

Brown left his mark

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By MARK DRAJEM

Messenger Staff

VICTOR — In 1937, the fortunes of the Victor semi-pro baseball team rose when Union College football star Ernie Brown moved to town and was



BROWN

quickly recruited as first baseman.

Brown was one of the stars of the team that played teams from Lyons to Canandaigua every Sunday afternoon.

Sixty years later, Ernest Brown, 82, was still contributing to Victor. He died suddenly Sunday of a heart attack.

Mr. Brown's contributions to the town were many. He joined the Victor Fire Department in 1941, after watching a barn fire char his 1936 Buick.

Although he stopped fighting fires long ago, Brown continued to volunteer. Recently he started archiving the department's history, said secretary Ed O'Loughlin.

Mr. Brown also led a Boy Scout Troop for 20 years. "He had an impact on a lot of young men in Victor, who got a lot of guidance from him in Boy Scouts," said Donald Brown, Ernie's son. "He was able to instill high ideals in people."

He was a president of the Victor Lions Club and served on the Victor Village Board and Village Planning Board for many years.

"He spoke his mind, that's for sure," said Fran Underhill, whose tenure as village mayor overlapped with Mr. Brown's time on the Village Board.

James Busch, who played with Mr. Brown on the baseball team and later coordinated the townwide emergency management committee with him, agrees. "He was a precise chap, who could see what was coming ahead," he said. "And he had a huge amount of energy."

Mr. Brown, who was an industrial engineer at Victor Insulators and Singer-Friden, put much of that energy into amateur radio, also called ham radio. For 40 years he was a member of a national ham radio group.

When icy or windy weather knocked out telephone and power service, Mr. Brown would use his radio to keep the town communicating with the world, friends say.

After working so many times on emergency communication, Mr. Brown realized its importance. He was one of the leaders of the group that planned and delivered the 911 emergency network in this area, Donald Brown said.

And ham radios led to his more recent hobby: computers and e-mail.

"He always liked to be up on the latest in technology," his son said.

He used that computer to fire off many letters to Messenger on town issues from taxes to traffic.

"He didn't keep anything to himself. Not to be mean about it, but he just spoke his mind," said Ruth Brown, his wife of 58 years. "He liked to keep busy."

Mr. Brown is survived by his wife, two sons, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. ◀

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