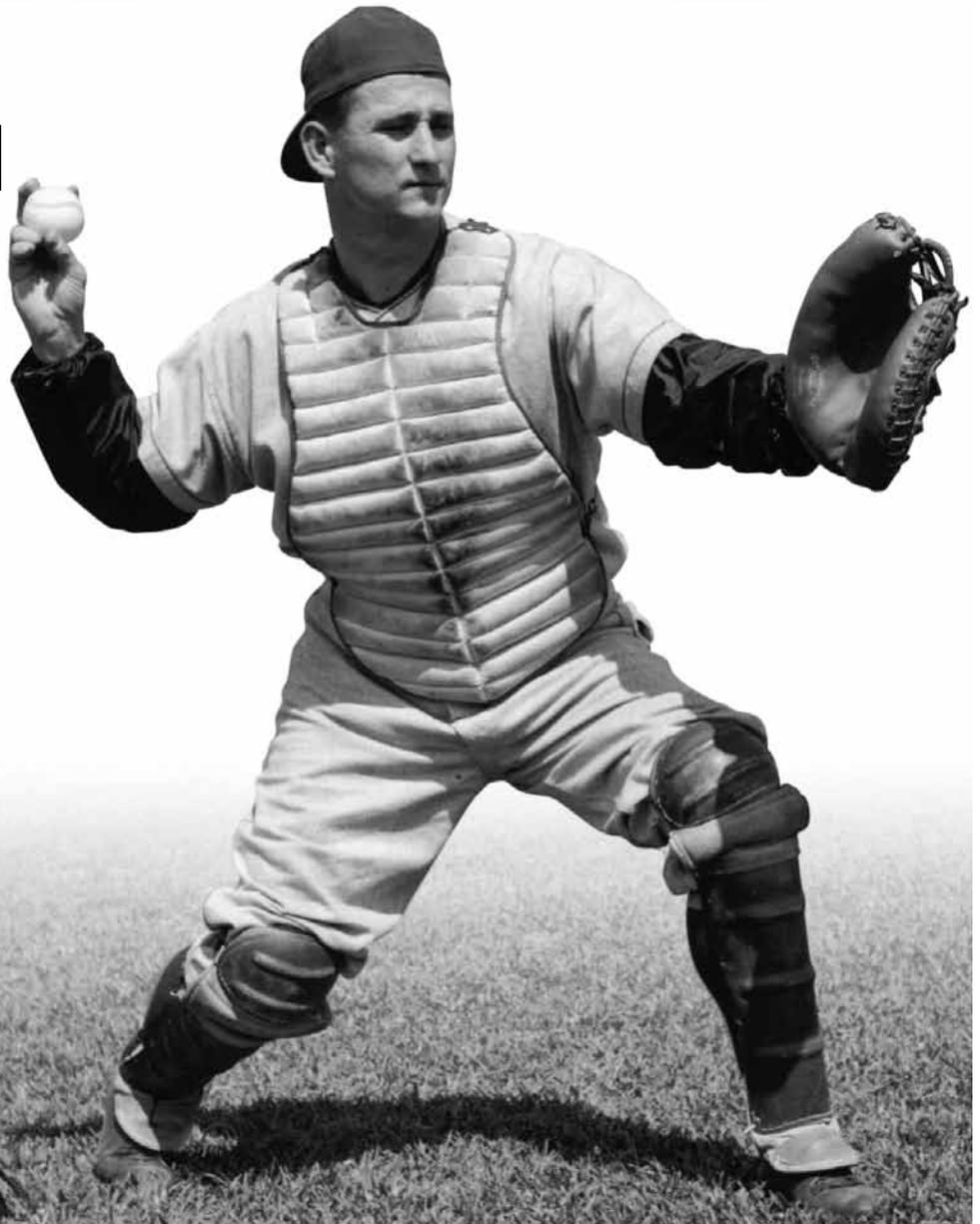


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# Society Saddened by the Death of Joe Astroth

By David M. Jordan

One of the features which made the Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society as successful as it became was the interaction between the Society's members and the former players of Connie Mack's A's. One of  
*continued on page 2*



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The Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society Inc. has been organized within the guidelines of section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and the articles of incorporation were filed with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 22, 1997. On January 21, 1998 the IRS further ruled that the A's Society is a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the code.

