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Legendary baseball scout Harry Minor dies in Long Beach at 88

By Mike Guardabascio, Press-Telegram

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The Long Beach community lost a sports legend earlier this week, when longtime Mets scout and local fixture Harry Minor died Wednesday night at his home. He was 88.

A member of the Long Beach Wilson, Long Beach Century Club, Long Beach Baseball, and New York Mets Halls of Fame, Minor graduated Wilson in 1946 and signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates shortly after, beginning a career in professional baseball that would last 65 years until his retirement in 2011. Three years ago, the Mets inducted him into its Hall of Fame as the first scout ever. Minor is also enshrined in the Cooperstown Hall of Fame in the scouts' wing.

"He was one of the best-known scouts in the country, one of the very best," said his longtime friend and former Press-Telegram sportswriter Al Larson.

Minor's legacy was cemented with the 44 years he spent with the Mets, who he first joined as an area scout in 1968. Minor made the call to draft pitcher Dwight Gooden and was involved in the scouting and signing of legends Darryl Strawberry, Lenny Dykstra and William Hayward "Mookie" Wilson.

"Harry was a key part of our organization for many years," Mets Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon said in a statement. "He helped build our championship teams in the 80s. ... Harry was a Mets legend, who touched the lives of countless players."

Minor's legend in Long Beach began before he embarked on his baseball career, however. He was one of the Jinx Busters, the first Wilson football team to beat Poly in 1943. Minor, who stayed in his hometown with his wife, Liz, went on to inspire a generation of Long Beach scouts, including Roger Jongewaard (who scouted for the Mariners for 40 years), and his sons, Bob and Steve.

Bob Minor is still a scout with the Pirates after 36 years in the business, working for the team that signed his father out of high school.

"He encouraged us to do whatever we wanted to do, but we both loved baseball," Bob said. "I think one of the things he was proud of was that both of his sons wanted to do the exact same thing he did."

Minor is survived by his wife, Liz, daughters Becky and Debbie, and his son Bob. He was preceded in death by his son, Steve. Minor has nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Services are scheduled for Feb. 2 at the Grand at 11 a.m.

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