
John N. Pearson



John Nils Pearson died Wednesday, December 3, 2014, at Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton, following several years of declining health. Coach Hank was born December 8, 1922, in Bridgewater. He attended Bridgewater public schools graduating from Bridgewater High School in 1940. He was the son of the late Nils F.W. Pearson and Selma A.M. Johnson-Fonander. During high school, John played football, basketball, and baseball. He excelled in sports and made baseball a lifelong career. Following high school, he completed post-graduate studies in Mathematics, and in 1941 began engineering studies at Northeastern University. Engineering studies were not to his liking and he enlisted in the Navy to attend pilot training. He completed several months of pilot training, but was eventually released from active duty in 1943 due to an excess of Navy pilots. Upon leaving the Navy, he signed a contract to play first base with the Brooklyn Dodgers. His professional baseball career lasted approximately one year during which he

played alongside many great players. One in particular was Duke Snyder who went on to become an elite baseball player and personality. In 1944, John was drafted back into the Navy. He never served overseas during [World War II](#) and was again released from active duty during 1946. He next applied and was accepted into the Physical Education program at Springfield College where he played baseball and received his bachelors degree in 1950. John remembered Springfield College playing Yale in baseball when he and George H. W. Bush were opposing first basemen. After Springfield College, John attended and graduated from Columbia University receiving a masters degree in Physical Education. John was a coach and teacher for over 30 years. He taught Science, primarily Biology, and served as a coach to thousands of young people. His first job was at a private Virginia school and in 1952 he returned to Massachusetts to teach and coach at Braintree High School. After 10 years at Braintree High School, he became the baseball coach and taught Science at Bridgewater-Raynham High School for 20 years, retiring in 1982. His long and illustrious teaching and coaching career positively influenced the lives of thousands of young people particularly those who played baseball for him. He taught them not only the fundamentals of baseball, but the fundamentals of life. Many followed in his footsteps and became teachers and coaches. At least a dozen of his players signed professional baseball contracts as players and coaches. Several of his former students and players have achieved national recognition as players, coaches, and scouts- Jim Calhoun as the University of Connecticut basketball coach, Richard Dube as a major league pitching coach, and Glenn Tufts as a major league scout to name just three. Coach Pearson received many awards and recognitions in his lifetime, including being inducted into the Massachusetts Coaches Association Baseball Hall of Fame in 1986. He was also one of the primary founders of the Brockton Invitational Baseball Tournament. He was very touched in recent years by the dedication of the John Hank Pearson Ball Park at Bridgewater Raynham Regional High School and the many tributes and testimonials in his honor. John leaves a legacy of excellence in sports that is unequalled. He did not make the majors as a first baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers, but in the minds and hearts of thousands of associates, students, and high school baseball players, he taught them how to daily hit home runs in their journey through life. He will also be remembered for his love of conversation, especially debate, and for his incredible memory for facts, details, and his students and athletes. Coach John Nils "Hank" Pearson will be missed by his many friends, players, students, and cousins. A funeral home service will be held at the Prophett-Chapman, Cole & Gleason Funeral Home, 98 Bedford St., Bridgewater, Friday, Dec. 12, at 11 a.m., followed by a burial with military honors at Mt. Prospect Cemetery. Visitation will be held Thursday, Dec. 11, from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Donations in Coachs memory may be sent to Coach John Hank Pearson Scholarship Fund, c/o Rockland Trust, 233 Broad St., Attn: Sheila Foster, Bridgewater, MA 02324. For online guest book and directions, visit www.ccgfuneralhome.com. Prophett-Chapman Cole & Gleason 508-697-4332

Funeral Home

Prophett-Chapman, Cole & Gleason

98 Bedford Street Bridgewater, MA 02324
(508) 697-4332

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