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Former Illini great Fletcher passes away

Thu, 05/10/2018 - 12:19pm | [Matt Daniels \(/author/matt-daniels\)](/author/matt-daniels)

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The patriarch of a family connected through the years to Illinois baseball and the local baseball scene has died.

Tom Fletcher, 75, died on Wednesday night. No official cause was given, but the Illinois baseball team confirmed the news on Thursday morning.

Fletcher was a 1962 All-American pitcher and first team All-Big Ten selection before he signed with the Detroit Tigers that year as well.

He pitched in one game for the Tigers in the 1962 season, but that was the only MLB game the left-hander pitched in after a blood clot developed in his shoulder. He returned to pro ball in 1964, but called it a career in 1968.

Tom's son, Darrin, starred at Oakwood High School before embarking on an All-American career at Illinois in the 1980s as well. Darrin Fletcher was a 1987 All-American with the Illini, and the catcher's MLB career lasted 14 seasons with the Dodgers, Expos and Blue Jays before he retired in 2002.

Darrin's son, Casey, played for two seasons at Illinois after a solid prep career at Oakwood. Casey was an outfielder at Illinois in 2014 and 2015, hitting .326 with three home runs and 33 RBI during the 2015 season that saw Illinois win a Big Ten title, a single-season record 50 games and advance to the NCAA Super Regionals for the first time in program history.

Casey Fletcher is in his second season as a volunteer assistant coach with the Illini, who play at Michigan at 5 p.m. on Friday to start a crucial three-game Big Ten series with the Wolverines.

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