



Rodger B. Irvine

September 1, 1940 - January 26, 2016

Rodger Irvine Sr., aka Big Rodg, Coach, Papa Pirate, Papa Patriot, Papa PUSH, 75 of Village Green, Miami Florida, passed away on January 26. Born in Toronto Ontario, Canada to William Irvine and Doris Booth.

Big Rodg moved to Miami at the age of twelve after his mother won enough money from a bet on a horse race. He attended ADA Merritt Middle and then Miami Sr. High School where he met his childhood sweetheart and love of his life, Sue Morris Root.

While at Miami Sr. High he developed his skill to throw heat from the baseball mound, which helped lead the Stingarees to a State Championship and brought the Pittsburgh Pirates to his door with a contract in hand. Big Rodg signed the contract to play professional baseball at the age of 17 and before graduating from Miami Sr. High's Class of 1958. Later in life, Big Rodg was honored when he was inducted into the Miami Sr. High's Baseball Hall of Fame, not only for his contributions during his time at the school, but for his life long dedication to promoting the sport of baseball and good sportsmanship.

In 1959, Big Rodg and Sue were married. They began their 56 years together as husband and wife traveling across America with the Pittsburgh Pirates and ending in Village Green when they decided to start their family. Big Rodg had the gift of gab. His affinity for sports' history and statistics, not to mention his constant smile, infectious laughter, and quirky sense of humor made him very approachable and gave those around him ease and comfort. His ability to communicate made him the best salesman the family ever knew.

Big Rodg had the love of music. It ran through his body like life its self. There was never a day that passed that he did not listen to music or a time that he would pass up a microphone to sing his favorite Elvis songs to anyone that would listen. He practiced endless hours to give his best singing performances at the Elk's Lodge or at his special appearances with his favorite local band, PUSH. As a self taught guitarist, he knew the importance of music and passed his eclectic love of this art to his children and grand children.

Big Rodg's passion for sports was unrivaled. He coached beyond his own children and grandchildren. Throughout the years he coached hundreds of young men and women. His ability to coach sports at all levels helped mold the characters of those young people beyond their respective sports, but instilled a lifelong love for competition. He was occasionally reminded of this when he was introduced to a child of a former player that was being signed up for their first team and he was being introduced as their parent's one and only, "Coach." He earned the respect of parents, opposing coaches and their teams, because of his passion to bring the best out of every player no matter what their skill level. His dedication to coaching, lead many of his teams to Championships and players to posses the discipline to excel beyond sports. He loved his get-togethers with all of his buddies to discuss baseball and their good old playing days. When he was no longer able to take to the field, he continued to support his favorite teams from the sidelines as their biggest fan and with an "occasional" piece of coaching advise.

Most importantly, the number one love in his life was family. Big Rodg's definition of family went beyond blood. He truly loved everyone in his life that shared his passions for sports, music, and his immediate family. He would want all of you to know that although he may not have said it out loud to each of you, you made his life better.

In closing, if there was a Championship Playbook for men to live their life by, then there would be an entire chapter dedicated to Big Rodg for everyman to emulate. He was an honorable, faithful, and loving son, man, husband, father, and grandfather.

He is survived by his half brother, Bruce, his wife, Sue, daughters, Lisa (husband Paul) and Lori (husband Jorge), sons, Rodger Jr. (wife: Kirsta) and Russell (wife Denise), and his beloved grandchildren, Alexis, Gino, Cameron, Madison, Christian, Caden, Ninah, and Sean, along with his sisters at heart, Judy and Delphene. Visitation at Stanfill Funeral Home from 4-7 PM on Sunday, January 31, 2016, with a Graveside Service at Our Lady of Mercy 11411 N.W. 25 Street, Doral, Monday, February 1, 2016 at 11:30 AM on February 1, 2016.

Cemetery

Our Lady of Mercy
11411 NW 25 Street
Miami, FL,

Events

JAN	Visitation	04:00PM - 07:00PM
31	<hr/>	
	Stanfill Funeral Home	
	10545 South Dixie Hwy., Pinecrest, FL, US, 33156	

FEB	Service	11:30AM
1	<hr/>	
	Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery	
	11411 NW 25 Street, Miami, FL, US	

Comments



“ In 1956, I needed a special catcher's mitt because I made Tony Romano's Knights of Columbus team and one of my obligations was to catch pitches from... Rodger Irvine.

Rodger was still 15 that summer and had just finished 10th grade at Miami High, two grades ahead of me. In me, he found a battery mate with a lot in common – we both stutter.

Catching Rodger Irvine was my highest accomplishment in baseball. Rodger was in higher level. His speed - exceptional. His control - not so much. He was less than 40 feet away throwing at 90 miles per hour throwing two pitches – a perfect strike and a wild pitch. He was not allowed to throw a curve ball in those days. It was quite normal for him to fire a wild fastball so high and wide that it would directly rebound off the wooden backstop as his personal grounder. No catching and no umpiring required.

