

# obituaries

**William H. (Billy) Southworth**, who reached most of the peaks and many of the valleys in a baseball career that covered almost 40 years, died in Columbus, O., November 15 after a lingering illness.

The 76-year-old **Southworth**, whose death was attributed to emphysema, a respiratory ailment, lived in Sunbury, O., a small town north of Columbus.

Although **Southworth** was best known for his managing, he also was a first-class player despite his modest size—5-8 and 168 pounds. He was a major league outfielder for 13 years with the Indians, Pirates, Braves, Giants and Cardinals.

He played in 1,192 games, had 1,296 hits and a lifetime batting average of .297.

At the age of 33, when he was nearing the end of his playing career, he was a hero in the Cardinals' first pennant-winning season and World Series victory over the Yankees.

**Southworth** spent the early part of 1926 with the Giants before going to the Cardinals. He batted .320 in the regular season. And, in the Series, he had a lustrous .345 mark, ten hits in 29 trips. He had only one RBI, but he scored six of the Cardinals' 31 runs.

#### Won Three Pennants

He managed the Cardinals from 1940 through 1945, winning pennants in 1942-43-44. He also had a fling at piloting the Redbirds in 1929, replacing Bill McKechnie late in July. The next year, however, he was back managing Rochester, where he had started his managerial career a year earlier.

In all, **Southworth** spent about 23 seasons as a manager in either the majors or the minors.

"Some were happy years and some were sad," the "Little General" remarked wistfully in an interview a few years ago.

The sad ones, no doubt, were with the Boston Braves. It was one of the most stormy associations a manager ever had with a club.

After finishing second with the Cardinals in 1945, **Southworth** went to the Braves for what was reported to be a \$50,000 contract covering five years.

**Southworth** won the 1948 pennant with Boston, but lost to the In-

dians in the World Series. But it wasn't really a happy club, as things later developed.

**Southworth** had received an emotional shock in 1945 after his son, Lt. Col. **Billy Southworth**, was killed when his B-29 crashed in Flushing Bay, N. Y., while trying to make an emergency landing. **Southworth** started finding solace in the bottle.

By 1949, there was much unhappiness among the Braves' players and **Southworth**, citing illness, left the club on a leave of absence August 16 and returned to his Sunbury home.

#### Club Finished Fourth

The Braves finished fourth and came in for a small World Series share. They promptly voted **Southworth** only a half-share, incurring the wrath of Commissioner Happy Chandler.

Chandler stepped in and ordered a full share for the pilot.

"Those divisions voted by the players are sent to the commissioner's office so that he can see if justice is done," Chandler said. "And that's what I did. I gave **Southworth** a full share."

The Braves had cut their melon into 37 shares of \$331 each.

**Southworth** was not indignant, at least on the surface, by the snub. "I suppose some of the boys felt that inasmuch as I hadn't been with the team all season," he stated, "that I wasn't entitled to a full share. But I'm not angry with them. If that's the way they wanted it, well, that's the way it should have been."

There was little doubt that the 1949 team had no liking for **Southworth**, whose methods were sometimes described as autocratic.

Ed Rumill, sports editor of the Christian Science Monitor, which is published in Boston, said in August, 1949:

"An off-the-record poll among the Braves revealed the startling fact that nowhere could I find a man who hoped that **Billy Southworth** would return as manager of the club in 1950. The poll was unanimously against it!"

#### Replaced by Holmes

But **Southworth** did return in 1950 and stayed until June, 1951, when he was replaced by Tommy Holmes.

What may have been upsetting to some—or all—of the Braves was **Southworth's** regimen at training camp. He demanded top physical condition, working his men harder and longer than most other pilots. He was a meticulous teacher, too, and all of this apparently carried over during the regular season.

After giving up the pilot reins, he remained with the Braves' organization as a scout through 1956.

**Southworth**, who was THE SPORTING NEWS' Manager of the Year in 1941 and 1942, touched many bases in his tours as a player or manager.

Among the minor league teams he played for were Portsmouth, Toledo, Birmingham, Rochester, Columbus and Asheville. He managed Rochester, Columbus, Asheville and Memphis.

**Edwin H. (Ed) Hurley**, an often controversial umpire during his 19 years in the American League, died November 12 in Boston after a long illness.

