**Paper: San Jose Mercury News (CA)**

**Deceased: ROBERT PERRY, 67, FORMER UMPIRE AND YOUTH BASEBALL COACH**

**Date: November 1, 1993**

When Robert Perry was a minor league baseball player, he hung up his glove for umpire's gear after realizing he would never make it to the majors.

Several years later, a fall that nearly killed him ended his career in organized baseball for good.

Still, when Mr. Perry died Wednesday from a heart condition at 67, baseball -- next to his family -- continued to be his greatest love.

''His feeling for the game was intense. He enjoyed playing, watching and teaching it," said one of his sons, Steven. "His big desire was baseball -- for sure."

Even after he could no longer participate as a professional in the sport, he coached youth baseball and umpired sandlot games, Steven Perry said.

A third baseman, Mr. Perry was playing for Boston College when he signed with the St. Louis Cardinals in the late 1940s. He also played for a Chicago Cubs farm club before turning to umpiring.

After attending the Al Somers Umpire School in Florida, Mr. Perry began to hone his skills in the Florida State League and the Northwest League. In his rookie year, he teamed up with Harry Wendelstedt, a umpire still working in the National League, said Steven Perry. Perry said his father always liked to recall those days and the young players who went on to big-league careers.

Mr. Perry's own career ambitions were permanently dashed in 1970 when, in his off-season job as a painter, a water tower on which he was working caught fire. Mr. Perry and two co-workers were forced to slide down a rope from the top of the 15-story structure, family members said. Mr. Perry fell part way down when the man above collided with him, knocking him free of the rope, said his wife, Elizabeth.

Despite massive injuries, her husband managed to leave the hospital after three months but could never return to baseball, she said.

Pessimistic about his chances of survival, Mr. Perry's doctors called him "Mr. Marvel," said his wife. "He had a lot of stamina. He was a tough one."

Following the accident, the family came to San Jose, where Mr. Perry went into the painting business for himself and owned a tavern. He had been in retirement for several years due to his heart ailment.

Those who met him for the first time would never know he had been in an accident, said his son. "He didn't use it as an excuse to keep him from doing what he wanted."

(box)Born: July 5, 1926, Framingham, Mass. (box)Died: Oct. 27, 1993, San Jose, Calif. (box)Survived by: Wife, Elizabeth of San Jose; sons Michael and Steven of San Jose, and Donald of Fontana; a granddaughter, Christine Testa of Fontana. (box)Services: Monday 1 p.m. at Chapel of Flowers Funeral Home, San Jose. Burial in Oak Hill Memorial Park, San Jose.

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