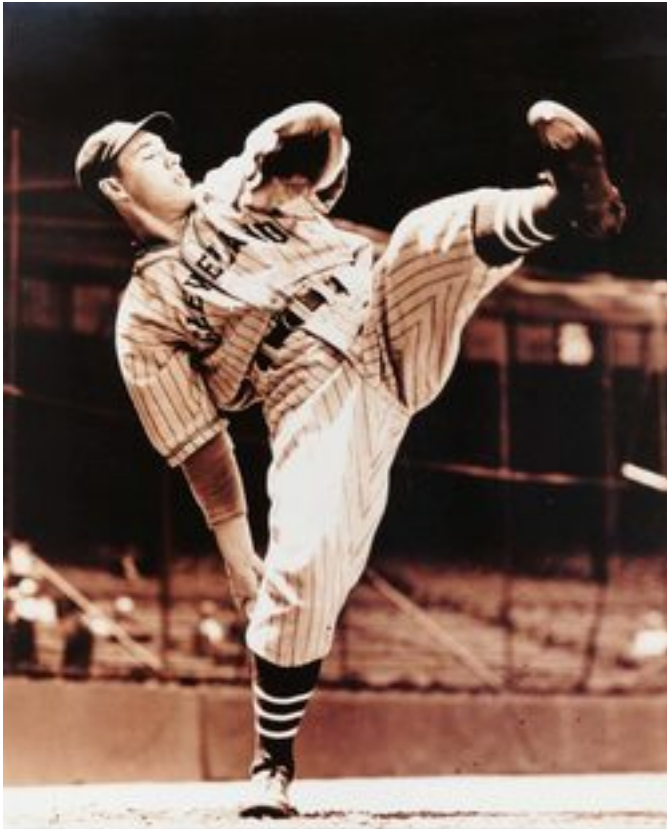


## Comments by Baseball Execs, Indians Family on Passing of Bob Feller

Written by Maury Brown

Thursday, 16 December 2010 08:52

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An American icon, and war hero has passed as 92-year old Cleveland Indian and Hall of Famer Bob Feller died at 9:15PM ET on Weds. night of acute leukemia in Cleveland, OH.

"Bob Feller is gone. We cannot be surprised," said Cleveland Indians owner Larry Dolan. "Yet, it seems improbable. Bob has been such an integral part of our fabric, so much more than an ex-ballplayer, so much more than any Cleveland Indians player. He is Cleveland, Ohio. His statue at Progressive Field is an icon. No more, no less than Moses Cleveland in Public Square.

To say he will be missed is such an understatement. In fact, more to the point, he will not be missed because he will always be with us. Since 1936 he has been with us. For 75 years he has been a contributing citizen, a model for all athletes, and friend of thousands. As so it shall be in the larger sense, Bob will be with us always. Not at Opening Day, not at Fantasy Camp, not in the Press Box, but in our hearts.

We in Cleveland have been blessed to have had him with us these many years. We will never let his memory pass."

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It is a combination of so many other aspects of Feller's life that make him stand out from other great players. As Midwesterners, fans love that his arm strength came from working on a farm in Iowa. As Americans, we are filled with pride by the fact that he enlisted in the Navy on the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor and immediately volunteered for combat service. He was the first MLB player to do so. Feller was once asked, "What is the most important game you ever won?" He responded, "World War II." Following the war, despite missing four seasons during what many considered his prime years, Feller returned to old form and never once regretted serving his country before himself.

Feller's life, much like his fastball, never seemed to slow down. He remained an ambassador to the game and helped form the Major League Baseball Players Union. Feller constantly maintained a presence in Greater Cleveland and frequently attended Indians games. As evidenced by the Bob Feller statue outside Progressive Field, no player has meant more to the Indians organization, both during and after his career, as Feller.

Many things have changed since Feller was a kid learning the game from his father on their farm in Van Meter, IA. However, kids still play baseball and playing this game lends itself toward dreaming about becoming one of the greats. As an organization, the Cleveland Indians could not be more proud to have had one of those greats so close, for so long. He was more than a hero. Bob Feller is a legend.

Feller spent every one of his 18 seasons in Major League Baseball proudly wearing a Cleveland Indians uniform, epitomizing the loyalty this city has shown its teams for generations. Signed by the Indians at age 17, he started 484 games and won 266 of them. Of those wins, 19 occurred during the 1948 season when the Indians last celebrated a World Championship. He had a lifetime ERA of 3.25, threw three no-hitters- including the only Opening Day no-hitter in MLB history on April 16, 1940 - 12 one-hitters and 44 career shutouts. In 1946, he pitched a remarkable 36 complete games.

Bob Feller was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in August and underwent surgery at the Cleveland Clinic to implant a pacemaker in October. In mid-November, Feller was hospitalized with pneumonia. He had recently been moved into hospice.

Executives and members of the Cleveland Indians family commented on the loss of Feller:

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### **Commissioner Bud Selig**

“I am saddened by the loss of Hall of Famer Bob Feller, truly one of the game’s all-time great pitchers. He made his first big league start with the Cleveland Indians as a 17-year-old in 1936 and struck out 15 batters. That marked the beginning of 18 remarkable seasons during which he became baseball’s undisputed strikeout king, leading the American League seven times, and a model of durability. Known as ‘Rapid Robert,’ he posted six 20-win seasons, threw three no-hitters, and led the Indians to the World Series crown in 1948.

