

R.T. Chadner, former minor league pitcher

Richard T. (Dick) Chadner, 53, of Stacy, Minn., a minor league baseball pitcher in the 1950s, died Saturday at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Paul. He apparently suffered a heart attack while attending a movie.

Chadner, a native of Philadelphia and son of a Polish immigrant, grew up in Chester, Pa., where he was a star high school baseball pitcher. In 1953, a Pitsburgh Pirates farm team offered the 6-foot 8½-inch, 18-year-old a new Ford Crown Victoria automobile to join its organization. "Three teams wanted him to sign and the Pirates offered him this (car) and he took it," said Chadner's wife, Nicki.

Chadner later played minor league baseball for Chicago White Sox and Detroit Tigers farm organizations. His baseball career came to an end in the late 1950s when he was hit in the chest by a line drive. "He said he didn't even see it coming," his wife said. "It hit him ... knocked him over, knocked him out. He got a tumor on the heart (and) ... that was the end of his career."

Chadner went to work for the Ford Motor Co. in Chicago and was transferred to the Ford plant in St. Paul 15 years later. In 1973, he became a correctional officer for the Minnesota Department of Corrections and had worked at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center's medical "miniprison" for the past 13 years, his wife said. He played softball for the hospital team for several years, his wife said, and enjoyed fishing for trophy-size walleye, bass, northern and lake trout in Canada's Northwest Territories.

"He was such an avid Twins (fan," Nicki Chadner said. "He lived for those box scores, hits, runs, errors. He had to have his newspaper every day, no matter what."

Besides his wife, Chadner is survived by his father, Richard Sr. of Vernon, Fla., and a sister, Mickey Mariorano of Philadelphia. Services will be held at 3 p.m. today at the Spielman Mortuary, 344 W. University Av., St. Paul.

Dick Chadner obit

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