

Bullpen

RONALD TELLEFSEN

MEMORIAL ISSUE

This special edition of the *Bullpen* is
dedicated in loving memory to Ron Tellefsen...
our leader, our hero, our friend.

June 2005 - Special Edition

Tribute to a Legend

Ron Tellefsen
1936 - 2005

Babe Ruth League, Inc.
President/Chief Executive Officer
1980 - 2005

Message From The President

My Father, My Hero



Steven Tellefsen is pictured above with his father Ron Tellefsen at the 2004 Babe Ruth League, Inc. Board Meeting.

Since this is my first column as President/CEO, it is only fitting that I talk about my father, my hero – Ronald Tellefsen. My father was one of the most important people in my life. There was no one like him, so I am very pleased we have devoted this BULLPEN edition as a memorial to him.

My father dedicated his life to youth sports, in particular, Babe Ruth League, Inc. He started his professional career with Babe Ruth League in 1969 as Development Director administering the 16-18 program. He was promoted to Field Commissioner in 1971 when he assumed responsibility for the entire field operation, which at that time was the 13-15 and 16-18 divisions of Babe Ruth Baseball. In 1973, he was named Commissioner of Babe Ruth League, Inc., and in 1978 was promoted to Vice President/Commissioner, making him an officer of the corporation. In September of 1980, the International Board of Directors elected my dad to the position of President/CEO. He had just celebrated his 25th Board Meeting this past December.

During my dad's numerous travels, many of you had the opportunity to get to know him. As I am sure you will agree, he was truly a remarkable man. Words cannot even begin to express how much I miss him. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your words and expressions of sympathy over his passing. I've often found that sharing in the pain can sometimes be as healing as getting a good laugh out of a joke that my father often played on me.

You see, he had a great sense of humor. Although he was very professional to a fault, he loved to rib and play jokes on people. And his laughter could light up a room.

The memories I have of my dad from my childhood are very pleasant ones. Although he was a very hard working man and traveled extensively, he always made time for his family. We may not have spent as much time together as I would have liked, but the quality of time we spent together was second to

none. Even though he was often exhausted when he came home from a trip, he would never just "flop on the couch". He took the time to reconnect with his family.

My dad always told me that I was the man of the house when he was away.

But, he would always call home to check on us, see how school went or to see how I did at my baseball or basketball games. My father was there for the good times, and believe me there were many. More importantly, he was there during the tough times to make everything alright.

His fathering role could have been compared to that of a coach. He challenged us to achieve excellence, but would always positively acknowledge our efforts if we failed. With this philosophy, my dad taught us that striving to succeed is important, but that in the end self-improvement, confidence and having fun are as important as winning. And if you think about it, developing these traits and accomplishing your goals really is "winning". As you can see, there was not a better educator in the game of life. He had the ability to communicate with you in a way to make you understand and believe in yourself. He was a man of principles who believed in honesty, courage and goodness in all.

As a young man, I was always interested in the Marine Corp. One day I went to the recruiting station, spoke to a recruiter and enlisted. When my father came home that evening, I told him what I had done. Needless to say, both he and my mom were very proud. Even though I was at the Marine Corp Boot Camp in Paris Island, South Carolina, my dad would take the time out of his busy schedule to visit me. He would

drive straight through from New Jersey to South Carolina. On several occasions, he brought my girlfriend (now my wife) with him so we could spend some time together. When I graduated from Boot Camp, it was one of the greatest moments for my father and me.

My father not only loved his kids, but the welfare of all children nationwide was foremost in his heart. We certainly understood his dedication to his job. My dad loved sports and the great life lessons and camaraderie that came along with it. It was always his goal to provide every child with the opportunity to play the great games of baseball and softball and to have fun doing so. Dad was a man of many passions... family, friendship, and sports. There are so many activities we spent together doing that I will miss.

One of my favorite activities was playing golf with my father. He was such a competitor on the golf course. There was one tournament in particular that I especially enjoyed...the Bill Axtel Golf Outing (named after one of my dad's dear friends who had passed on). This tournament was held annually in June. Eight of us would play 36 holes a day from Wednesday through Saturday. My dad set the rules and made sure everyone followed them to the letter. He even purchased awards to give out at the end of the outing. It was a lot of fun and made for some treasured memories.

