



Obituary

The Hon. Theodore W. Becker
1949-2024

Theodore W. Becker, a former Mayor of Lewes and beloved community member, passed away at age 75 at 2:30 pm on Sunday, October 6 at Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia, PA.

A native of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Mr. Becker received his bachelor's degree from Ohio State University and served in the U.S. Army National Guard from 1978-1994.

Mr. Becker and his partner, W. Joseph Stewart, purchased their home at 221 Second Street in Lewes in 1974 and proceeded to acquire retail properties along Second Street, as well as a marina on Pillottown Road.

After Stewart-Becker Properties acquired today's Inn at Canal Square on Front Street and began renovations there, Mr. Becker became a full-time resident later that year in order to devote the time needed for property management.

Over those years, Mr. Becker became increasingly involved with the Lewes Chamber of Commerce, where he later served as a board member; he had recently been installed as the Chamber VP at the time of his death. A former executive who oversaw a national chain of decorator fabric showrooms, Becker brought his keen sense of design to their retail properties, with a focus on quality tenants and merchandise.

In 2000 he and Mr. Stewart initiated and led a community-wide effort to save Lewes' waterfront from development. Both became founding members of the Greater Lewes Foundation, which organized an \$11 million campaign to purchase the land and create the Lewes Canalfront Park, which opened in 2008.

Mr. Becker was elected to Lewes City Council in 2004 and served five terms before becoming Mayor in 2014. As a Councilman, he was instrumental in strengthening Lewes' Historic Preservation Code which established the city's historic district and enabled Lewes to retain its character and charm in the face of rapid development.

Always looking to the future, Becker worked closely with Mayor James Ford to float Lewes' first City Bond Bill, raising \$19 million to upgrade City sidewalks, sewer and water service and lighting, City Hall and Police Department expansion and to construct a new sanitation plant for the Board of Public Works.

Mr. Becker was on the board and finance committee of Beebe Hospital beginning in 2005 and remained an emeritus board member thereafter.

In 2021 Mr. Becker was appointed by Governor Carney as a Delaware Commissioner on the Delaware River and Bay Authority. Earlier, in 2005, Gov. Jack Markell had also named him to The Delaware Health Commission.

In 2022, after two terms as Mayor, Mr. Becker turned his interests to the threat posed to Lewes and other coastal communities by climate change. Lewes, Bowers Beach, Slaughter Beach and Kent and Sussex Counties joined in creating the Bay Beach Association.

Consistently philanthropic and community minded, both Mr. Becker and Mr. Stewart continued on the GLF Board, which Mr. Stewart currently chairs. They have also supported and allowed the use of their facilities at the Inn for countless local charitable events.

In December 2022, Mr. Becker underwent regenerative heart surgery to correct a condition. Before his recent illness, Mr. Becker was working actively with the GLF on several important projects, including restoration of the Nassau School, a redesign of the deVries Monument and an \$8 million project to save the Fourth Street Preserve, all in Lewes.

A public Celebration of Mr. Becker's Life for the entire Lewes community is being planned for late October; his interment in Lewes will be private. Donations to the Fourth Street Preserve project are encouraged in lieu of flowers.

Photo attached – caption – “Ted Becker, Sept. 2024, Lewes, DE”

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