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Elliott Howard Sylvan, onetime player for NY baseball Giants' farm team, food bank volunteer, dies at 87

Updated June 14, 2015 10:01 PM

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Elliott Howard Sylvan, a former trucking executive and World War II veteran who once played for a New York Giants' farm team, died June 2 of lymphoma at his home in Princeton, New Jersey. He was 87.

Voted "most valuable player," Sylvan was celebrated at Yankee

Stadium with other high school baseball stars, a group that included Ed Ford from Manhattan Aviation, who later was nationally known as Whitey Ford of the Yankees. Sylvan played one season with the Giants' Tennessee farm club, the Bristol Twins, in the summer of 1945, then went into the Army.

The teenager was sent to Japan as part of the postwar occupying forces, said his wife, Lenore Sylvan, 86. He served as an auditor, ending his tour in 1947.

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Sylvan graduated from Jamaica High School, then attended Columbia University at night while he worked during the day, his wife said. After three years, the demands of work kept him from completing his degree.

The family moved to Syosset in 1953, where they lived until 2005, when Sylvan and his wife moved to Princeton.

During more than four decades in the trucking industry, Sylvan worked for his father-in-law's Supermarkets General Corp., which operated the Pathmark supermarket chain, and his own brokerage company, which provided shipping services.

In retirement, Sylvan used his skills to help Island Harvest, a nonprofit food bank, collect and deliver food to soup kitchens, pantries and other groups offering food services for people in need. He coordinated and dispatched the group's fleet of trucks and vans throughout Long Island, said Randi Shubin Dresner, president and CEO of Island Harvest.

"Quite frankly, there were so many things I needed to concentrate on. Knowing that aspect of our work was taken care of was just a relief for me," Dresner said.

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Sylvan and his wife also donated their time to Island Harvest, including for the group's annual Thanksgiving turkey drive. One year, Sylvan collected so many turkeys that the van was filled to the brim. He warned Dresner not to open the van until she was ready to unload the turkeys, and to open only the side door, not the back doors.

A skeptical Dresner had to see for herself.

"I opened the doors and all the turkeys just rolled out of the van onto the street," she said, laughing at the memory.

Sylvan also used his love of baseball to help children at the AHRC, formerly known as the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, teaching them the game and being there to lend an ear, offer advice and help as needed.

"These are the things that made up the man I was married to," Lenore Sylvan said. "He was a loving individual who was always ready to help others."

In addition to his wife, survivors include sons, Sanford Sylvan of Manhattan and Seth Sylvan of Plainview; daughter, Gwen Sylvan of Skillman, New Jersey; three grandsons; a granddaughter; and a great-grandson.

Two memorial services are planned on Long Island and in Princeton. The family has not set dates.

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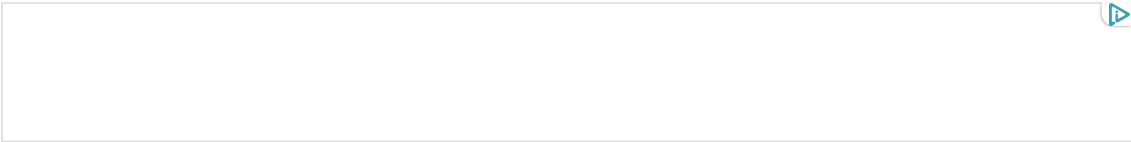
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