferred to me on was ancient Jewish texts - and even then he would make connections between that material and some ancient Scottish custom. Lens #4 is Justus the learner.

#### Lens #5: The Reservoir Builder

All who loved Justus were frustrated with his inability to let go of stuff. He created reservoirs of stuff. His car was basically a "junk drawer on wheels," and more than once, when he picked me up for a visit, I wondered if there would actually be room in his van - it was always a van - for an extra person and their bag. His living quarters - in every single place he has ever lived - might be described as wide open horizontal file cabinets for materials he cared about.

It may have been this same desire to capture and hold on to things that drove his love of photography. He strove to capture moments - whether it be a moment in nature or the gathering of family - with a passion that only camera

buffs could understand. He passed along his love of photography to many people, including me. He has left us with a reservoir of beauty, of thousands of beautiful images. Lens #5 is Justus, the Reservoir.

#### Lens #6: The Independent Rebel

Justus had a fierce independent spirit. He brushed off a variety of social conventions and had little patience for dress codes. His late-in-life ponytail reinforced this image. He did things his own way, and I'm not sure I can ever remember him caring much about what others said about him.

A story that proves the point: When Jenny and Justus visited the Okefenokee Swamp, dad filled his pockets with a variety of plant species, despite the conspicuously posted warnings prohibiting such practice. As they were walking out of the park, a ranger called after them. "Sir! Sir!" Dad pretended not to hear. When the ranger caught up to him, he confronted Justus: "You can't take that material out of the park." Dad hedged. The park ranger didn't budge. There was a short stand-off, and the ranger forced Justus to empty his shirt pockets. When he and Jenny got back to the car, and he made sure the ranger had left, he then emptied all the samples that were still in his pant pockets.

Justus' independent rebel side came out in his parenting as well. He parented intentionally to raise independent children. He cared especially about encouraging strong women, often speaking with pride about the strength of Baird Women. In his apartment in Houston he hung a piece of art on the wall with a poem about love. There was one line in the poem that referred to how a woman needs a man. He covered that line with masking tape, so no one would see it. Lens #6 is Justus, the Independent Rebel.

#### Lens #7: The Researcher of Roots

For years Justus was a leader in a Baird clan club. He took a trip to Scotland

to explore his Scottish roots, and you can see in my tie, my kippah (which he hand-made for my wedding), the Baird clan colors that he embraced with love. Justus was an extreme amateur genealogist. Many times he traveled across the country, knocking on doors of carefully researched houses to meet distant families, fill in a missing detail on a family tree, and collect another story about his ancestors.

Justus believed in DNA, not fate. He sensed that the Baird attractions to water sports and hiking were rooted in a Scottish love of water and mountains. Jenny believes that her love of genetics was born during conversations at Grandma's kitchen table over old family photos. And when I told him I was going to rabbinical school, dad told me that his father had considered become a clergyman, and that he himself had tested with aptitude for being a pastor. Justus believed that the Bairds were programmed for helping professions. Perhaps he was right. Lens #7 is Justus, the Researcher of Roots.

## Conclusion

In an annual letter to family and friends 12 years ago, Justus instructed his readers to "Remember to set some life goals, invest regularly, and hug your loved ones." That's pretty good advice, and he followed it pretty well. His words are worth repeating today, and often.

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# Tribute Wall

BF

“ *Salpi:*

*Our sincere condolences for Justus' dead. He is resting in peace now. Reading his memories we realize how intense he lived his life. It was an honor have had the luck to know him. We were trying to contact you, but nobody answer the telephone. If you are doing some service in his memory, please let us know.*

*Sincerely,*

*Bert and Beatrice Gonzalez-Rubio*

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**Bert and Beatrice Gonzalez-Rubio - Atlanta, GA - Friends - May 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM**

SF

“ *Justus my friend will be missed. I have many great memories of times with Justus and Salpi in Milwaukee. My condolences and prayers are with your family. I love the picture. Steve Gradus*

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**Steve Gradus - Milwaukee, WI - friend - April 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM**

CF

“ My first exposure to Justus was on a photography workshop in Yosemite NP about 6 years ago. I wondered who is this old, wacky guy. He always had a smile on his face. Over the years we spent time talking about photography at our club. He never stopped wanting to learn. About a year ago, we had a long discussion about what he was going through with his illness. That talk really put a lot things into perspective.

*Rest in peace Justus. You were a great man and wonderful human being. I'm proud to have known you.*

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**Carl Fredrickson - Roswell, GA - Friend** - April 25, 2013 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ Dear Justis and Julie...Pleace accept our condolences on the death of what seemed to be a very special person....We are sorry we cannot be with you at this very sad time.....May G\_od's healing power be there for you all....Most Fondly, Stan and Maureve

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**The Goldhamer Family...Stan, Kim Jon and Maureve - Beachwood, OH - Cousin**  
- April 25, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ J.N., as I knew him, and I were friends from long ago. His parents and my parents were friends. I remember him as an avid swimmer and really nice person. The last time I saw him was at the '82 World's Fair in Knoxville. He had seen my parents (Jim and Selma Myers) at ther TVA Barge and they told him where I worked at the fair. It was a great pleasure to see him at that time. I also remember that his daughter was chosen as a young writer for Guidepost Magazinel My heartfelt sympathy to his family.

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**Martha Myers Derreberry - Crossville (formerly of Midtown!), TN - friend** - April 24, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KN

“ Just a note to the family, upon reading Mr. Baird's obit, what amazing accomplishments and just realizing what an interesting man he must have been. My condolences to you all.

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**Kathy Frye - Sweetwater , TN - None** - April 24, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ He was more than just interesting. He was an amazing friend, a bon vivant and an outstanding public official. We will all miss him.

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**Stuart S. Mukamal - Milwaukee, WI - Friend** - April 24, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RC

“ Dear Salpi, Jenny, Jody & family; We will not be there only thinking of you each one..Ann's mother was daughter of Seth Baird..We kept in touch with Justus and Salpi..Justus visited us on the farm in Iowa many times..have wonderful memories..greatly enjoyed being part of Justus and Salpi's wedding day..talked with them by phone many times..We will all miss him greatly, but know that God needed him..he is now well..God is good. Prayers and blessings to each of you. In sympathy...

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**Ray and Ann (Caylor) Dutton - Colfax, IA - cousin** - April 22, 2013 at 12:00 AM