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# Ron Henry, swingin' Denver singer, dies at 79

Henry was best known for singing and acting in Denver but had a long baseball career

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For the past 35 years, Ron Henry was a fixture at Denver bars and clubs where he was a well-known singer and actor, but what his fans may not know is that he also played major-league baseball.

To his five children, his siblings and his many grandchildren, Henry was fun-loving and a joy to be around.

“He loved his friends, he loved his life, he loved all the people he encountered, all the people he interacted with especially with the music,” said Rebecca Mobley, one of Henry’s daughters.

Ronald Baxter Henry died on May 14 at his home in Denver from cardiovascular disease and end stage renal disease. He was 79.

Mobley said if she had to pick one word to describe him, it would be



Ron Henry, in a photo taken in the "late '90s or early 2000s" according to Rebecca Mobley.

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Provided by Rebecca Mobley

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"charismatic."

"He was a fun-loving guy. He liked to laugh a lot. He was kind of a jokester," she said. "He loved us a lot. He tried to give us a lot of good advice. ... He really adored his grandkids."

Henry, one of five children, was born on Aug. 7, 1936, to James Henry Sr. and Essie Lee Ragin Henry in Chester, Pa. He was a strong athlete throughout his childhood and started his baseball career at just 17 when he played in an American Legion all-star game. He hit a home run into the left-center-field stands at Connie Mack Stadium, former home of the Philadelphia Phillies, which earned him the MVP title for the game, said his younger sister, Valaida Henry.

The night before the big game, Henry was hanging out with his younger cousins when "he looked in the mirror at them and pretended he was swinging a baseball bat. He said he was gonna hit it out of the stadium, and then he did that," Valaida Henry said.

A catcher, he signed with the Milwaukee Braves in 1954. With his first signing bonus, he bought his parents and siblings a home, which his sister Valaida still lives in today.

"He came one time with cash, and like you see on TV, people with money throwing it up on the bed. I remember doing

that," she said.

Henry played in the minor leagues for 15 seasons (1954-68), and he spent 20 games of the 1961 season and 22 more major-league games in 1964 as a member of the Minnesota Twins. He hit two home runs in the 1964 season.

After his baseball career ended and then a brief time in the Army, he settled in Denver, where he spent 35 years as a singer and actor, becoming an integral member of the music scene.

Henry played shows at the Manhattan Grill, the 9th Hole, which is now Roo Bar, and, most famously, [The Bay Wolf](#) in the early 1980s. He acted at various venues, including [Armando's Ristorante](#) and [Rodney's](#). He also had a role in the [Country Dinner Playhouse's](#) "Damn Yankees."

"It was wonderful seeing your brother up on stage and seeing people loving him so," Valaida said.

In recent years, Henry lived with and was cared for by his sister Gale Boulware and her children, Mark Boulware, Desiree Burgos and Mikel Boulware.

Henry is survived by children Rebecca Mobley, Jason Henry, Donna Moore, Sheryl Johnson and Rodney Shelton; sisters Valaida Henry and Gale Boulware; his many grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held Friday at the Valley View Church of God, 4390 S. Lowell Blvd., in Englewood. A celebration of life will be Saturday at Herb's, 2057 Larimer St., in Denver.

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