



MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL WHOLESALE ELECTRIC COMPANY

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James E. Baker, MMWEC founder, public power pioneer, passes at 94

LUDLOW, Mass. – December 7, 2015 – It is with sadness and deep respect that the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) marks the passing of James E. “Jim” Baker, who died on December 3 at the age of 94.

As the 28-year manager of the consumer-owned Shrewsbury, MA, municipal utility, Mr. Baker’s work as a public power advocate changed the course of history for Massachusetts municipal utilities and earned national acclaim. He spearheaded a legal and regulatory initiative in the early 1960s that led to a Federal Power Commission decision enabling municipal utilities to purchase power at wholesale from the region’s investor-owned utilities, yielding great benefits for municipal utility consumers.

Inspired by this victory, Mr. Baker went on to become a key figure in the creation of MMWEC, promoting the concept of joint action among municipal utilities and guiding the organization during its formative years. He was a founder of MMWEC, serving as the organization’s chairman from its inception in 1969 until 1983. Mr. Baker also chaired a public power committee that initiated and prevailed in federal litigation that gave municipal utilities the right to participate in the New England Power Pool and own pool-planned generation units.

Mr. Baker went on to national public power leadership roles, serving as president and a director of the American Public Power Association, where he received the prestigious James D. Donovan Individual Achievement Award as well as the Distinguished Service Award in 1984.

“James Baker was a tireless and true champion of public power whose work has and will continue to benefit consumers throughout the United States,” said MMWEC Chief Executive Officer Ronald C. DeCurzio. “MMWEC was extremely fortunate to have Mr. Baker as a founder and advocate of joint action, and we express our deepest condolences to his family and friends upon his passing,” he said.

A funeral mass is planned for December 9 at 11 a.m. at Saint Mary’s Church, 640 Main Street in Shrewsbury. Burial with military honors will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Mr. Baker can be made to Habitat for Humanity – MetroWest/Greater Worcester, 11 Distributor Road, Worcester, MA, 01605.

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