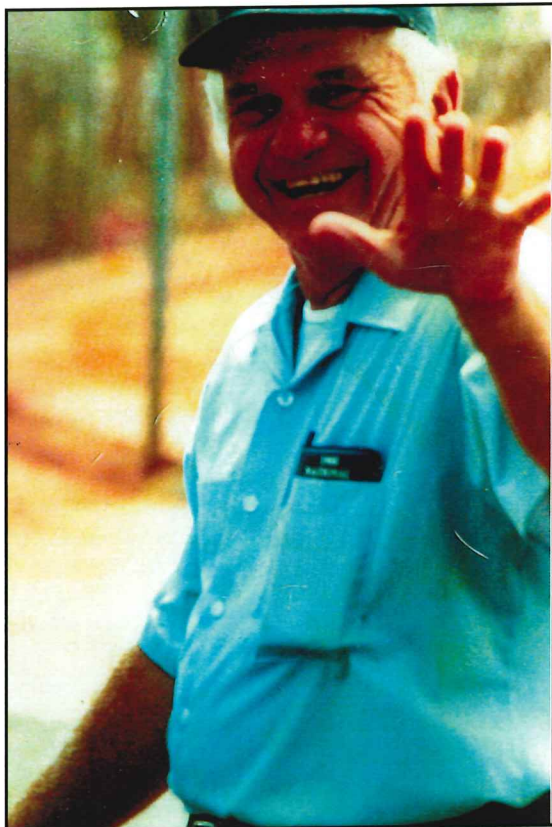


BILLY WARE COLLINS

O N SEPTEMBER 15, 1925, BILLY WARE COLLINS WAS BORN TO MAUDIE AND ALFRED

Spencer Collins in Carbon Hill, Alabama. He grew up in Carbon Hill, where he began his love for all sports and his community. While attending Carbon Hill High School, Bill played football and baseball for the junior high and varsity teams. In 1942, he played quarterback for Coach Cecil Greg in the single wing offense. Along with J.W. Tune, Frank Scott and many others, the team provided the community with one of the most memorable seasons for Carbon Hill. The team was undefeated at 9-0 and outscored opponents 267-32. No team scored more than seven points in a game. The team recorded victories over Fayette, Dora, Cordova and Walker.

Upon completing high school, Bill pursued a career in baseball by playing semi-pro ball in Brownsville, Texas and Amory, Mississippi. During that time, Bill answered the call to duty with the U.S. Army Air Corp. After his service, he returned home and began playing baseball for the BABF team in Carbon Hill. Collins played catcher, as well as infield, and also coached the team. He played with greats such as Cotton Clark, Dwight Norris, Bill Barnes, and Larry Hinds. The Carbon Hill community had tremendous pride in their BABF team, which provided Sunday afternoon entertainment for many of its residents. In 1964, Bill and Larry Hinds were instrumental in starting the Little League Program in Carbon Hill. Bill umpired numerous games at no cost.



During this same time period, Collins began the legacy of being known as “The Man in Blue”. He started umpiring baseball, then eventually broadened to softball, football and basketball. He became a member of different official associations and continued to officiate/umpire all sports until the 2002 baseball season. In 1998, Bill was inducted into the Alabama ASA Hall of Fame at their Annual Induction Banquet. Bill was a member of the chain gang for the University of Alabama home football games from 1970 until 2002. Bill was recognized for his many years of service at the A-Day game in 2002.

Bill Collins passed away on June 23, 2002, survived by his wife, Elsie Files, their three children, William, Mitchell, Spencer Joe, and Suzanne Atkins, and his grandchildren. After Bill’s death, Carbon Hill City Council passed a resolution declaring a week in his honor. The Little League field was named “Bill Collins Field” as a tribute to his dedication to the youth and the city. The “Bill Collins Softball Classic” was organized in 2003. It was first played at Memorial Park in Jasper, but has been hosted by Carbon Hill High School since then.

Bill’s close friend and fellow official, David Benson, sums up Bill this way, “Bill loved his church, family, officiating and crappie fishing in that order. I knew him over twenty years and we traveled this state and worked games together. I can’t remember a place we went where someone didn’t know Bill. He was known and respected throughout our state. Bill officiated for the players and the game, not for the officiating fee. His passion, professionalism and the love of the game was his motivation.”