

REMEMBERING

ROLAND HEMOND

1929-2021

BY FRED MITCHELL,
AWARD-WINNING SPORTSWRITER FORMERLY OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE



HIS WORDS ALWAYS WERE MEASURED. HIS
ACTIONS WERE PROFOUND AND GENUINE.
AND HIS FORMIDABLE BASEBALL LEGACY
WILL LAST FOREVER.



THE ENTIRE BASEBALL WORLD IS SADDENED BY THE NEWS OF ROLAND HEMOND'S PASSING AFTER A LONG AND INCREDIBLY IMPACTFUL LIFE

- JERRY REINSDORF



Roland Hemond was an iconic baseball lifer who rose from humble job assignments to lofty titles as the result of a relentless work ethic, exceptional people skills and enduring patience.

He touched so many lives and continually enhanced his legacy before passing away at the age of 92 on December 12, 2021, following a 70-year career in the sport he loved. Hemond, born in Central Falls, Rhode Island, won three Executive of the Year awards as the general manager of the Chicago White Sox and Baltimore Orioles. He is credited with founding the Arizona Fall League, which showcases top prospects from all major league organizations.

"The entire baseball world is saddened by the news of Roland Hemond's passing after a long and incredibly impactful life," White Sox Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf said. "Roland began his career in baseball in 1951, and there is not a person in this game over the past 70 years who has not benefited from his judgment, friendship, mentorship and his many creative ideas that forever changed the game of baseball on the

field and in the front office. Baseball owes Roland an immense debt of gratitude and its heartfelt thanks.

"The highlight of his time as White Sox general manager certainly came in 1983 with the American League West Division title, the city's first championship since 1963. His champagne-soaked suit from that clinching game still is prominently displayed in our ballpark."

The winner of the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011, Hemond also helped form the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation. Indeed, Roland Hemond, a military veteran of the United States Coast Guard, is the inspiration for three prominent MLB awards: The Baseball America Award, presented to a person who has made significant contributions in scouting; the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) award for the executive who has shown great respect for scouts; and the Roland Hemond Award, given by the White Sox to those who are dedicated to improving the lives of others through extraordinary personal sacrifice.

2011 BUCK O'NEIL



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Hemond first joined the White Sox in 1970 as director of player personnel along with field manager Chuck Tanner.

Among the many lives he influenced during his lengthy career was that of longtime baseball executive and Chicago native Ned Colletti. When he was just 15, Colletti happened to run into Hemond in what turned out to be a prophetic encounter.

"My 50-year friendship with Roland began at a Chicago bank," Colletti recalled. "Northwest Federal Savings was located at the corners of Irving Park Road, Cicero Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue. I had a savings account there, and one Saturday afternoon I went to deposit the \$15 I had earned that week. I heard that Roland was going to be there in a meet-and-greet. I was 15 years old and Roland was beginning his career as general manager with the White Sox.

"I waited in line and met him for the first time. I told him that even though I was a Cubs fan, I had great respect for anyone who held the position of general manager and that one day I hoped to work in baseball. He thanked me despite my allegiance and encouraged me to follow my dreams and aspirations. 'I am proof,' he said. 'that with hard work, paying attention and with kindness and integrity anything is possible.'

"I never forgot the time he took, nor his message," Colletti added.

"It was 35 years later, on November 15, 2005...I had just been named general manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers. My cell phone was on high alert. Hundreds of texts, emails and phone calls. One of the calls was from Roland. I answered immediately.

"I'm proud to call you and welcome you to a very special group," he said. 'And if I can give you one piece of advice, I'd tell you to celebrate everything you can - big or small. Because there will be enough days with crisis management and challenges and disappointments. Don't ever forget to celebrate.'"

Colletti began his career with the Chicago Cubs as an assistant media relations director and eventually rose to vice president. He later became assistant general manager of the San Francisco Giants.



'THAT WITH HARD WORK, PAYING ATTENTION AND WITH KINDNESS AND INTEGRITY ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.'

- ROLAND HEMOND

The Dodgers went to the postseason five times in Colletti's nine years (2005-2014) as general manager. After every clinching game came a call from Hemond: "Don't forget to celebrate."

Colletti never forgot.

"I'll always celebrate knowing Roland, and like so many people, calling him a friend," he said.

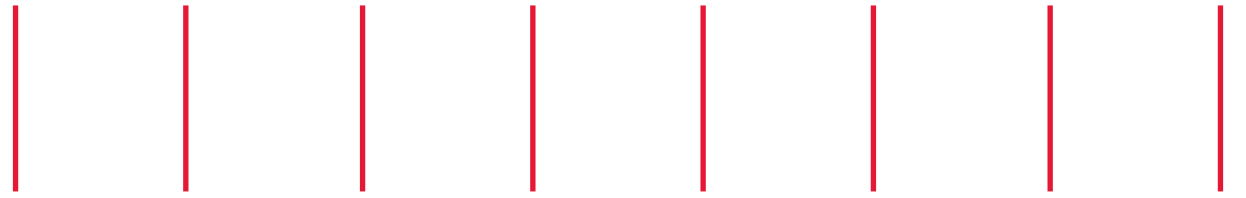
Hemond influenced so many others with whom he came into contact, including Dan Evans, who served as the White Sox assistant general manager before becoming GM of the Dodgers (2001-2004).

"I knew him for only 21 years, but like many, I felt as if I knew him forever," Evans told the Daily Herald.

Hemond, who also served in executive roles with the Milwaukee Braves (1952-1960), California Angels (1961-1970) and Arizona Diamondbacks (1996-2000 and 2007-2017), also has been credited with mentoring baseball execs Walt Jocketty, Doug Melvin and Dave Dombrowski.



ROLAND HEMOND AWARD



“Roland was my first general manager as a player, and then, years later, was the first person I called when I became general manager of the White Sox,” White Sox Executive Vice President Ken Williams said in a statement. “He became my first hire when I asked him to come aboard as an adviser and counselor. Roland did that and more and was an invaluable adviser, confidant and friend as we captured the 2005 World Series.”

In fact, during the White Sox sweep of the Houston Astros to win the 2005 World Series, Hemond received the ultimate birthday gift. A unique celebration for the trusted adviser as he turned 76, the White Sox won Game 3 – an epic 7-5 victory in 14 innings that ended in the early hours of October 26 – only to finish off the Astros for the title with a 1-0 win in Game 4 later that evening.

While all of the accomplishments in his highly decorated career help to define Hemond’s impact on the game of baseball, the most enduring memory for all who had the good fortune to know him was how well he respected and treated other people. ■