Hurley, who was 61 and a resident of Holyoke, Mass., was retired by the A. L. in a stormy incident after the 1965 season.

On December 29, 1965, Hurley and two other veteran A. L. ump-



**Billy Southworth**

Bill McKinley and Joe Paparella, receive notices from League President Joe Cronin that they were being retired effective January 1, 1966. For Hurley and McKinley, the retirement notice came as something of a shock. Paparella, however, had planned to retire.

What caused the resultant storm—in Hurley's case—was the rule governing retirement.

#### Lowered Retirement Age

The A. L. had lowered its retirement age for umpers from 60 to 55, but left it on a voluntary basis until age 60, when retirement became mandatory. A. L. directors, however, made 55 the mandatory limit at a meeting in December, 1965, and so Hurley and the others were dropped.

Hurley was outraged, blasting Cronin and threatening to take the matter to court. He even appealed to William Eckert, then commissioner, but the retirement stood.

"Even a dog gets more consideration than we did," said Hurley, who claimed at the time he was 55. Records, however, show he was 57.

"Even when an umpire is fired," said Hurley, "he gets ten days' notice. We got two. I'll tell you this. Nobody—certainly not Cronin—can take a bow for the way this thing was handled. The way they did it, I just can't believe it."

Hurley's retirement pay was in the neighborhood of \$5,000. As one of the veterans, his umpiring salary was about \$16,000.

He was recognized as a capable and firm ump, but one who wouldn't take much guff from players or managers.

#### Wouldn't Be Jackass

"All I ever did when umpiring," he recalled not long ago, "was try to do a capable job. I tried to conduct myself so I deserved the respect of my children. How could I ask their respect, then let some manager or player make a jackass out of me?"

Although Hurley probably had more than his share of controversies and thrilling experiences, the thing that stood out in his mind was a bizarre incident that occurred in 1951.

Hurley was behind the plate when Bill Veeck, then owner of the Browns, sent midget Eddie Gaedel to the plate as a batter. Hurley at first balked—and so did the Browns' opponent, the Tigers—but when St. Louis Manager Zach Taylor produced a bona-fide contract, Hurley allowed Gaedel to bat. The midget drew a walk.

Before entering the American League in 1947, Hurley, who had played only semi-pro ball, was an arbiter in the Canadian-American League, Eastern League and American Association. As an A. L. ump, he worked in four World Series and three All-Star games.

After his forced retirement, he was a scout for the Twins in 1966

and traveling secretary of the Athletics in 1967.

**Johnny O'Connor**, who gave more than 2,000 autographed baseballs free to handicapped children over a 22-year period, died recently in St. Petersburg, Fla.

O'Connor, 79, a retired government employe and a native of Framingham, Mass., was known to hundreds of players. Each spring he would camp outside the visitors' clubhouse at Al Lang Field in St. Petersburg and have the players autograph baseballs.

The noble hobby started quite by accident. O'Connor and Edd Roush, the Hall of Famer, were standing outside Lang Field chatting when a ball flew over the wall.

"There was a little girl in a wheelchair," O'Connor recalled, "and Roush grabbed the ball and offered it to the youngster. He also asked if she would like to have it autographed and when she said yes, Roush went into the park to get the signatures. But when he came back, she was gone. He gave the ball to me and told me to see if I could find the little girl and give it to her. I did and I've been giving kids baseballs ever since."

#### Never-Ending Supply

O'Connor's source of baseballs was amazing. Some he purchased, some he begged and others were given to him. Often he would buy a ball for \$1 or \$2 from a youngster who had retrieved it following a homer or a foul that went out of the park.

His only source of money was a small pension. He never sold a ball nor would he entertain the thought of selling one.

"It would be wrong if I sold one," he said. "They are for the kids alone."

He had a special affection for young polio victims in the days when the disease was prevalent. But he also sent baseballs to other handicapped youngsters, even those who were blind.

All he would ask is that the child receiving the ball send a note of acknowledgement to him or one of the players who had signed the ball.

At his stand outside the clubhouse, O'Connor would keep his baseballs in special holes in an old wooden soda box. Each player would sign as he entered or left the clubhouse and the ball would be put in its slot. No one ever refused and frequently a player would give O'Connor the name of a youngster to whom a ball could be sent.

