

The Patriot Ledger

Sports

Former Red Sox catcher Jerry Moses dead

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BOSTON - Former Red Sox catcher Jerry Moses, a nine-year major league veteran catcher and member of the Red Sox organization from 1964-70, including the 1967 American League Championship "Impossible Dream" season, died on Tuesday. He was 71.

Moses, a native of Yazoo City, Miss., lived much of his life on Boston's North Shore.

Following his major league career, Moses devoted considerable time to assisting his close friend Mike Andrews in Jimmy Fund events, appearing in golf tournaments, chairing a major dinner honoring Ted Williams, and organizing a bone marrow donor program in support of Red Sox Hall-of-Famer Bill Monbouquette. He co-hosted a radio show on WRKO with Andrews in 1984 and partnered with him for 25 years in the operation of a kids' baseball camp in Massachusetts.

Among the children who attended the camp was Red Sox President and CEO Sam Kennedy.

"I was blessed to get to know Jerry later," Kennedy said. "Through his many charitable efforts and in his frequent visits to Fenway Park, a place for which he had such obvious fondness. Jerry was proud to have played for the Red Sox, and we were so thankful that he maintained his connection to us for so many years. The entire Red Sox family extends its condolences to Jerry's family and friends."

Said Andrews: "I don't think I ever met a better man in my life. Everyone loved Jerry. He's just a lovable guy, and he loved everybody back. He supported not only the Jimmy Fund but many other charities, and he was a very smart, successful businessman."

"When I look at people that made the most of their life after baseball, Jerry is at the top. He took care of his family. [He was] very family-oriented."

Moses was signed by legendary Red Sox scout George Digby in 1964 and debuted the following year at the age of 18. In just his second at-bat, the future All-Star became the youngest player in Red Sox history to hit a pinch-hit home run.

Moses, a September call-up in 1967 who served as the team's bullpen catcher in its stretch drive to the pennant, battled his way back to the big leagues for parts of the 1968 and 1969 seasons before earning the chance to be the Red Sox' Opening Day catcher on April 7, 1970. He hit .542 in the first seven games of the season, going on to earn an All-Star nod from Hall of Fame manager Earl Weaver before his breakout season was shortened by injury.

Following the 1970 season, Moses joined Tony Conigliaro and Ray Jarvis in a six-player trade that sent the teammates to the California Angels.

"It was sad and my wife was hysterical," Moses once said when asked about the trade. "For the first time she was going to have to leave Boston. We were entrenched here, her family was here, and we really had no reason not to be here. I was quite surprised as well because I had really played well in 1970 until I got hurt. Nothing was ever the same."

Moses played for a total of seven teams over the course of his nine-year major league career. After his stints in Boston and California, he played for the Indians, Yankees, Tigers, Padres, and White Sox, appearing in his last major league game in Comiskey Park on August 9, 1975, his 29th birthday. He tripled off Hall of Famer Jim Palmer in his last big league at-bat.

In 155 games for the Red Sox over the course of four seasons, Moses batted .278 with 13 home runs and 51 RBI, and started 117 games as catcher. Overall, he played in 386 games, batting .251 with 25 home runs and 109 RBI.

"I loved every minute that I played for Boston," Moses said. "The Red Sox experience after '67 particularly was wonderful because that's when the crowds started to come. For guys like me just coming to the big leagues, it was a wonderful time to be a Red Sox."

Moses credited his father, Steve, a major league scout for the Pirates, Angels, and Dodgers, as being the biggest influence on his playing career. "I'm here totally because of my dad," Moses said. "He had a greater influence on me than anyone else. He always wanted me to be a ballplayer."

Upon his retirement, Moses began a new career in the food industry, starting with the Ogden Food Service Corporation, where he spent 11 years. He also co-owned a startup called Fanfare, partnering with Boston businessman Joe O'Donnell for seven years, and later was part-owner of Ann's Boston Brownie Company.

Moses was in failing health when the Red Sox celebrated the 50th anniversary of the "Impossible Dream" season last August, but attended the event and delighted in the company of his former teammates, including Jim Lonborg, the pitcher he said he enjoyed catching the most.

"No matter what you do once you've been a Red Sox you have a little bit of an advantage," Moses said. "People really do take notice, and these great fans make old guys like me feel really good."

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