

Hall of Famer Chick Hafey, Ex-N.L. Star, Dies

Charles J. (Chick) Hafey, a member of baseball's Hall of Fame and one of the National League's all-time great outfielders, died in Calistoga, Calif., July 2. He was 69.

Despite ill health during most of his career, Hafey had a lifetime batting average of .317 with the Cardinals and the Reds from 1924 to 1937.

He achieved his greatest fame with the Redbirds and played in four World Series for them, the first in 1926. He also was in the 1928-30-31 classics.

Hafey wore glasses—one of the first in the majors to do so—and his eyesight fluctuated with the severity of the sinus condition that was with him throughout his career.

Branch Rickey, the guiding light of the Cardinals, once said, "I always thought that if Hafey had been blessed with normal eyesight and good health, he might have been the best righthanded hitter **baseball** had ever known."

But that accolade was small consolation for Hafey, whose running salary battles with Rickey finally led to his trade to the Reds in 1932.

Not surprisingly, the sweet-talking Rickey got Hafey to sign a three-year contract in 1928, calling for \$7,000, \$8,000 and \$9,000. That was right after Hafey had hit .329. In the three seasons he was under the contract, Hafey batted .337, .338 and .336. Chick could now see a plumper contract on the horizon.

But he was sadly mistaken.

He asked for \$15,000 in 1931, a sum Rickey considered "outrageous" because of the depression and other factors. Hafey finally came to terms 10 days after the season began, agreeing to \$12,500.

Then Rickey played his trump card. Hafey was docked his salary until the front office decided he was able to play. That resulted in a deduction of \$2,100.

So Hafey wound up playing for \$10,400 in a year when he won the N. L. batting title with a .349 mark, beating Jim Bottomley and Bill Terry in the closest race in history. The figures had to be carried to four decimals to get the winner.

It was another pennant-winning year for the Redbirds and now Hafey was sure he'd be rewarded. Not so.

He asked for \$17,500 in 1932, a sum which he said included the \$2,100 he was docked the previous year. Rickey, the general manager, and Sam Breadon, the club owner, countered with \$13,000. Hafey, then in Florida, blew his cork, jumped in his sleek Auburn and headed back to California.

"I was so angry I drove 90 miles an hour across the desert," he said.

The Cardinals traded Hafey to the Reds on April 11 and Hafey didn't have to squint to see the figures on the Cincinnati contract. They read \$15,000, the sum he always wanted.

Hafey rewarded the Reds with an outstanding performance in center field (he played left for St. Louis), and batted .344.

Shy and soft-spoken, Hafey didn't get the publicity given many of his contemporaries. But they all held him in high respect. He had a powerful and accurate arm and his line drives were screamers. His log shows 164 homers and 341 doubles. Three times he drove in more than 100 runs, an excellent record in view of the fact he never played in all games because of his health.

Bill McKechnie, who was manager of the Cardinals in 1928-29, was sometimes awed by Hafey's performances.

"Hafey was one of the greatest righthanded hitters," McKechnie once said. "He also had the best outfielder's arm I ever saw."

Rogers Hornsby also had praise for Hafey and thought he should have been in the Hall of Fame. Hafey didn't make it until 1971, when the Veterans Committee enshrined him.

Hafey was 6-1 and weighed about 185 pounds. Sometimes, however, his weight would dip when he had severe sinus attacks. Further complicating matters was blurred vision.

In 1927, he had considerable trouble with his eyes, yet he batted .329. He was so ill in 1936 that he sat out the entire season. He played in 89 games and hit .261 in 1937, then called it a career and returned to his ranch in California.

Occasionally he would go to San Francisco to see the Giants play. On one such visit a few years ago, he told an interviewer he couldn't understand why players today beefed so much when they got a brush-back pitch.

"Even if a pitch is a little bit close, they start hollering now," Hafey said. "In my time, we were always getting knocked down and thought nothing of it. The Cubs had some real brutes. If you got a hit against Pat Malone, Charley Root or Lon Warneke, you could make a bet that the next time you came up, you were going down."

Hafey, who started as a pitcher but was quickly converted, played only briefly in the minors with Fort Smith, Houston and Syracuse. He came from a **baseball-playing** family. An older brother was in the minor leagues and two of his nephews, Bud and Tom, were major leaguers.

Unlike most athletes, who knock years off their ages, Hafey added one to his.

"I was only 17 when I first signed and I thought it would be better if I said I was 18," he admitted long after he was out of **baseball**. "But the extra year stayed with me throughout my career."

