

# William V. Ryan Passes



William V. Ryan, a retired Polytechnic Institute educator, coach and referee who also ran the play clock during [Baltimore Colts](#) games, died Feb. 18 of [Parkinson's disease](#) at his Rodgers Forge home.

He was 83.

The son of a postal worker and a homemaker, Mr. Ryan was born and raised in Medina, N.Y., near Buffalo. He was a 1945 graduate of Medina High School, where he played varsity football, basketball and baseball and was a high and broad jumper in track.

After serving as an electronic technician in the Navy aboard the destroyer USS Borie from 1946 to 1948, he attended St. Bonaventure College for a year and a half before transferring to [Notre Dame](#) University.

He graduated from Notre Dame in 1952 with a bachelor's degree in physical education and earned a master's degree in education in 1954 from the University of Buffalo.

In 1956, Mr. Ryan moved to Baltimore and joined the faculty of Loyola High School as a teacher and the football team's line coach. He later coached varsity baseball and football.

During his years at Loyola, his teams won various titles and Mr. Ryan produced some noted college and professional players, among them Tim Nordbrook, a shortstop whose six-year major league career during the 1970s included playing for the Orioles from 1974 to 1976.

Tracy Mehr, who had been football coach at Loyola High School during Mr. Ryan's early days there, remained a lifelong friend.

"We lived together before I got married in an apartment on St. Paul Street. He was one of the most honorable men I've ever met during my coaching career and one of the most organized," said Mr. Mehr, who later coached football at Boston College and Amherst.

In 1967, Mr. Ryan left Loyola and began teaching health and coaching baseball, cross-country, track and field, soccer, wrestling and football at various times during his 25 years at Poly, where his runners won titles.

When school wasn't in session during the summer, Mr. Ryan worked for 30 years as a swimming pool inspector for the Baltimore County Health Department.

William Hastings, who had been Poly wrestling coach until his retirement in 1990, was a colleague and close friend.

"I had been at the old school on North Avenue, and Bill came onboard after we moved to Cold Spring Lane in 1967. He coached cross-country, junior varsity basketball while officiating at high school games all around the area," said Mr. Hastings.

"He was an all-around good guy. The kids liked Bill and had the utmost respect for him. He coached them as well as teaching them physical education and health. He had a great rapport with them, and they got attached to him," he said.

From 1972 to 1992, Mr. Ryan was the public address announcer of the annual Poly-City Thanksgiving Day football game at [Memorial Stadium](#).

He retired from Poly in 1992.

In 1957, Mr. Ryan began umpiring baseball games at the high school and college levels and had worked one summer in the New York-Penn league in pro ball. He began officiating football in 1962 on the high school, college and semipro levels.

During the 1970s and 1980s, he ran the play clock for the Baltimore Colts at Memorial Stadium. From 1996 to 2008, he oversaw operation of the coach-to-quarterback radio control and play clock for the Ravens.

"He once got run over by running back Joe Washington," said a son, Michael P. Ryan of Lutherville.

Bill Tanton, former longtime Evening Sun sports editor and columnist, described Mr. Ryan as one of those "stocky guys who always seemed to get hit. He was working the field as an umpire one day when he was hit by one of the kids."

"Bill was an official for a long time," recalled Vince Bagli, former WBAL-TV sports anchor. "He was always intense, no matter what he was doing."

Lou Hammond, a referee, worked Ravens games with Mr. Ryan.

"Bill had the job of clock operator for the Ravens, and when he retired, I was one of the guys who took over for him," said Mr. Hammond.

"He was an Irishman and could have a tough style at times. He may have been tough on the field, but when he got off and was sharing a beer with you, he was a gentle giant. It was that he just took his work very seriously," he said.

"I've known and worked with Bill for 40 years. We worked Memorial Stadium and many high school and semipro minor league football games through the years," said Mr. Hammond.

"He won the Paul Menton Award in football and the Okie O'Connor Award, which is the highest award for high school baseball. Both of these are pretty big honors," he said.

Ted Patterson, the veteran sports broadcaster and sports historian who was also a friend, said, "He was a real positive-outlook guy who always had a good word for people. He really was an all-around nice man."

Mr. Ryan was a longtime member and former national president of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials and a member of the Mason Dixon Umpire Association and the Maryland Board of Football Officials.

Mr. Ryan helped organize and attend reunions of his former shipmates from the Borie. He was a history buff and liked collecting sports records.

"His favorite restaurant was the Peppermill in Lutherville, where he was known as 'Coach,' and his trademark look was pulled-up white tube socks," his son said.

To assist families caring for relatives who suffer from Parkinson's disease, Mr. Ryan's family established the Socks Up Foundation, his son said.

Mr. Ryan, a longtime resident of Glen Argyle Road, was an active communicant of St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church, where a Mass of Christian burial was offered Thursday.

Also surviving are his wife of 49 years, the former Camilla "Cam" Bradford; three other sons, Shawn V. Ryan of Cockeysville, Richard B. Ryan of Lutherville and Terry N. Ryan of Linganore, Pa.; two daughters, Sheila A. Ryan of Towson and Jennifer C. Ryan of Cockeysville; and six grandchildren.