O'Connor, an infantry veteran of World War I, kept the names and addresses of youngsters in a dog-eared notebook.

He was particularly pleased when he would receive a reply from a crippled boy who expressed a desire to become a baseball player when "I don't have to wear braces any more."

"That's all the thanks I ever need," said O'Connor.

**Mrs. Frances Schriever**, for many years the personal secretary of the late J. G. Taylor Spink, publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS, died in a rest home in suburban St. Louis November 14.

**Mrs. Schriever** was described as having "the patience of a saint" in working with her dynamic boss. She was calm and pleasant-voiced in contrast to Spink's gruff and explosive nature. She matched him in long hours on the job, took care of his correspondence and maintained his personal files.

Spink was a champion in placing long-distance telephone calls. Mrs. Schriever handled the calls and her voice was known to baseball officials and sportswriters all over the country. Many of them became her friend and knew her by her first name.

It is doubtful if any secretary equaled Mrs. Schriever in her ability to track down people she

## TL Shows Increase of 29,333 at the Gate

FORT WORTH, Tex. — Although only three of the eight teams showed increases, Texas League attendance was up 29,333 over 1968, according to official figures released by league President Bobby Bragan.

Over-all attendance was 828,269 compared with 798,936 for the preceding year. In 1969, the league had a 138-game schedule and in 1968 a 140-game chart.

Biggest increase—76,578—was shown by Albuquerque. Dallas-Fort Worth was up 20,071 and Amarillo, the Western Division champ, had a gain of 13,784. Memphis, the Eastern Division winner and also the playoff victor, had a loss of 34,130.

#### ATTENDANCE FIGURES

Club	1969	1968	Increase or Decrease
Dallas-Ft. W.	235,827	215,756	+20,071
Albuquerque	176,671	100,093	+76,578
Memphis	107,288	141,418	-34,130
Arkansas	89,321	101,531	-12,210
Amarillo	68,045	54,261	+13,784
El Paso	62,869	78,137	-15,268
Shreveport	50,223	67,671	-17,448
San Antonio	38,024	40,069	-2,045
Totals	828,269	798,936	+29,333

was ordered to reach. If Spink wanted to talk to someone, Mrs. Schriever located him, even if she had to ferret him out in some isolated place in this country or overseas.

Mrs. Schriever went to work for THE SPORTING NEWS in June, 1926. After Spink's death on December 7, 1962, she became the receptionist for the paper. In that capacity, she greeted visitors to THE SPORTING NEWS and conducted them on tours of the office and plant.

She also continued to place long-distance calls with her usual efficiency for members of the editorial staff.

Her husband, Frank, survives.

**Robert Morrison**, 56, a sports writer for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for 33 years, died of a heart attack November 13 while talking by phone to his son.

Morrison was in a hospital at the time, apparently recovering from a first attack suffered on October 22.

During his career with the Post-Dispatch, Morrison covered practically every sport. In recent years, his main assignment had been professional football.

Before joining the Post-Dispatch, Morrison, who attended Washington U. in St. Louis, worked for the Associated Press for two years.

**Mrs. J. LeBeau Christy**, sister of the late J. G. Taylor Spink, publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS, and Mrs. Frances Merrell, died in St. Louis November 17.

Mrs. Christy, whose name was Freddie, is survived by her husband, a son, C. Calvin, and a daughter, Mrs. Virginia Culver.

A nephew is C. C. Johnson Spink, editor and publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS.

**James L. Mitchell**, who owned and managed three Negro baseball teams that played throughout the country in the 1930s, died November 11 in Louisville, Ky.

Teams owned and piloted by Mitchell were the Louisville Black Caps, the Louisville Black Colonels and the Zulu Cannibal Giants.

**Graham Ross**, former vice-president of the Professional Golfers Association, died of a heart attack in Dallas November 12.

**Leo J. Yurchak**, 59, an infielder with Rogers, Ark., and Norfolk in 1934-35, died in Kansas City, Kan., recently.

**Cecil Dillon**, 61, who played for the New York Rangers in the 1930s, died in Meadford, Ont., November 14.

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