I also enjoyed accompanying my dad to New York to participate in all-nighter card games with his old buddies. It was great to hear stories about my dad and his friends when they were young. They were quite a bunch of characters. They were also very dedicated to the game of baseball. My dad was involved in baseball since serving as a bat boy when he was just a "babe". He then went on to play the game and serve as a manager.

However, I think his #1 love was umpiring. He was an umpire's umpire. It wasn't the money that attracted him to officiating; it was his love for the game and respect for the rules. It used to disappoint him when he saw umpires in it just for the extra dollars. This was one of the reasons



Loretta and Ron Tellefsen would have celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary in April.

behind his idea to form the Babe Ruth League National Umpires Association.

However, what I will miss most is going over to my dad's house after a long day. We would sit on the back patio. He would light up a cigar and we would talk for hours about the grandkids, Babe Ruth League and life in general. Some of my best life lessons were learned during these special sessions.

As I grew from a young boy into a man, I saw my father in a new light. I noticed how devoted his friends and business associates were to him. He inspired everyone to greatness and put his knowledge and thoughts into action. His kids, as well as the youth of our country, were his driving force. He felt that every kid deserved a fun, educational and memorable childhood.

He was a man of great dignity honor and strength.

His merits were noble and of admirable length.

He was far greater than all other men that I know.

He was my dad, my mentor, my friend and hero.

To my hero, **my dad** – I will forever love and admire you.

Steven Tellefsen, President/CEO
Babe Ruth League, Inc.

Chairman of the Board Pays Fond Tribute to Ron Tellefsen

As Chairman of the Board of Babe Ruth League, Inc. for the past 25 years, I made countless trips with Ron Tellefsen all over the United States, Canada and Mexico. These trips included visits with corporations, mayors, governors and professional young athletes. Ron not only informed those he met with about Babe Ruth League, Inc., but he usually taught them something they did not even know about their own organization, constituency or community. With ease, he could sell himself and Babe Ruth League, Inc. to everyone, not only because he believed in the program, but also because he believed in people. No person was too great or too small for Ron to visit with and get to know, not just on a business level, but also on a personal one.

Everyone felt comfortable with Ron, from US Presidents, to CEOs, to young people, and to restaurant employees, whom he would persuade to brew him a fresh pot of coffee—even if it was "against the rules." All who came in contact with Ron learned something from his warmth, charisma, vision and passion. He was and will always be one of the greatest people persons I have ever known.

Bill Smith, Chairman of the Board
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Chickasha, OK



A meeting of minds at the annual Board of Directors Meeting (left to right): BRL, Inc. Chairman of the Board Bill Smith, Cal Ripken, Jr., BRL, Inc. Executive Consultant Robert Curran and Ronald Tellefsen.



BRL Annual Golf Outing - a winning foursome (L-R) K&K Insurance (outing sponsor), CMO Lou Valentic, retired Rider University Baseball Coach Sonny Pitaro, and BRL Board Member James Wagoner.

INSURING THE BABE RUTH FAMILY

By now Babe Ruth baseball and softball leagues across the country are in full swing. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls are enjoying another season of America's favorite pastime and all are protected by an excellent liability and accident insurance program that has grown tremendously over the years. Much of the growth of the program can be attributed to Ron Tellefsen, Babe Ruth League's former President and C.E.O., who passed away recently. Reflecting back on the many insurance discussions we (Cheryl Pettibone, normally the author of this column) had with Ron, Rosemary Schoellkopf and Donna Mahoney over the years, I thought I would take this opportunity to share with you Ron's passion for the well-being of Babe Ruth participants.

