



Dr. Richard Ocie Bessent

FEB 14, 1953 - MAY 22, 2025



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Dr. Richard Ocie Bessent

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Dr. Richard Ocie Bessent passed away on Thursday, May 22, 2025. He was a beloved doctor and resident of the Greater New Orleans area for more than 40 wonderful years.

He is survived by his wife, Susan Macaluso Bessent; his children, Charles Townsend Bessent and Richard Olivier Bessent. He is also survived by his sister Charlene Bessent and his mother Vonnie Bessent.

He was preceded in death by his father Ray Bessent and his brother John Bessent. Richard was born in Jacksonville, FL on February 14, 1953 to Ray and Vonnie Bessent who raised him as a hard working farm boy and avid outdoorsman. As the first person in his family to receive a college education, Richard attended Vanderbilt University on academic scholarship where he graduated with honors from the School of Medicine in 1979. He followed Vanderbilt with an Internship at Baylor School of Medicine and eventually a Residency in Ophthalmology at Tulane University. Richard fell in Love with New Orleans, along with Virginia Provosty, resulting in the beginning of a family and the decision to move to Covington, Louisiana. Richard served his community as a Board Certified Ophthalmologist, opening Surgical Eye Associates alongside his partner Steven R. Meyer, M.D. in 1984. He was beloved by his patients and staff, remaining a dedicated and ever-available doctor and surgeon until a stroke forced retirement in 2021. He gave the gift of sight daily, averaging over 4000 cataract surgeries a year during his impressive and fruitful career. No matter the necessity, no matter the hour he was always just a phone call away.

He was as comfortable on a tractor as he was in the operating room. His friends will remember him as a loyal and faithful companion. He was an avid outdoorsman, a voracious student of the world, reader, scientist, deep thinker and conversationalist. Above all, he loved to laugh. If you had the pleasure of being in the room, or even the



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adjacent room, his infectious bellow was heartwarming, and impossible to mistake. His love of medicine and dedication to his career was superseded only by the love he had for his family and dearest friends. The man had a big, beautiful heart—a supporter of valiant causes and a consistent advocate for the underdog. He will be sorely missed by his family and his memory lives on in often retold stories he loved to elaborate to the delight and amusement of the hearer. His legacy rests in the simple fact that he helped his patients, family and friends see this beautiful world with clearer vision and a lighter heart.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations in memory of Dr. Bessent be made to the charity of your choice.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend the memorial services at St. Joseph Abbey, 75376 River Road, St. Benedict, LA 70457 on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 2:00 PM with visitation at the Abbey on Thursday beginning at 1:00 PM.

E.J. Fielding Funeral Home has been entrusted with funeral arrangements. The Bessent family invites you to share thoughts, fondest memories, and condolences online at E. J. Fielding Funeral Home Guest Book at www.ejfieldingfh.com.





Events


Dr. Richard Ocie Bessent

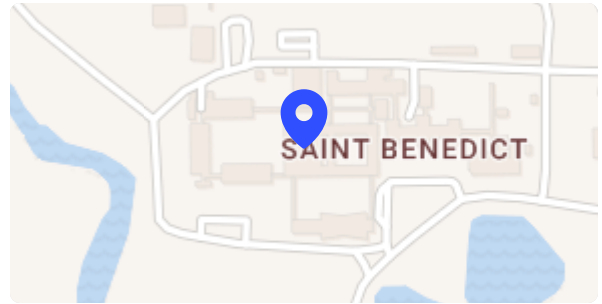
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Gathering


 **Thursday**, May 29, 2025

 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM CT


 **St. Joseph Abbey**
75376 River Rd., St Benedict LA 70457

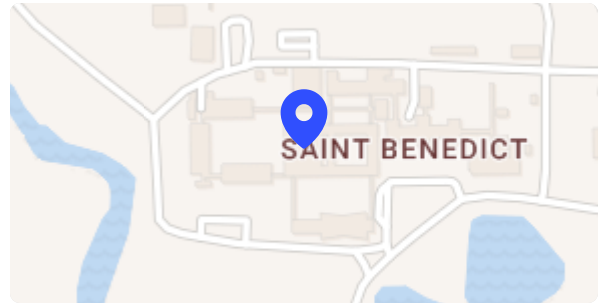


Memorial Mass

 **Thursday**, May 29, 2025

 2:00 PM CT

 **St. Joseph Abbey**
75376 River Rd., St Benedict LA 70457





Tribute Wall

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TN

Tiffany Nuccio posted:

An excellent and well written obituary truly honoring the memory of Dr. Bessent. I had the pleasure of seeing him a few times for appointments and he was always very pleasant which led me to recommend him to others. Many prayers and heartfelt concern from our family to his. May the peace of Christ be with each of you now and always.

June 2 at 12:24 PM

MT

Michael Tomlinson posted:

Dr. Bessent was my ophthalmologist since around 1988 and provided me with excellent service. From routine care and annual examinations to cataract surgery. He was a darn good surgeon and ophthalmologist and I am very saddened to learn of this passing. Dr. Bessent also had a really good and friendly "bedside manner" and I always enjoyed seeing him. A great sense of humor and very, very knowledgeable.

June 2 at 8:29 AM

EA

Elizabeth Arceneaux posted:

Dr Bessent guided me through 30 years of hard contact lenses and then a transition period of 3 months into lasick surgeries. He was kind and caring throughout all! I certainly will miss him. Liz Arceneaux

May 30 at 7:35 AM

JM

Joann Mccarroll posted:

Simply, one of the best obituaries ever written for one of the best doctors ever. It was always a pleasure to have an appointment with Dr Bessent because he was always so positive, happy and just fun to be around. He was truly one of a kind.

