

**BASEBALL**

# Bill Monbouquette, 78, Dies; Pitching Ace When Red Sox Struggled

By **BRUCE WEBER** JAN. 27, 2015

Bill Monbouquette, a stalwart right-handed pitcher for the Boston Red Sox during one of the leaner periods in the history of the franchise, died on Sunday in Boston. He was 78.

The cause was complications of leukemia, his wife, Josephine, said.

Monbouquette, who was born in the Boston area and grew up there, played eight of his 11 major league seasons with the Red Sox, from 1958 to 1965, and for much of that time he was the best pitcher on a bad team. During his time with them, the Sox never finished higher than third in the American League; after his first season, never higher than fifth; and after his second, never higher than sixth.

Known to fans and teammates as Monbo, he never played in the postseason, but he did earn his status as a hometown hero, leading the team in strikeouts and innings pitched four times and leading or tying for the team lead in wins three times. He won 13 or more games in five consecutive seasons, including a high of 20 in 1963.

In 1960, he was the starting pitcher for the American League in an All-Star Game. (There were two that year.) Unfortunately for him, Willie Mays opened the game with a triple, and a few batters later, Ernie Banks, who died on Friday, clubbed a two-run homer. Monbouquette took the loss as the National League won, 5-3.

William Charles Monbouquette was born in Medford, Mass., a suburb of Boston, on Aug. 11, 1936, to Fred Monbouquette, an electrician, and the former Catherine Field. He graduated from Medford High School and was signed by the Red Sox in 1955. He pitched three seasons and part of a fourth in the minors before

making his major league debut against the Detroit Tigers on July 18, 1958.

The Red Sox traded Monbouquette to the Tigers after the 1965 season, and he also played briefly for the Yankees and the San Francisco Giants.

“My favorite picture of Bill is in his Yankee uniform,” his wife said in an interview on Tuesday. “But don’t tell anyone.”

After retiring as a player, Monbouquette stayed in baseball as a coach and a scout, including stints as pitching coach for the Mets in 1982 and for the Yankees in 1985 and ’86.

Monbouquette’s first marriage ended in divorce. His second wife, the former Josephine Ritchie, was born down the street from him in Medford, and she turned him down for a date when he first asked her as a teenager. They met again at their 40th-anniversary high school reunion and married in 2005. For most of their time together they lived in Medford, though they had recently moved to Gloucester.

In addition to her, Monbouquette is survived by three sons, Marc, Michel and Merric; two sisters, Danielle Moreno and Cathy Ferguson; two brothers, Ted and Jack; and three grandchildren.

Not an especially overpowering pitcher, Monbouquette had a career won-lost record of 114-112 (96-91 with the Red Sox). He was known for his durability — he threw 78 complete games in 263 career starts — and for his control: He walked just 2.1 batters per nine innings over the course of his career.

Still, he had at least two games of overwhelming dominance. On May 12, 1961, he struck out 17 Washington Senators in a complete-game win, a Red Sox record at the time. (Roger Clemens eclipsed it with 20 in 1986, setting a major league record.) The next year he pitched a no-hitter against the White Sox. The final batter was a future Hall of Famer, shortstop Luis Aparicio.

“It was Aug 1, 1962,” Monbouquette recalled to The Boston Globe in 2008. “I had Aparicio 0 and 2 and threw him a slider off the plate. He tried to hold up, and I thought he went all the way. The umpire, Bill McKinley, called it a ball, and as I was getting the ball back from the catcher, someone shouted from the stands, ‘They shot the wrong McKinley.’ I had to back off the mound because I had a little chuckle to myself.

“The next pitch, I threw him another slider and he swung and missed. They

say white men can't jump, but I did. It's about the biggest thrill I ever had."

***Correction: January 30, 2015***

*An obituary on Wednesday about the former Boston Red Sox pitcher Bill*

*Monbouquette described the beginning of his professional baseball career incorrectly.*

*The Red Sox signed him as an amateur free agent in 1955; they did not draft him.*

*(Major League Baseball did not institute a draft of amateur players until 1965.)*

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