“More impressive than his vast accomplishments on the field was being part of ‘The Greatest Generation.’ Bob was one of the first Major Leaguers to enlist following Pearl Harbor and served our country for nearly four years during the prime of his career. Bob Feller was a great pitcher, but he was first and foremost a great American. On behalf of Major League Baseball, I send my deepest condolences to Bob’s family, friends, the Cleveland Indians’ franchise, and all of his fans.”

### **Mark Shapiro- Indians President**

“Bob was that rare man, whose legend and feats were matched by his intellect, strength and substance. He was inspirational as a competitor and even more so as a man. I was privileged to have known him and each time I visited with him, he reinforced my passion for baseball and my appreciation of the Indians’ heritage.”

### **Mike Hargrove- Indians Hall of Famer**

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"We have all lost a friend and the nation has lost an icon. Bob was always there with a word of advice or a story of Baseball's past. The thing is that they were always relevant and helpful. I will never forget before the first game of the '97 World Series, Bob came up to me and patted me on the back and told me how proud he was of me and the team, then gave me a buckeye and said it was for luck. I don't think that Bob ever believed in luck, just hard work and an honest effort. I will miss Bob very much. He was my friend."

### **Charles Nagy- Indians Hall of Famer**

Ever since I joined the Indians organization, it was always an honor to talk baseball with such a legend. It is very sad to lose someone that was such a Cleveland icon. We also had a connection with the University of Connecticut and I enjoyed talking Huskies basketball with him on a regular basis. He was a presence that will surely be missed.

### **Mike Hegan- Indians Broadcaster and son of Feller's battery mate and Tribe Great Jim Hegan**

"The Indians of the 40's and 50's were the face of the city of Cleveland and

Bob was the face of the Indians. But, Bob transcended more than that era. In this day of free agency and switching teams, Bob Feller remained loyal to the city and the team for over 70-years. You will likely not see that kind of mutual loyalty and admiration ever again."

### **Rick Manning- Indians Great and Broadcaster**

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“Since my days as a player in the early 70’s, over 20 Fantasy Camps and our Indians Cruises together, he was for me someone so special. He took life to the fullest. I don’t know anybody who got more out of life than Bob Feller, plus he was very privileged to spend over half of his life in the Baseball Hall of Fame. I admired, loved him and was honored to call him my friend. He will always be Cleveland and will always be Cleveland Indians. I will miss him as he is a piece of history. When you mention greatest baseball players of all-time, he has to be mentioned.”

### **Tom Hamilton- Broadcaster and “Voice of Indians”**

“Bob was a living legend, but more importantly, a true American Patriot. Nothing was more important to Bob than this country and what it stands for. Of all of his accomplishments, he was most proud of the fact that he served this country with honor during World War II. But Bob always reminded us that he was no hero, the heroes were those that lost their life defending this country. I was always amazed at his incredible recall when reminiscing about his career. It was like you were back in time reliving those great moments. I feel very blessed to have known Bob these last 21 years. Bob was truly an iconic figure who always made you feel like a friend.”

### **Manny Acta- Indians Manager**

"There has never been a great one with such an affiliation to his original franchise. When you think Cleveland Indians, you think Bob Feller and vice-versa. He was a genuine patriot and a big-time Hall of Famer. Boy, he loved the Indians and we all loved him back."

### **Dennis Lehman- Indians Executive Vice President of Business**

“In the short time I have known the Feller’s, my wife Ginny and I have really felt a part of their family. Many nights over the course of a summer, sitting with Bob and talking baseball, will always be a fond memory. His love of our country and passion for the game, was without question. His recall of people, places and situations, was like no one I have ever met. Image, Bob having dinner with Joe DiMaggio and his wife Marilyn Monroe, and he could describe the

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meal conversation.

He was an amazing, engaging person, who was willing to share his thoughts and opinions to all and took the time to spend with so many of us in this community.

I will miss him very much.”

### **Bob DiBiasio- Indians Vice President of Public Relations**

“Bob Feller loved the Cleveland Indians. It is the ultimate American success story. Consider how a five-ounce baseball provided an Iowa farm boy the opportunity to travel the world as he became perhaps the greatest ambassador baseball has ever known. I had the privilege of working alongside him for more than 30 years and he taught me as much about the game of baseball as he did life. I will miss his friendship.”

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Details on a public memorial service will be announced in near future. Fans are invited to visit [indians.com/feller](http://indians.com/feller) for a tribute to Bob Feller and the opportunity to share their thoughts and memories regarding the Indians legend.

The designated charities for any monetary contributions can be made in the name of Bob Feller to Cleveland Indians Charities ( [www.indians.com](http://www.indians.com) ) and the Bob Feller Museum ( [www.bobfellermuseum.org](http://www.bobfellermuseum.org) ).

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**Source: Cleveland Indians, Major League Baseball**

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**Maury Brown** is the Founder and President of the [Business of Sports Network](#) , which includes The Biz of Baseball, The Biz of Football, The Biz of Basketball and The Biz of Hockey, as well as a [contributo](#)

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