My objective every inning was to talk to him about concentrating on throwing strikes. This meant that we met on the mound every inning. With me stuttering at least 4 times on a sentence such as, “Be sure to pitch to the mitt.”, he would stutter on a response such as, “Be sure to keep the target low.” Even the sentence “We can do this, let's go!” was fraught with silent stuttering blocks. We laughed a lot!

Rodger was a young gentleman - never upset - just determined. He loved baseball. His infectious spirit made it easy for everyone else on the team to love playing with him on their team.

In the spring of 1958, the football coaches had me report to baseball practice instead of Spring Football practice! I was overjoyed – I might make the baseball team! The reality of it was – they needed a spring-practice catcher to prepare the pitchers! And, my job? Play catch with Rodger Irvine to prepare him for his senior year!

Rodger and I enjoyed a great reunion. Rodger had been a “B” squad basketball player, and even made it up to the varsity for a few games, but baseball was in his soul. Rodger was loose, casual, and confident. By now, he threw a fastball, a slider, and a “drop” (sort of a curve ball) - he was a real pitcher. That spring was my delight – being Rodger's private catcher. By the end of the season, Rodger signed with the Pirates – I was proud!

In the mid 1980's, at a huge hotel gathering of Miami High athletes to honor all our old coaches, my best memory was of Rodger Irvine.

I finally left my seat with all the football players found the baseball players. There, standing tall, with a bunch of short guys, was Rodger Irvine. As I got closer, I recognized everyone – he was standing with a group catchers (Mike Resnick, Lenny Scheinhoeft, & Joe Camissa)! When Rodger looked over and saw me, he exclaimed, “Hey guys here's Earl! Now, I finally have all my favorite catchers here!”

So, at 40-plus years old, I finally earned my highest athletic accolade – I was remembered as one of Rodger Irvine’s favorite catchers!

Thank you, Rodger for all you were. You were a gentle giant with a charming, disarming and thoughtful self-deprecating style that everyone found endearing. You had quite an arm and a memorable charm.

Rodger Irvine quotes to Earl Sedlik:

- “Earl, as I developed in the minors, my pitches got faster and faster, but I never could tell exactly where the pitches were going to go!”
- “So finally, I had to make a decision. Should I go back for another season in the minors and leave my wife with two kids for the summer? I was offered \$18,000 to play ball, and I decided that it was better to stay home, get a real job, and focus on my family.”

Rodger became a family man and a role model for us all – especially to his favorite catchers – he was our “favorite pitcher and... man”.

With deepest honor, respect, and grief,

Earl Sedlik
earl@sedlik.com
Seattle, WA

EARL SEDLIK - February 01 at 03:48 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers go out to the entire family. Even though I couldn't make it there. My heart and spirit are there with you all. I'm so glad I got to spend time with Uncle Rodger when I was there last year for my birthday. He sang karyoke and I was so proud to call him my uncle. He made us all laugh and was full of energy and life. You will be missed Uncle Rodger! Thank you for teaching me tee-ball too as a kid. Softball turned out to be my favorite sport thanks to you. Love you, Christina

Christina Adams - January 30 at 11:00 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rodger B. Irvine.



January 30 at 09:59 AM



“ Our friendship began in 1955 at Ada Merritt Jr. High when I was a seventh grader and Rodger was a ninth grader. Rodger was a great human being, great friend and a great baseball player. He enjoyed attending Miami High luncheons where we talked for hours. Your friend Florian Stolfi.

Florian Stolfi - January 29 at 10:44 PM



“ As I sit here reminiscing all the memories, and boy there are tons! From the first time I met him, the Two (skinny) twins, (which I didn't like to much) and the wonderful (MY) family, it change my life forever. As I grew up not having a father figure, I was able to lean on him for guidance and support. And boy did I need it! As the boys and I grew, he continued to show us guidance and on making the right choices. Although he tried many of times to tell us that Larry Bird and the Boston Celtics were the best, WE didn't agree :) Or show us that Elvis was the greatest when we argued that The New Kids on the Block rocked ! Our sleep overs were special because all coach wanted to talk about was sports and our upcoming games. I remember him watching us play basketball in front of the house and giving us pointers and tips, and yes Madison he would scream "put your hands up!!" all the time. We would sometimes be out there for hours at a time, or until Mrs. Irvine would call us for dinner. Great dinners by the way! I can go on for hours writing great moments, but the most important thing I can say is THANK YOU COACH !!! You played a huge role in my life ! As your (MY) family knows, you were special to me!! Until we meet again, Farewell Coach!!!!

Eddie Lopez - January 29 at 07:04 PM



“ Your Enterprise Holdings Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rodger B. Irvine.



Your Enterprise Holdings Family - January 29 at 11:23 AM