

By Staff

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Former Bradley player, Morton coach Mike McDonald dies at age 68

Mike McDonald, a standout baseball player on Bradley's 1968 NCAA playoff team who went on to coach Morton High School to a state championship, died Saturday. He was 68.

In 24 seasons at Morton, McDonald guided the Potters to a 452-313-4 record, highlighted by the Class AA state championship season of 1984 and a state runner-up finish in 1994.

McDonald was head coach at Eureka College between two stints as an assistant at Illinois Central College, concluding his time on the ICC staff last spring.

Longtime ICC baseball coach Brett Kelley was a star under McDonald on Morton's 1994 team that lost to Joliet Catholic in the state title game.

McDonald's success as a coach started with fundamentals, Kelley said.

"He was demanding and he expected us to be good and do things the right way," Kelley said. "I don't know that there is or will be a high school coach who can do what he did as far as going through the fundamentals and knowing how you have to do everything."

"That's a reason the Morton program was so strong. You take a lot from the guy because that's how you learn to play the game."

McDonald was a 1976 inductee into the Bradley Athletics Hall of Fame, a 1991 inductee into the Illinois High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame and a 2012 inductee into the Spoon River College Athletics Hall of Fame.

At Bradley, McDonald was an All-Missouri Valley Conference third baseman on a Braves team that won the conference title and made the NCAA playoffs. He signed with the St. Louis Cardinals as a catcher in March of 1970 and reached the Double-A level.

When he signed with the Cardinals, McDonald had to resign his teaching and coaching positions at Bergan High School and give up his managerial duties in the Sunday Morning League.

In high school, McDonald played third base on Pekin's 1964 team that made the state semifinals. He batted .455 and .320 in two years as a Spoon River outfielder, then went on to success at Bradley.

Knapp-Johnson Funeral Home & Cremation Center in Morton is in charge of arrangements.



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Mike McDonald

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