Ron's direction to K&K Insurance Group each year was simple. He wanted Babe Ruth teams, leagues, players, coaches, umpires and volunteers to have the best insurance program in all of amateur sports. He listened intently to our many suggestions for program changes and modifications, and he frequently made suggestions of his own, ideas that he carefully thought out or that may have been shared with him by those in the field. Ron was a "baseball man" at heart, but first and foremost, he was a business man... a knowledgeable and fair business man. No deal was a good deal unless it was fair for both parties. Over the years we became known as Babe Ruth's business partners, and as our relationship grew - dating back to 1988 - just partners. And as our partnership grew, our friendship grew too. When K&K was selected to provide liability insurance to Babe Ruth teams and leagues in 1988, Ron wanted leagues to have the option to purchase either \$1 million dollars of protection or \$2 million dollars of protection. He did not want to force either liability limit on everyone, knowing that budgets for insurance vary from league to league. As the Babe Ruth World Series program began to grow to more and more sites, giving a greater number of youth the opportunity to participate in a national championship event, Ron was a proponent of a separate liability insurance program for World Series sites. This policy provided valuable liability protection to every World Series host league and community, and the premium was paid by Babe Ruth Headquarters.

Ron was most proud of Babe Ruth's accident insurance program. He did everything possible to maintain the \$250,000 primary accident protection for each and every person in the Babe Ruth family (leagues must enroll in the plan to have the protection). As medical inflation has continued to drive the cost of insurance across our nation, Ron sought solutions that would enable leagues to continue to afford the only PRIMARY accident insurance program in all of amateur athletics. He could have agreed to a lesser limit of coverage. He could have certainly opted for an excess accident product rather than a primary program. Instead, he found ways to fund the program and to this day, the Babe Ruth Accident Insurance Program stands alone in sports.

Second only to caring for the kids, Ron had a passion for taking care of his volunteers. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Babe Ruth organization. They coach, they rake the fields, they work in the concession stands and many of them serve on the local Board of Directors of the league. Ron wanted these Board members to be comfortable with their decision to be a part of their local Board. He challenged us to create an affordable Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance Program so individual board members would have protection from allegations of negligence resulting from their decisions on behalf of the league. The current D&O program, now in its 7th year, continues to grow as more and more leagues see the value of the protection. Though the D&O marketplace has gone through some difficult times of late, Ron fought long and hard for the program, keeping the premium at a reasonable level.

The Babe Ruth insurance program is somewhat of a vicious circle. It's June of 2005 and we're already planning for the '06 renewal. By the time this Bullpen is on your desk, Rosemary and Steven Tellefsen, Babe Ruth League's new President and C.E.O., will have visited K&K Insurance Group in Ft. Wayne, Indiana to review the current program and policies and begin discussions for next year. Shortly after the World Series are completed, we will all get together once again to finalize pricing, terms and policy conditions for next year. Brochures will be sent to the printer, delivered to Babe Ruth Headquarters for mailing and the cycle will repeat itself.

I must admit that not all of what we do with the Babe Ruth organization is all work! There is some play involved, after all Babe Ruth baseball and softball is all about fun! Each year we play in the Babe Ruth golf outing, helping raise money for scholarships for

Babe Ruth graduates. Cheryl and I attend several World Series each year. Often she goes one direction and I go another. It's relaxing to just sit and watch baseball or softball. The annual Babe Ruth Board Meeting has always been a combination of work and play. After a detailed presentation to the Board each year, we are invited to participate in the dinners and activities hosted by Headquarters. Ron always made us feel special. He treated us with respect and like a good partner, he saw to it that we were an integral part of the organization.

In closing, we "broke bread" with Ron and the staff on many occasions. He was predictable at every meal, from his corn flakes in the morning to his filet for dinner, a "nice medium" he used to tell the waiter when asked how he would like it prepared! He enjoyed having a casual conversation at the end of a long day with his favorite beverage, at times accompanied by a cigar. He'd start over each morning with a "fresh pot of coffee", usually up before the birds. Ron loved all sports and enjoyed a "gentleman's bet" (or two, or three...!!) on a college football or basketball game, an NFL game or, a horse race. He and I would talk frequently this time of year, not about business however. He loved the Triple Crown races; the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont! We'd speculate on the winners and compare notes on Monday morning. Ironically, he first told me about his cancer at the conclusion of one of the races two years ago.

