

*UPDATED 6.28.26*

**In memoriam: George Robert Blakey**

George Robert Blakey, 90, passed away at home on May 1, 2026, in Oak Park, Illinois, where he lived with his son, John Blakey. He was born on January 7, 1936, in Burlington, North Carolina.

He is survived by his children Michael Herman Blakey, Elizabeth Elaine Blakey, Anne Marie Blakey, John Robert Blakey (and wife Christina), Katherine Blakey Cox (and husband Michael), Christine Blakey Coury and Margaret Blakey Clarke (and husband Kevin) as well as his beloved 18 grandchildren and three great grandchildren: Katya Blakey, Alexander Martinez, Blakey Wilkins, Brandt Wilkins, Liv Wilkins, Doak Wilkins, Joseph Blakey, Charles Blakey, Daniel Blakey, George Blakey, Jacqueline Cox, Kelly Cox, Julia Cox, Charlotte Cox, Joseph Coury, Anthony Coury, Jonathan Coury, Eoin Clarke, Aidan Clarke, Elaine Clarke and Declan Clarke. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

A lifelong and devout Catholic, he has now joined God in Heaven, reuniting in great joy with his wife, Elaine Menard Blakey (d. 2002) — whom he married on April 7, 1958, in the Log Chapel of the University of Notre Dame — and his son, Matthew Menard Blakey (d. 2014).

Also preceding him in death were his parents, Lewis James (originally Levi Jacob) Blakey in 1945 and Malatia Myrtle Horrigan in 1986 as well as his brother, Lewis Horrigan Blakey, in 2026.

His family knew him as a loving person of great faith, honesty, intelligence, integrity, responsibility, justice and kindness. He was also a man of many interests, ranging from law and philosophy to history and travel.

An avid reader whose family usually saw him with a book in hand (and piles more nearby), he was a consummate scholar even outside his professional work as a law professor and attorney. His insatiable curiosity led him to study everything from the Stoics to ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt to Shakespeare, astronomy, World War II and the geology of the Grand Canyon. (Ever the enthusiastic teacher, he reveled in taking his grandchildren on helicopter rides over the awe-inspiring landmark.)

His house was filled with his many collections, including Biblical and religious art, gargoyles, miniature medieval castles, Incan artwork, law enforcement memorabilia, and Roman and Egyptian statues. He even had a full-size replica of a sarcophagus and enjoyed telling his grandchildren there was a mummy inside!

He had a great sense of adventure and a sense of the silly. Until his last days, he described himself as still “really just a nine-year-old boy” on the inside. He traveled the world to see the wonders he read about in his youth — the pyramids in Cairo, the Acropolis in Greece, Machu Picchu in Peru and the Great Wall of China. His favorite holiday may have been Halloween. Even after his children were grown, he continued to dress up (invariably as a vampire) and

decorate his house and yard each year to both delight and scare his grandchildren and the neighborhood trick-or-treaters.

Affectionally known to his family as Pop, Granddad, Gramps, G-Bob and GRob, he will also be remembered by his grandchildren as Grandpa M&M's as he always had that candy at the ready for them in his pocket.

To his family, he was both a great man and a role model. He was a great man in the wider world, as well.

Blakey graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a BA in philosophy *cum laude* in 1957 and a JD *summa cum laude* in 1960.

In 1960, he joined the United States Department of Justice and served as a special attorney in the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section of the Criminal Division. Under the guidance of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Blakey participated in criminal prosecutions against organized crime members as well as corrupt politicians and union leaders. He stayed at the Justice Department until the summer after the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

From 1964 to 1969 and from 1980 to 2012, Blakey served as law professor at Notre Dame Law School, where he taught and mentored thousands of students. In 1985, Notre Dame named him the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Professor of Law.

In 1967, he served as an organized crime consultant with President Lyndon B. Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice to draft racketeering and wiretapping legislation.

From 1969 to 1973, he was chief counsel of the U.S. Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures (chaired by Senator John L. McClellan). In this role, Blakey drafted Title IX of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, also known as the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act; the Title III wiretapping statute; and, over his many years of public service, other important pieces of federal and state criminal legislation.

Since 1970, the RICO statute has promoted justice in countless criminal and civil matters, including cases against organized crime, street gangs, white collar criminals and corrupt politicians.

From 1973 to 1980, he served as law professor at Cornell Law School, where he was also director of the Cornell Institute on Organized Crime.

From 1977 to 1978, Blakey was chief counsel and staff director of the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations (chaired by Congressman Louis Stokes), investigating the assassinations of President Kennedy and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blakey and HSCA colleague Richard N. Billings authored two books about the Kennedy assassination: *The Plot to Kill the President* in 1981 and *Fatal Hour* in 1992.

From 1985 to 1986, he was special counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee (Senator Joseph Biden), working on white-collar crime control.

In 1988, Blakey was a consultant to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee (Congressman John Conyers), working on white-collar crime control.

During his long tenure as a legal scholar, Blakey wrote more than 100 law review articles that have been cited thousands of times. He also argued three cases before the U.S. Supreme Court: *Holmes v. SIPC* (1992), *Humana v. Forsyth* (1999) and *Scheidler v. National Organization for Women* (2006).

Blakey's substantive and scholarly contributions to the law, and in particular to the field of criminal justice, are hard to overstate. Through his work, he has left a legacy of justice served, careers inspired and lives saved.

In December 2012, he retired from teaching but not from practicing law. He spent many of his last years living in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

As he was suffering from several conditions related to his advanced age, his death was neither tragic nor unexpected. Yet we, the members of his family, are nevertheless quietly heartbroken. We will remember him always for his brilliance, generosity and love. He is sorely missed and will be so forever.

***Visitation will be held from 5-7 p.m., on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at the Kaniewski Funeral Home, 3545 N. Bendix Drive, South Bend, Indiana 46628.***

***A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556. For information about a Mass livestream link, please contact a member of the family.***

***A private internment ceremony will follow at Cedar Grove Cemetery on the University campus.***

***From 4:30-7:30 p.m. immediately following the internment, family and friends are invited to a Celebration of Life reception and repast at the Downes Club on the seventh floor of Corbett Family Hall, located on the east side of Notre Dame Stadium.***

*In lieu of flowers, please send donations to St. Margaret's House, where Elaine Blakey was a longtime volunteer. Address: 117 N Lafayette Blvd., South Bend, IN 46601; phone: 574.234.7795; website: [St. Margaret's House](#).*