

# UPDATED: Staten Island Sports Hall of Famer and legendary baseball scout George Genovese dead at 93



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Legendary baseball scout George Genovese, who left his family's Clove Road home for the minor leagues in the days before World War II and remained in the game for the next 75 years, scouting and signing the likes of Bobby Bonds, Dave Kingman and George Foster, died Sunday in Burbank, Ca., following a brief illness.

The undersized middle-infielder, whose one official big league at-bat came early in the 1950 season with the woeful Washington Senators, was one of five baseball-playing brothers raised by immigrant parents in depression-era Staten Island.

Once their playing and managing days were over, Genovese and his late brother, Chick, became probably the most successful baseball-scouting brother tandem of all time.

George Genovese, was 93 when he passed away at St. Joseph's Medical Center, Burbank.

In a Staten Island of a different time, Genovese worked on a vegetable truck and racking balls in a North Shore pool hall before signing his first minor league contract fresh out of Port Richmond High School in the spring of 1940.

After borrowing two dollars for travel expenses, he had caught the eye of the St. Louis Cardinals at an open tryout in Connecticut.

The 18-year-old was shipped off to a Cardinals' PONY League affiliate in Canada, a move that marked the beginning of an odyssey that would span parts of eight decades and the administrations of one dozen U.S. Presidents.

Genovese played, coached and managed everywhere from Mexico City and El Paso to Hamilton, Ontario, and Hollywood, Ca.

And, after his one brief stint in the big leagues, was given his first non-playing job in the game by Branch Rickey, at the time the GM of the Pittsburgh Pirates.

"A visionary," he called Rickey, the man credited with planning and executing the breaking of baseball's color line when he promoted Jackie Robinson from the minors to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.

"I believed in what he was doing," Genovese has said.

In his days as an underpaid minor league player and manager Genovese supplemented his income delivering the mail in Hollywood and Beverly Hills, hauling his leather bag to the mailboxes of stars like Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra.

The Island native's only break from working for a major league franchise came during World War II when he served three years in the Pacific.

And he never tired of the game.

From his home base in Southern California, the Staten Island Sports Hall of Famer worked for the Giants, and later in life, briefly the Dodgers, and was instrumental in discovering overlooked prospects like Chili Davis and Jack Clark.

His brother Chick worked for the Giants organization in the 50s and 60s and was among the leaders of the vanguard of MLB scouts who began mining the Caribbean for baseball talent.

Chick inked some of the first Dominican future stars, Juan Marichal and the Alou brothers, Felipe, Matty and Jesus.

Dan Taylor, who collaborated with George on a recently published memoir, "A Scout's Report: My 70 Years in Baseball" (McFarland Press), says Genovese signed 250 players to their first professional contracts and that 44 of that group played in the major leagues.

His daughter, Kathleen Haworth, along with his brother Jim and granddaughters Rose and Holly Haworth, survive Genovese.

"My father is a perfect example of a young person following his passion all his life, and in so doing inspiring young people who came after him to do the same," Kathleen Haworth said.

Arrangements have yet to be set, but the family says a memorial service will be held some time in the future.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, those who wish to can make a donation to the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation, which each year honors a recipient with the "George Genovese Lifetime Achievement Award."

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