Ron served this organization well. You were his passion. You were his family. Every insurance decision he made, he made in the best interest of Babe Ruth League, Inc. Babe Ruth League, Inc. will live on for many years to come thanks to Ron Tellefsen and his love for each and every one of you.

*Lou Valentic, Chief Marketing Officer
K&K Insurance Group*

Remembering a Babe Ruth Legend

I first met Ron in 1972 at the Babe Ruth World Series in Pine Bluff. Since that meeting, I have always considered him a special friend. That meeting I knew what his intentions would be when he became President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. He had one thing in mind and that was to make Babe Ruth League, Inc. the best youth sports program in the world, and if he could have stayed with us a little longer, there is no doubt that would have happened.

He made the kids his priority number ONE and that shows by the progress made since he became President/CEO some 25 years ago. He was a special person and could get more people and corporate businesses involved than anyone in his field. I could write many pages on our relationship, but space would not allow. With these few words, I say to a Legend, you did a great job and will always be remembered. May God Bless Babe Ruth League, Inc.

*Jim Hill, Board Member
White Hall, AR*



Ron Tellefsen introducing his special invited guest, Anthony McFadden of Pine Bluff, Arkansas to former Cincinnati Reds great George Foster who was the featured guest speaker at the 2003 13-Year-Old World Series Banquet of Champions.

Humbled By His Contribution

I cried when I read your report on the passing of a very dear friend, Ron Tellefsen. I served as a manager, District Commissioner and State Commissioner of Southern California in the days of his tenure as the head of Babe Ruth League. I and many others here in Southern California, are humbled by his contribution to Babe Ruth League.

He was, and still is, an idol to be held high to all who are in this program and others who remember him. I, for one, am really honored that I knew him and was able to work with him personally within the program.

He will be greatly missed and a person that cannot be replaced due to his value to the entire game of baseball. I will make sure that some of my friends within the Babe Ruth organization and Major League Baseball receive a copy of his tribute.

I know our good Lord above will welcome him with open arms to fill a position in Heaven with some others that have preceded him. I am indebted to Babe Ruth League through Ron's leadership for giving me an opportunity to know and to love this man who gave so much.

*Tommy Thomsen
Fawnskin, CA*



Rosemary Schoellkopf and Ron Tellefsen share a light moment during a presentation at the 2000 Board of Directors Meeting where Ron was being honored for 20 years of excellence serving as the President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc.

ONE IN A MILLION

His very good friend (one of Ron's beloved "roomies" Tom Gorman, a former MLB umpire, had a phrase which I'd heard him say numerous times when out with Ron: "Ron, every night with you is like New Year's Eve". That was because Ron knew how to entertain. He loved people and was the life of any party. To hear him laugh was just so contagious. It came from deep inside and bellowed out with an equal measure of mirth and mischief. He was a natural storyteller. No matter how many times he would tell a story, or how many times you would hear it, one didn't tire of hearing them over and over again. It was just so enjoyable hearing him talk.

Forbid the day you did something out of the ordinary and he caught you – because that story got bigger and bigger each time he told it. (Not that I would know firsthand.) But he did love to kid and tease and would not hesitate to put you on the hot seat especially if he had an audience. Ron was absolutely tireless when he was with people – I do believe most of his energy came from interaction with others. He thrived on it. He was a people person through and through, and like Will Rogers, I don't think he ever met a person he didn't like. He had the gift to turn even disgruntled and adversarial people into friends and supporters.

He was caring. He valued every human being and he enjoyed making people feel important and special. No matter how busy he was, he would stop and give his time and devoted attention to whomever he was with or whomever stopped by. He took no account to cut short a visit because of a full schedule. Ron often relayed how much he learned from other people – which is no surprise as he listened with great interest to what others had to say. Ron had the ability to read people and could sense things that others could not.

The following is just a small snapshot of how he put others before himself. Just a few days before Ron passed away, the entire staff went to the hospital to see him after work. We were all crowded around into his room and had spilled out into the hall way. He took that opportunity to have what we now refer to sadly as his last staff meeting. He spoke a good half hour...and it was all about us. He thanked each and every one for the great job they do; he told them how much he respected them and how valuable they were to the company. His words were positive and full of reassurance – so very much like Ron.