Hafey was well into his career before he realized he needed glasses. After he had been hit several times by pitches in 1926, Dr. Robert Hyland, the Cardinal physician, became suspicious. He gave Hafey an eye test and confirmed that the slugger had impaired vision.

"Nobody gave me a break because I wore glasses," said Hafey. "The only reference I can remember is one made by Van Mungo. I hit a homer off him when he was pitching for Brooklyn and he was really burning. He yelled, 'That's the last time I'll respect those damned things.'"

Elmer Layden, one of Notre Dame's "Four Horsemen" and later coach at his alma mater and commissioner of the National Football League, died in Chicago June 30. He was 70.

A 165-pound fullback out of the tall corn country in Iowa, Layden was one of Notre Dame's all-time greats. He was All-America in 1923 and 1924 and the hero in the Fighting Irish's 27-10 victory over Stanford in the 1925 Rose Bowl game.

The "Four Horsemen" were immortalized by sportswriter Grantland Rice in his account of Notre Dame's 13-7 win against Army in 1924.

"Outlined against a blue-gray October sky, the Four Horsemen rode again today," Rice wrote. "In dramatic lore they are known as Famine, Pestilence, Destruction and Death. These are only aliases. Their real names are Stuhldreher, Miller, Crowley and Layden."

The Four Horsesmen, all backfield men, were pretty good, but Rice was carried away.

George Stickler, later sports editor of the Chicago Tribune, was the sports public relations director for Notre Dame at the time and he



Chick Hafey

knew a good thing when he saw it.

The day after Rice's dramatic account appeared in newspapers, Strickler rented four horses from a South Bend coal company, mounted his charges on them and called in the photographers. History was being made.

Harry Stuhldreher, the quarterback, died in 1965, but halfbacks Jim Crowley and Don Miller are still alive. All four had remained close friends through the years.

Miller, along with Layden, was an All-America in 1923 and Stuhldreher, Crowley and Layden were elected the following year. Miller lost his spot to Illinois' Red Grange.

Layden lacked flamboyance and accepted victory and honors with modesty. He almost quit Notre Dame in his freshman year, but was persuaded by Coach Knute Rockne not to return to his home in Davenport, Ia.

"Elmer, I know you are homesick," Rockne said, "but we haven't lost a freshman yet. I hope you're not going to be the first one."

Layden's greatest game probably was in the Rose Bowl against Stanford. He scored three touchdowns, two after hijacking passes and fleeing 70 and 78 yards.

"Elmer could have been even a better player, a better scorer if he hadn't been so unselfish," Crowley said. "He never failed to block for the rest of us. He was always a first-class gentleman."

Layden earned a law degree and he couldn't make up his mind after graduating just what career he would pursue. He played one year of professional ball with Brooklyn, then became coach at Columbia College in Dubuque, Ia., in 1926. He also practiced some law.

When an opportunity arose to become coach at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1927, he discarded law and built the Dukes into a national power.

As Notre Dame's fortunes sputtered under Hunk Anderson, Layden's 54-16 record at Duquesne did not go unnoticed by his alma mater. In 1934, Layden returned to the Fighting Irish as coach and remained through 1940, compiling a 47-13-3 record.

Ironically, his replacement was Frank Leahy, who preceded him in death by nine days.

Columnist Red Smith, an alumnus of Notre Dame and a long-time friend of Layden, held him in high esteem.

"Layden was scrupulous in following eligibility rules," Smith wrote. "Athletes had to maintain an academic average of 77, compared with a passing grade of 70. There was no

red-shirting, no playing of student transfers. Without cutting corners, he was a success against the best college teams in the world."

Layden also served as athletic director and was a low-key recruiter. He always impressed upon a boy that football fame was fleeting and that the main thing was to choose a college that would best prepare him for life.

More than one good athlete grabbed his hat when he heard Layden's speech.

By 1940, Layden's enthusiasm for coaching was gone.

"The strain was becoming so terrific that I felt it wasn't worth it," he said. "I wanted no more of it."

So he left Notre Dame in 1941 to become commissioner of the NFL in the war years of 1941-46. His reign was indistinguished and he had some opponents among the club owners. He was replaced by Bert Bell.

That was all of football for Layden, who decided on a business career.

"I can make a better living under less hectic conditions," said Layden. "You can't eat newspaper clippings."

He moved to Chicago and became an executive with General American Transportation Corp., retiring several years ago.

