

## Professional Profile of Edward P. Vargo

Edward P. Vargo, National League Umpire, 79, died Saturday afternoon, February 2, 2008, peacefully at his home. Born in Butler, Pennsylvania in 1928, Ed was the youngest son of Alex and Mary Vargo. Involvement in the game of baseball came at an early age as one of his first jobs as a kid was that of batboy/equipment manager for the Butler Yankees who were at the time a formidable farm-league extension of the New York Yankees.

In 1948, after a brief stint as a catcher in the St. Louis Cardinals' minor league system, he was called to serve his country and spent the next five years in the U. S. Army. Baseball followed him into the service as he managed a team at Virginia's Fort Belvoir, to the base championship in 1952. During his service hitch, he discovered a talent for working home

plate as an umpire. After an honorable discharge, Ed worked the minors as an umpire, refining his game from 1954 until his National League breakthrough year of 1960.

From 1960 through his final season in 1983, Ed called balls and strikes during a truly memorable era in the sport. Among the standouts in the profession when Vargo arrived, current Hall of Fame members Al Barlick and "Jocko" Conlon commented that he was the best young umpire to come up to the "big leagues" at that time and an "outstanding ball and strike man." His colorful insight, consistent appraisal of the pitch and love of baseball served the game well. As a life-long member of the Butler area community, Ed spent his time in the off-season, working with the Butler Area School District in the capacity of a home and school visitor. In this particular role, Ed spent countless numbers of hours helping students and families in need. Although retired after 1983, Ed Vargo continued to remain part of the game as an umpire supervisor from 1984 through the 1986 season. With the installation of A. Bartlett Giamatti as the Commissioner of Baseball in 1987, Ed became the supervisor of umpires for the National League. He would hold this post with distinction until his retirement from baseball in 1997. He resided in Butler with his wife of 47 years, Elizabeth, and within close proximity to his two daughters, Karen McClarnon and Kristin Wissinger, two sons, Edward P. and David A., and a total of eight grandchildren, Ryan, Jacob, Zachary and Will McClarnon; Ashley and Hayden Wissinger, and Alexander and Daniel Vargo.

### Highlights and Achievements

1954-1959 Minor League Umpire in the following leagues:

- Georgia-Florida League, Piedmont League, Eastern League and the International League

1960-1983 National League Umpire

- 4 World Series appearances 1965, 1971, 1978, & 1983

- 4 National League Championship Series appearances

- 4 All-Star Game appearances 1961, 1976,

- Called 3 "No-Hitter" games including Sandy Koufax perfect game

- Crew Chief from 1971-1983

1984-1986 Umpire Supervisor under the direction of Charles "Chub" Feeney

1987-1997 Supervisor of National League Umpires

1989-1997 Consultant to the Rules Committee of Major League Baseball

### Local Honors

1966 First Inductee into the Butler County Sports Hall of Fame

1994 Inducted into the Western Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame

Edward is survived by his loving wife, Elizabeth Hunter Vargo, daughters, Karen McClarnon (Bill McClarnon) and Kristin Wissinger (Darrin Wissinger), sons, Edward P. (Ellen Rosenthal Vargo) and David A., and eight grandchildren, Ryan E. McClarnon, Jacob A. McClarnon, Zachary William McClarnon & William Hunter McClarnon, Ashley B. Wissinger, Hayden Wissinger, Alexander Vargo and Daniel Vargo.