May 29 at 12:40 PM

PJ

Pam J. posted:

I'm so very sorry to hear of Dr. Bessent's passing. He became my doctor when I moved here almost 30 years ago, and performed both cataract surgeries for me. He has been and will be missed!

May 29 at 11:08 AM



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AM

Ann Moores posted:

All of us are thinking of Richard and you all. Richard has been such a dedicated ophthalmologist to us as well as a cherished friend and neighbor for so many years. Even after his stroke he gave his time and efforts to advise me on my cataract surgeries. He was one of those very few ophthalmologists who embraced new medical advances as well as become proficient at these procedures as opposed to most who pretty much practice the same way they were originally trained. It was due to his exceptional intelligence, work ethic and curiosity to always be learning how to improve his medical skills. He also was one of the kindest and most thoughtful people we have been honored to know. He will be dearly missed!! Ann, John, David and Celeste Moores

May 29 at 9:19 AM

SC

Sally Champagne posted:

Dr. Bessent became my ophthalmologist in the 1980's. I had so many problems and he would joke with me about entering my case in different medical journals! I was so saddened to learn of his retirement and he will always be missed! Good bye to my Doctor and friend. You made quite a mark in the world!

May 29 at 6:58 AM

JV

James Vitrano posted:

In 1994, Dr. Bessent made a sight saving diagnosis when I was 15. He monitored my care and eyesight for nearly 15 years thereafter. He was patient, kind, strong and loving. He was everything a physician should be. His staff followed his lead in care and kindness. I am forever indebted to Dr. Bessent. God has called home a special man we were blessed to have with us. My love, prayers and thoughts are with his family.

May 29 at 5:54 AM



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Sandy Hughes posted:

Dr. Bessent gave me back my sight. I contracted a virus from an incident in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The steroid medication that I had to use to combat the virus caused my cataracts to grow at a rapid pace. I was almost completely blind by the time of my cataract surgery. Oh, the miracle of sight! It took many, many years to get me completely through the virus; Dr. Bessent was with me through it all.

May 29 at 5:37 AM



Evelyn Sanders May 29 at 10:14 AM

So sad to hear of this loss. My prayers and sympathy to the family. I liked him very much. He was a very likeable doctor and created confidence in me to have my cataract surgery! He will be missed and certainly earned his angel wings!



Hutson Brock May 29 at 5:59 AM

Dr Bessent will always be remembered as one of the greatest healers, physicians. The community will be forever diminished since his passing.



Karen And William Babin posted:

So very sorry to hear to this sad sad news! Dr. Bessent was a wonderful doctor and always with a great sense of humor. Prayers that God gives his family and friends loving comfort and strength. May he rest in peace.

May 29 at 4:54 AM



Bond Wroten Eye Clinic sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Bessent family.



May 28 at 12:07 PM



Judi Peck posted:

He was my ophthalmologist until retiring . He was very much the personality described in his obit. He always had a big smile entering the exam room and always engaged in conversation. H is truly missed

May 27 at 11:12 AM



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Anonymous sent a Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray to the Bessent family.

May 27 at 6:22 AM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Richard.

May 27 at 6:22 AM



Tiffany McGary-Cyprian posted:

Dr. Bessent had the most caring compassionate heart ! When I had my accident & was having visual problems & concerns 1 of my physicians referred me to Dr Bessent for Opthamology it was the BEST referral ever - I was Dx with a Visceral detachment & he coached me through it all - he actually cared ! Ty sir May you REST IN PEACE !

May 24 at 7:56 AM



Edna Kennedy posted:

Susan, you are in my thoughts and prayers.

May 24 at 5:11 AM



Michele Alexis posted:

I recovered his patients after cataract surgery at Cypress Point Surgical Hospital. Such a sweet and caring man. He will be missed. RIP Dr Bessent. Prayers to all who loved him.

May 23 at 5:27 PM



Barbara Lee posted:

Dr Bessent had been my Dr since the 70's, such a sweet soul, stayed with him up to his retirement, will definitely me missed , Prayers for the family

May 23 at 3:55 PM



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CG

Clark Gristina posted:

I became a patient of Richard's in the 80's, and remained one until his retirement. Also became his friend. He was always so welcoming and genuine. So sorry that he has left so early.

May 23 at 3:06 PM

SL

Susan Lapeyronnie posted:

Susan, Townsend, Ro & Virginia, my prayers, thoughts & love are with you all at this time. Dr B was my boss & friend for over 20 years. I enjoyed my time with him at SEA. He was always ready to answer a question, share a joke, make you feel up when you were down. I will miss him, his laugh & his sly sense of humor. Farewell Doc. The Psycho Babe.

May 23 at 11:41 AM

MB

Mary Bertucci May 24 at 3:55 AM

Susan, My Thoughts and Prayers are with you and your family during this time. I was a patient of Dr. Mayer but seen Dr. Bessent a few times through the years, he was such a wonderful and caring man.. he will be missed by many. RIP Dr. Bessent

DY

Debbie Yaeger May 23 at 1:26 PM

I had the honor and joy to be one of Dr Bessent's technicians. He was one of the best. He found out that I was from Florida one day and asked if I knew how to make a key lime pie. I said of course. I made one for Jim and the office. He was wonderful to work with and was an expert at his work. His loss will be noticed by many. Rest in peace Doc. You are loved. Debbie



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Richard by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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