



Kevin Michael Collins

August 4, 1946 - February 20, 2016

Kevin Michael Collins, age 69, passed away suddenly at his winter home in Naples, Florida on February 20, 2016, surrounded by loved ones. Kevin was born on August 4, 1946 in Springfield, Massachusetts to Michael and Virginia (Munyan) Collins. After a stellar schoolboy athletic career at Springfield Technical High School in Massachusetts, Kevin accepted an offer from the New York Mets and for the better part of the next ten years, played professional baseball. He was a hard-nosed, steady utility player for a number of teams including the Detroit Tigers and the Montreal Expos. While with Montreal, he hit the first ever pinch-hit home run for that organization. Kevin played baseball at a time when a player's salary was about the same as a teacher or police officer; a time, as he used to say, when baseball was simply "about a ball, a bat and a glove". When he finally hung up his cleats, he had no complaints, and no regrets. "I was a guy who played the game the right way," he said in an interview once, "Nobody ever had to tell me how to compete. I... gave you all I had, whether or not that was enough".

In his youth, he benefited from his local Boys and Girls Club and later went on to devote much of his time and abilities to that organization. In 1974, he left baseball to settle with his young family in the metro Detroit area and took a job with Summa-Harrison Metal Products and then later with Mexican Industries, an auto parts supplier in southwest Detroit.

Kevin continued to share his love of the game with talented young ball players. As the Head Coach and Player Manager, Kevin competed in the Detroit Federal League as well as the Pontiac Men's Class A League gaining local, regional and national attention year after year at the AABC Stan Musial World Series.

Kevin had a passion not only for sports, but also politics and current events and was always up for a lively discussion. His smile and engaging nature always made you feel like you were a lifelong friend. He was always ready, too, to tell a good story or share advice if asked, and you could always count on his use of "colorful" language. Kevin never met a dog he didn't like and was always at the ready to lavish them with love and treats. He

cherished his family and friends and there was no one he loved more than his three devoted grandchildren. If you were lucky enough to rub shoulders with Kevin Collins, there's no doubt that you were better for it.

He was preceded in death by his parents, and his in-laws, Armand and Eileen (Webb) Laflamme.

He is survived by his loving wife, Linda Marie (Laflamme) Collins, who he met at age 17 on the day he signed his first major league baseball contract and with whom he recently celebrated his 48th wedding anniversary. He is cherished and survived by his two children, Michael (Kirsten) Collins and Kelly (Keith) Binkowski, both of Michigan, and leaves behind his three biggest fans, grandchildren Joseph Binkowski, Katherine Binkowski and Lucas Collins. He also leaves behind his two sisters, Nancy (John) Pollard and Kathleen (Ralph) Disa, and sister-in-law Ann (John) Komer, of Massachusetts. He will be celebrated and remembered by all who knew him, including his nieces, nephews, godchildren and countless friends and extended family.

A Celebration of His Life will take place at a later date in both Michigan and his home state of Massachusetts. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Naples Humane Society.

Comments



“ So sorry for your loss Linda and family....So many GREAT MEMORIES of Caseville .Lots of Fun times on the Beach....and Kevin and his golf cart. All of you will continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

Sue Williams

Sue Williams - March 06 at 09:59 AM



“ Here is the feature story I wrote about Kevin back in 2011. It is also on my Facebook page.

R.I.P.

-Kevin Duffy

<https://www.facebook.com/kevin.duffy.336>



Kevin Duffy - March 01 at 10:27 AM



“ I had the good fortune to speak to Kevin about his career in baseball a few years ago as the alumni features writer for Inside Pitch, a monthly magazine devoted to the N.Y. Mets that ceased publication in 2012. We spoke a few times by phone, and I found him to be a delight to talk baseball with, very personable. I was left with the impression that I had just spoken to someone whom I had known for years, a longtime friend. I wish I could have met him in person.

My thoughts and prayers to his wife, Linda, children and grandchildren, as well as anyone else whose life he may have touched. God bless one and all.

Kevin Duffy

Bath, Pennsylvania

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Kevin Duffy - March 01 at 09:51 AM