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Former Padres catcher Bob Barton dies



By **Jeff Sanders**

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Bob Barton, a catcher with the Padres in the early 1970s, died Jan. 15 in Vista after a long battle with dementia, his wife, Connie, told the Union-Tribune. He was 76.

Barton played parts of 10 seasons in the majors, beginning with the Giants in 1965. The Padres acquired him in December 1969 alongside third baseman Bobby Etheridge and pitcher Ron Herbel for pitcher Frank Reberger.

Barton suited up for San Diego for three seasons before he was traded to the Reds in 1972 for catcher Pat Corrales. He enjoyed his best season in 1971, batting .250 with five homers and 23 RBIs in 121 games with the Padres.

Barton appeared in three games for the Reds in 1973 before he was released. He re-signed with San Diego the following year, appearing in 30 games before playing his last game on his birthday on July 30, 1974.

“As you can imagine, he loved (being a major leaguer),” said wife Connie, 70, whom he married in 1975. “He played sports all his life. He didn’t get to play as much as he thought he should have – that was a little bit of a sore spot – but he loved the game and loved working with the pitchers. ... He had a real knack for teaching.”

Barton worked in insurance after his playing career, which began when he signed with the San Francisco Giants in 1959 out of high school in Covington, Ken. He was a standout in both baseball and basketball, and gave up a basketball scholarship to the University of Kentucky to play professional baseball, Connie Barton said.

Barton, who signed for \$25,000, was 17 when he started his career in Hastings in the Nebraska State League. Born in Norwood, Ohio, Barton debuted in the majors six years later.

In addition to being a catcher, Barton was also the Padres’ player representative in 1972 leading into the first players’ strike.

Barton is survived by his wife Connie, sons Brian, Tony, Joshua and Joseph and daughter Katie Riley.

The family will hold a service 1 p.m. Feb. 17 at Emmanuel Faith Community Church in Escondido.

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