

## BEN SANKEY

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**B**ENJAMIN TURNER SANKEY WAS BORN IN NAUVOO, ALABAMA, IN 1907, THE SON OF DR. AND MRS.

H.J. Sankey (remembered as the doctor who delivered the Short Quadruplets). Ben rode the train from Nauvoo to Jasper each day so he could attend Walker County High School. He excelled in all sports but his sport of choice was baseball. He also played on the first state championship football team at Walker in 1922.

After graduation, Ben attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute (later Auburn University) where he starred on the baseball team as the starting shortstop in 1926, 1927 and 1928. In both 1927 and 1928, he led the team in hits, runs and home runs and was selected to the All-Southern team both years. While at Auburn, he was President of his Senior Class, President of the Alpha Mu Rho Fraternity, President of the Yellow Dogs, a Major in ROTC and won the Auburn Country Club Golf Cup.

In 1928 and 1929, Ben "The Pride of Nauvoo" played for Selma of the Southern League before being signed by the Pittsburg Pirates in October of 1929. He played 3 years with the Pirates becoming the first ex-Viking and first ex-Auburn Tiger to play in the Major Leagues. He was later to play for the Southern League, Pacific Coast League, and the International League before ending his career as a player/coach with the Baltimore Orioles. He was inducted as a Charter Member of the International League Hall-Of-Fame as a result of his career as a shortstop with the Montreal Royals. He was considered by many to be the best defensive shortstop to ever play the game.

Ben retired from the game in 1941 and was employed by Bethlehem Steel in Baltimore until 1952. He eventually moved back to Alabama where he retired as a sales manager with T.R. Miller Co. in Brewton, Alabama. He was an avid golfer his entire life. Ben passed away in October of 2001 at the age of 96.

Ben was married to the former Minnie Motley of Brewton and they had four children: Benjamin Turner Sankey, Jr. - taught English at the University of California (deceased); Charles Howard Sankey - Retired Naval and Airline Pilot; Phillip Tippins Sankey - advertising agent in Birmingham; and Joseph Merritt Sankey - real estate agent in Gulf Shores.

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