Joe E. Brown, who considered himself a sports fan first and a famous movie and stage comedian second, died in Brentwood, Calif., July 6 after a long illness. He was 80.

A former minor league infielder and once part owner of the Kansas City (American Association) club, the wide-mouthed comedian could be found at a **baseball** game or some other sports event when he wasn't working in films or on the stage.

In recent years, however, he was confined to his home by arthritis, a heart condition and finally a stroke.

Although **baseball** was his first love, he was an ardent follower of UCLA football teams and often sat on the bench. He was an avid collector of sports memorabilia and gave a substantial part of his collection to UCLA in 1947.

"People call me a super-fan," Brown said in an interview in 1960. "Well, maybe I am, but I'm not a fanatic. I can't quote batting averages and things like that and I'd rate sports pretty far behind the church and my family."

Brown, whose wife of 58 years, Kathryn, was with him at the time of his death, had two sons and two daughters. Joe L. Brown is general manager of the Pirates and Don was an Army Air Corps pilot killed in a crash in 1942.

Brown ran away from his home in Ohio when he was 10 and later worked as an actor and acrobat. He played a few games for St. Paul before World War I, then devoted his full time to acting.

Some of most hilarious performances were in movies with **baseball** or other sports backgrounds. Two of his films were "Alibi Ike" and "Elmer the Great," both about **baseball**. They still are seen occasionally on television.

Brown was a close friend of the late publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS, J. G. Taylor Spink, and was a frequent visitor to the paper's offices during the publisher's lifetime. The comedian devoured every issue.

In the early 1950s, Brown did a stint with the Yankee broadcasting team. He also found time to head the P-O-N-Y **baseball** program

which is for youngsters in the 13-14 year-old bracket.

Both of Brown's sons attended UCLA and participated in varsity sports.

The comedian took a fatherly interest in UCLA students, particularly athletes, and helped about 30 through college. One was Mike Frankovich, who was more like an adopted son. Frankovich was one of UCLA's top athletes and now is a movie producer.

David Earl (Swede) Savage, who was burned and suffered other injuries in a crash during the Indianapolis 500-mile race May 30, died in Indianapolis July 2. He was 26.

The Santa Ana, Calif., driver had been on the critical list since the accident, which occurred midway through the race when he slammed into a wall. His car seemed to disintegrate as it burst into flames.

Savage's death was the third related to this year's 500 event. Driver Art Pollard was killed May 12 during a practice run. Armando Teran, a member of a pit crew, was injured fatally after being struck by a fire truck which was speeding to the site of Savage's crash.

David (Salt) Walther, who was burned in a crash on May 27, is still hospitalized in serious condition. Walther's car was one of 10 in an accident which caused the race to be postponed.

Savage, literally, was born to speed. He drove in "kiddie races" when he was 9. By the time he was 15 he was competing in motorcycle events.

He wasn't unfamiliar with crashes. He had sustained head injuries, a collapsed lung, broken ribs and a caved-in chest during mishaps.

"My accidents made a better driver of me," he claimed.

He realized his ambition to drive in the Indy 500 in 1972 when he qualified at 181.726 and started in the ninth position. But he was forced out after five laps with a broken connecting rod.

Walter J. Schmidt, a major league catcher for 10 years with the Pirates and the Cardinals, died in Modesto, Calif., July 4. He was 86.

Schmidt, who had a .257 lifetime batting average, was with the Pirates from 1916 through 1924 and the Cardinals in 1925.

Most of Schmidt's minor league career was spent in the Pacific Coast League with San Francisco, Mission and Seattle. He retired in 1929 and moved to Ceres, Calif., where he spent the rest of his life.

His brother, Charles, who died in 1932, was a catcher with the Tigers for six years.

David Bloom, 73, retired sports editor of the Memphis (Tenn.) Commercial Appeal, died in Memphis July 1.

Bloom was with the Commercial Appeal for 49 years until his retirement in 1972. He continued to write a column in the Sunday paper, the last one appearing two months before his death.

Luther A. (Doc) Cook, an outfielder with the Yankees for four years before World War I, died in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., June 30. He was 84.

Cook played for the Yanks, then the Highlanders, from 1913 through 1916 and had a .274 batting average.

Warren M. Palmer, former basketball coach at Hamilton College, died recently in Utica, N. Y. He was 32.

Margaret Ozark, mother of Phillies' Manager Danny Ozark, died in Detroit, July 3.