In the 23 years I worked for Ron, he never ceased to test me. We would walk out of a meeting or something would come about – and he would ask, "What was the most important idea that was exchanged or had surfaced?" Often times there were quite a few things of importance he might have had in mind; therefore choosing "the" most important item discussed was difficult. However, there would be one major point and Ron liked to test to see if you had picked up on it. He did this to all of his staff. Ron would always be pleased if you got it right, yet never upset if you didn't; although he made sure you knew what it was you had missed. He never stopped learning and never stopped teaching. He was a very nurturing boss.

I have often said that Ron has a mind like a steal trap. If you are familiar with that saying, you know what I mean. There was precious little you could get over on him. I tried once. I was on a flight that had a stop but did not a change planes. The inexperienced traveler that I was at the time (going to my first board meeting and flying alone), I decided to get off to stretch my legs and became so engrossed in shopping that the plane took off without me! So, I scrambled and got myself settled on another flight right away. I then decided to tell Ron I would be arriving later as I had "missed my connection". Well... he knew my plane did not have a connection – and that became one of the "stories" he told on me. This is one story I did get tired of hearing as I would often hear him say, "Rosemary, you know the plane won't wait for you". You can rest assured I haven't gotten off a flight since.

Ron was an extremely intelligent man. Mentally, he could run circles around other professionals. He had the ability to maneuver and negotiate to his (and to Babe Ruth League's advantage), but Ron was always fair and would never leave the negotiations until it was a win-win situation for all parties. He took partnerships very seriously and wanted both organizations to be successful as possible.

He did so many great things for the Babe Ruth program. He instituted a lot of change and truly took a good baseball program and turned it into a great baseball and softball program. He made Babe Ruth League, Inc. what it is today – a very well respected and successful non-profit organization. It's not a stretch to say he had a new idea every day of his life.

Ron was also amazing in that he had a photographic recall of people's names, what year he'd met them, where he met them and what they were doing at the time. Sometimes he even remembered what they were wearing. If it was at a world series game, he remembered the players, their positions and any key plays they had made. He would remember their family and anything special that had happened at the time. He astounded me time and time again – he had an absolutely incredible memory! When he met someone (young or old) and had played baseball or softball, he had the uncanny ability to guess their position played. He was right 99% of the time!

Ron had a compassionate heart and took a special interest in those children and adults who suffered with a physical or mental challenged, or anyone going through difficult times. I remember a young retarded man in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee who Ron encouraged to help selling World Series tickets. That man was very successful and sold the highest number tickets. Ron in turn never failed to send him a birthday present. He also became the pen pal of a young man serving his sentence in an Alabama prison. He befriended him and helped help him take care of his child's needs. On one occasion Ron invited a young retarded man into our office because he saw him waiting for the bus in the rain. He became a regular visitor, and because of Ron, we all took him under our wing. There is also young retarded woman in Newark, Ohio who Ron met when she was at a hotel restaurant folding napkins. She became an instant favorite of Ron's and he made sure she received flowers and a cake for her birthday every year after that initial meeting. He never failed to ask where she was and if she was coming in that day. He always spent some time talking with her when he visited. Even being a busy CEO – he found time to do many good deeds; not because he felt sorry for them, but because he valued and respected them as individuals and as fellow human beings.

Working for Ron has been both a joy and a challenge because he never settled for mediocrity. I will always treasure my friendship with this very special gentleman. He surrounded himself with good people who have a great love for children and who are dedicated to providing the best youth baseball and softball experience as possible.

Over the last 23 years, I've had a front row seat for all of Ron's accomplishments. He did not have a huge ego like some bosses. He always gave credit to and shared his successes with his staff. And, as a woman, I especially appreciated that quality in Ron because he not only treated women as a true equals, but respectfully as he was such a gentleman. He recognized an individual's value, intelligence and professional input regardless of gender. More importantly, he had a tremendous respect for and was most thankful for all the wonderful volunteers who make our program so successful.