Donors may deduct contributions to the A's Society for Federal estate and gift tax purposes.

Along the Elephant Trail is the official Newsletter of the A's Historical Society Inc. and is published frequently. The opinions expressed by the writers in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or sentiments of the Philadelphia A's Historical Society Inc., its officers, directors or members.

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# A's Society Mourns the Loss of Joe Astroth

*continued from front cover*

those players who participated in Society activities to the greatest degree, until he was prevented by failing health, was the old A's catcher, Joe Astroth. Joe was always happy to show up at any scheduled function and take part in all the activities. Accordingly, we were greatly saddened to learn of Joe's death in Florida on May 3, 2013, at the age of ninety.

Joseph Henry Astroth, born in East Alton, Illinois, across the river from St. Louis, was a star three-sport athlete in high school and attended the University of Illinois before being called into World War II military service with the Coast Guard. Playing ball with the Coast Guard at New London, Connecticut, Joe attracted the attention of A's scout Tom Fleming and George Sisler of the Dodgers. When he was discharged in mid-1945, Joe quickly signed with the Athletics and made his big-league debut on August 13, 1945; he played in nine more games that season. Joe played in four games for the A's at the start of the '46 season before Mr. Mack sent him for seasoning to Lancaster in the Interstate League, where he batted .289 in 97 games. In 1947, Joe caught for Savannah in the Sally League, and in '48 he hit .352 for Memphis in the Southern Association.

This earned Joe a promotion to the big time, and he caught 55 games for the A's in 1949, backing up Buddy Rosar. In 1950, in 39 games, Joe hit .327; in one of those games, on June 8, he tied a major league record by driving in six runs in one inning (with a grand slam home run and a two-run double). For the team's last four seasons in Philadelphia, Joe was a regular catcher for managers Jimmy Dykes and Eddie Joost. In 1953, while batting a cool .296, he led the league with his 72% of runners caught stealing, and he was also involved in more double plays than any other catcher.

Many fans will recall when Bobby Shantz, after being caught by Yogi Berra in the

All-Star Game, was asked by a reporter how it felt to be caught by such a big-time star. "Hey," replied Bobby. "I get caught regularly by the best catcher in the American League, Joe Astroth."

When the team departed for Kansas City, Joe went with it as the regular catcher, and he hit .252 in 101 games for Lou Boudreau's team in 1955. After catching eight games for K.C. in 1956, his last on May 13, Joe was let go and his major league career came to an end, with a .254 batting average over 544 games. Joe later played for San Diego in the Pacific Coast League and Buffalo in the International League before hanging up his mitt for good. Joe Astroth was remembered as a fine catcher and handler of pitchers with a fairly good bat, though limited in power.

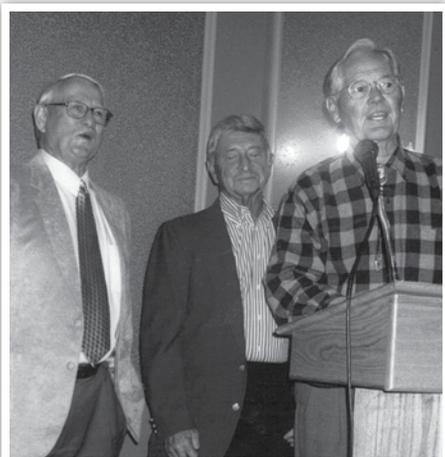
A's Society members were treated to a Joe Astroth who was never without a good story and who loved to share them. Bobby Shantz, we know, has always been a very reluctant public speaker; when called upon, he usually said, "I'll let Joe speak for me," and Joe was always happy to oblige. On top of that, of course, Joe Astroth was simply one of the nicest guys around. We have missed him since his health-related move to Florida several years ago, with his wife Marge, and we will miss him even more with his passing. ♪



