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VETERAN

Sabath A. "Sam" Mele

Sabath A. "Sam" Mele of Quincy

Beloved husband of the late Constance "Connie" Mele. Devoted father of Sherry Ann Mele and her companion Roland Perrault of Quincy, Marilyn Mc Cabe and her husband Kevin of Norwood, Steven Mele and his wife Kathy of Sandwich, Marsha Mele of Quincy and Scott Mele of Quincy. Cherished grandfather to Kyle and Kelly Mc Cabe of Norwood, Anthony Mele of Charlotte, Shauna Mahoney and her husband Daniel of Marstons Mills, Scott Mele Jr and Ryan Mele of Quincy, Isaiah Mele of Sandwich and great-grandfather to Harrison Mahoney of Marstons Mills.

Sam was born January 21, 1922 and grew up in Astoria, Long Island NY. He attended Bryant High School and it was there that he first began to play baseball after being mentored by two of his uncles, Tony and Al Cuccinello, both of whom played Major League baseball for many years. After high school Sam attended New York University where he played basketball and baseball and he excelled at both eventually earning induction into the school's Hall of Fame. But it was on the baseball field that he truly began to make his mark. In 1941 he batted .405 and in 1942 his average was .369.

Sam was a veteran of World War II . He enlisted in the Marines in 1942 and he served on the aircraft carrier U.S.S Ranger in the Pacific Theatre. While enlisted he was able to play some baseball against other enlisted Major League stars such as Joe DiMaggio. Mele led the Navy League in hitting with a .358 average in 1944.

In 1946 after his discharge from the Marines, Mele began his pro baseball career by signing with the Boston Red Sox. In his only year in the minor leagues he was the MVP of the Eastern League while leading the league in batting (.342) total bases and triples. The Red Sox had lost the 1946 World Series in 7 games to the St. Louis Cardinals and that great Boston team had Hall-of-Famers Ted Williams and Bobby Doerr as well as Johnny Pesky and Dom DiMaggio all of

whom became Sam's life-long friends.

In 1947 Sam earned the job as the starting right fielder for the Red Sox while batting .302 for the season. That was the beginning of a 10 year Major League baseball career that included playing for the Washington Senators, Chicago White Sox and Baltimore Orioles. Sam was a lifetime .267 hitter who was an excellent fielder. He twice led the league in outfield assists and fielding percentage as well as the league leader in doubles. In one memorable game in 1952 he tied a major-league record by hitting a triple and home run in the same inning which drove in 6 runs.

After retiring as a player Mele immediately began a coaching career in the Majors with the Washington Senators who, in 1961, became the Minnesota Twins after the team relocated.

On June 23, 1961 at the age of 39 Sam was named Manager of the Twins. He inherited a young but talented team led by such stars as Hall-of Famer Harmon Killebrew, Tony Oliva and Bob Allison. The team improved each year and in 1965 the Twins won the American League pennant and faced the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series that went to seven games. Unfortunately for the Twins in that deciding game they had to face the Dodgers great Hall-of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax who shut them out 2-0. His lifetime managerial record was 524 wins against 436 losses and it included his Manager of the Year award in 1965.

After leaving the Twins in 1967 Mele rejoined the Red Sox as a Special Assignment Scout, a position he held until his retirement in 1994. During that time Sam was instrumental in the Red Sox scouting and signing of Hall-of-Famer Jim Rice. In 1995 Mele was awarded the prestigious Judge Emil Fuchs Memorial award which is given annually to a recipient who has given "long and meritorious service to baseball".

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend the visiting hours on Friday 4-8 PM in the Keohane Funeral Home, 785 Hancock St., QUINCY. A Celebration of Life Service will be held in the funeral home at 9:30 AM on Saturday prior to the Funeral Mass in St. Ann's Church, Quincy at 10:30 AM. Burial in Mt. Wollaston Cemetery, Quincy.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Sam may be made to **The Jimmy Fund** c/o Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, PO Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284-9168.

Keohane
FUNERAL HOME

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Quincy, MA 02170
617-773-3551

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