

BASEBALL

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Baseball notes: Stevens, MLB's oldest living player and a former St. Louis Brown, dies at 99

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Chuck Stevens (back row, left) was among a group of former players who met with President Ronald Reagan at the White House in 1984 before the Old Timers Baseball Classic. Front row from left: Ernie Banks, Harmon Killebrew and President Reagan. Warren Spahn stood next to Stevens, and Larry Doby stood behind the president. (AP Photo)

St. Louis Browns first baseman Chuck Stevens, who was the oldest living former major-league player at 99, died Monday night near Long Beach, Calif. Stevens, who played with the Browns in 1941, 1946 and 1948, would have been 100 on July 10.

The switch hitter averaged .251 in his three seasons with the Browns, hitting four home runs. Three of those came in 1946, when he was a regular. His on-field legacy was that he was the first player to get a hit off future Brownie Satchel Paige when the latter was with Cleveland in 1948.

After his playing career, Stevens was head of the Association of Professional Ball Players of America, which was created to help former players who were in need.

Stevens had been scheduled to participate from California in the annual Browns reunion luncheon slated for July 12 in St. Louis, which would have been two days after his milestone birthday.

Former Philadelphia A's pitcher Fred Caligiuri, at 99, is believed to be the oldest former major leaguer now.

Former catcher Tom Jordan, who had one at-bat with the Browns in 1948 after playing with the Chicago White Sox and Cleveland, is next at 98. Jordan is slated to attend the July luncheon here.

Cardinals great Red Schoendienst is the oldest living Hall of Famer, at 95.

He is 14th on the list of living former players. (Rick Hummel)

Paige fire suspicious • Investigators are looking into whether a fire Tuesday that destroyed the former Kansas City home of Satchel Paige was arson.

There were signs that an accelerant may have been used. The house, which had been vacant for years, was Paige's home until he died in 1982 at age 75.