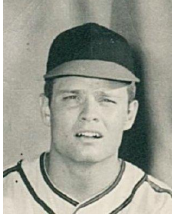


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**Walter Preston Shepherd**

Shepherd, Walter Preston

Walter Preston Shepherd, 88, died peacefully with his family by his side on Thursday, February 23, 2017

Preceded in death by his father, Richard Aaron Shepherd, and mother, Emma Fern Shepherd, of Mexico, MO, he is survived by brother James Gwynn (Gerry) Shepherd of Bella Vista, AR; wife Carrol Lee Shepherd of Deephaven, MN; daughter Nina Gwynn Shepherd of Deephaven, MN; son James Alden Shepherd of Duluth, MN; nieces Gretchen (Craig) Strauss of Coppell, TX, and Gwynn Shepherd of Red Bank, NJ; and nephew Stephen (Amy) Shepherd of Gordon, TX.

Born in St. Louis, Preston grew up on Love Street in Mexico, MO, in a white bungalow with a big front porch. An outstanding student and gifted athlete, he spent his high school years working at the Mexico Ledger, playing baseball and football, and selling slices of homemade pie at the Audrain County Fair to pay for college. He was president of his Mexico High School class of 1946 and later president of Phi Delta Theta fraternity at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1954.

In 1950, Preston was recruited by scouts from the Brooklyn Dodgers, Philadelphia Athletics, and the St. Louis Browns before signing—without a tryout—with the St. Louis Cardinals. Preston was catcher for the Johnson City, Lynchburg and Winston-Salem Cardinals from 1950 to 1953, where he was known for his high batting average and hard-nosed base running. In 1951, he enlisted in the U.S. [Army](#) and served in Frankfurt, Germany until 1952, and in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1952 to 1957.

In 1954, Preston fell in love and married Carrol LaBrayere of Ladonna, MO, and accepted a job offer with Employers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of Wausau (renamed Wausau Insurance Companies) in Wausau, WI. He rose through the ranks serving in offices in Tulsa, OK; Houston, TX; St. Louis, MO; Wausau, WI; and Minneapolis, MN, before retiring as a regional vice president in 1990. After retirement, he moved from his home in Edina, MN, back to his hometown of Mexico, MO, where he lived until 2012.

A fan of all sports, Preston continued his love of baseball by playing in adult baseball leagues and coaching Little League. He particularly enjoyed downhill skiing, tennis and playing golf with his children. He was a loving son and husband, devoted father, loyal brother and the favorite human of the Shepherd's family dog, Trinket.

Preston spent the last five years of his life in Minnesota with his daughter, son and wife. He made friends easily and kept them for years. A happy and optimistic man, Preston valued humility, kindness and loyalty—and he loved stepping up to bat.

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