**NOTICE:** The Society welcomes requests for information from the public, and, especially from those engaged in research concerning the Philadelphia Athletics Baseball Club. All such requests, other than casual questions the response to which shall be for the personal use of the questioner, must be submitted to the President of the Society, or, the Society's Vice President for History and Research, or the Executive Director of the Society. The response provided from the resources available to the Society shall not be considered a waiver, or release, of any copyright not owned by the Society. If available the Society will advise the researcher of any copyright information known to, or otherwise noted in the records of, the Society. The lack of copyright information in the records of the Society shall not excuse any researcher from due diligence concerning copyrighted material. The response to any request for information not presented to the President of the Society, or, the Society's Vice President for History and Research, or, the Executive Director of the Society shall not be attributed to, or otherwise be represented as having been secured from, the Society. ♪



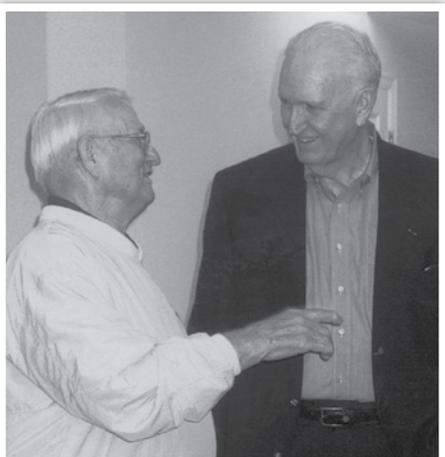
# Memories of Joe Astroth



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## Joe Astroth, 1922-2013

Joseph H. 'Joe' Astroth Sr. passed away Friday, May 3, 2013, in Boca Raton, Fla. He was 90. Joe is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Majorie I. Astroth. They were married at St. Mary's Church in Alton, IL on Oct. 18, 1947. Joe is lovingly remembered by his daughter, Janet A. Thompson of Delray Beach, Fla., his sons, August A. Astroth of Charlotte, NC, Joseph H. Astroth Jr. of San Rafael, CA, Brian D. Astroth of Midlothian, VA; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Born on September 1, 1922, in East Alton, L, Joe graduated from Wood River High School in 1940, and went on to attend the University of Illinois where he 'lettered' in football, baseball and basketball until he entered military service in 1942. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II until his honorable discharge in 1945. Immediately after his discharge, he was given a Major League baseball contract from the Philadelphia Athletics as a catcher. His major league debut was August 13, 1945, without playing a single minor league game; and his final appearance was May 13, 1956. During this entire time, he was a member of the Athletics, moving with them to Kansas City in 1955.

After his successful professional baseball career, he was the proprietor of two family run businesses, Pit-Catcher Bowling Lanes, and The Bullpen Dairy Bar in Chalfont. He later went on to be a sales professional and plant superintendent for General Copper and Brass, Co in Collingdale, PA. Joe enjoyed spending time with his children and grandchildren, and was an avid golfer, playing in many charitable golf events throughout the Northeast. Joe and his wife Marjorie enjoyed traveling, and even into their twilight years, maintained a passion for ballroom dancing. Their jitterbug dancing was a highlight of their children's wedding receptions.

A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. Monday, May 6, at St. Andrews Estates South in Boca Raton, Fla. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:45 a.m. Tuesday, May 7, in St. Jude Catholic Church in Boca Raton. A military funeral honors ceremony will take place in South Florida National Cemetery in Lake Worth, Fla.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Baseball Assistance Team via the Web site [www.MLBcommunity.org](http://www.MLBcommunity.org) Glick Family Funeral Home, Boca Raton, FL. 🐾

*This article originally appeared in the May 6, 2013, Intelligencer.*



**Joe & Marge Astroth (pictured above) resided at this home (below) at 151 South Moyer Avenue in Chalfont, PA for 60 years. Mrs. Astroth added that prior to moving into this home they had an apartment nearby and Joe would travel to Shibe Park daily during his years with the Philadelphia Athletics.**