A man of many talents – that is Ron Tellefsen. He was without a doubt, the most intelligent, intuitive and caring person I have ever known. Working for him has not exactly been like "New Year's Eve" (on the contrary!). However, it has certainly been an adventure.

Ron, I thank you for your friendship and respect. I thank you for believing in me and for providing me with so many opportunities for personal and professional growth. May our dear God and Father bless you until we meet again.

Written from the heart, with love and respect for a wonderful man - my boss, my mentor, my friend. If your path has crossed with Ron Tellefsen in this lifetime, you are truly among the blessed.

*Rosemary Schoellkopf
Executive Vice President/CFO
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*



Ron Tellefsen with "the twins" Jennifer (left) and Lauren Ann (right). These two granddaughters (his daughter Debbie's children) were known to get Ron in the most hot water and provided endless stories in which they got the best of him. And he loved every minute of it!

He Was Never Too Busy to Give Advice

Both Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball Leagues have undergone a huge loss with the passing of Ron Tellefsen. He surely is irreplaceable and will be expressly missed by all who came into contact with him. I fortunately had an opportunity to be in contact with him on occasion through emails about questions and concerns of Babe Ruth Baseball. He was never too busy to reply and give good advice. I was blessed to be able to draw on his vast experience and knowledge and commitment to the volunteers who give of their selves such as Ron has done. Our condolences to Ron's family and the Babe Ruth League family.

*Jeff Phillips, President
Dinuba Patriots Babe Ruth Baseball
Dinuba, California*

A Very Special Boss, Mentor and Friend

God looked around His garden and found an empty place. He then looked down upon the earth and saw your weary face. He put His arms around you and lifted you to rest. He saw the road was getting rough and the hills were hard to climb. So He closed your weary eyes and whispered, "Peace be thine."

Ron Tellefsen was a very big part of my life. Working for him for the past 26 years never felt like a job to me. He was not only my boss, but a mentor, cherished friend and a man, deep down in my heart, I considered as a second dad. I grew up a daddy's girl, so for me to even have a person in my life I considered a second dad was a genuine tribute in its own.

I began working for Ron in 1978 when I was only 17 years old. It was my first job out of high school. Ron was Commissioner at the time. Since it was my first job, I was quite scared. However, Ron made me feel comfortable and appreciated right from the get-go. He took me under his wing and taught me the ropes – an education above any college degree.

Working for Ron, as he quickly moved from Commissioner to Vice President/Commissioner to President/CEO, not only taught me the ins and outs of the Babe Ruth program, but also about life.

Ron's life lessons were priceless. He was a great man full of character and treated everyone with respect. He truly changed my life, as well as that of everyone who came in contact with him. I could not ask for better role models than my parents and Ron Tellefsen.

Making the right decisions came easily to Ron, and he never broke any promises that he made to people. Being honest, there have been decisions I have made in my life that were not the best. Ron was always supportive. In fact, he helped me see the

error of my ways and assisted me on getting back on the right track. For that I will be forever grateful. Ron Tellefsen always saw the good in people. He had an open door policy in which you could go to him with anything – work-related or personal.

From all Ron's contributions to people from all walks of life, I've learned that doing good things for other people is an admirable trait. It not only makes you feel good, but it also starts a wave of other noble deeds people pass on to each other.

Just like any parent, Ron provided me with a lot of "firsts". As I indicated previously, he helped me ease into my first job (with Babe Ruth, where I still am today) and made every day a unique adventure. He took me on my first airplane ride and my first World Series. With his great gift of gab, I very quickly forgot I was even on a plane. And not knowing what to expect when working at a World Series, Ron made it a fun time. The workload was heavy, but Ron's unusual finesse made the World Series experience second to none.

This was also the first time that I was introduced to members of the Babe Ruth Family outside of the office. They were wonderful people, and I was amazed at the love and admiration they had for Ron. (At future World Series and Babe Ruth events I attended, this became a trend. It seemed that everyone adored Ron!!) Ron was also responsible for my first limousine ride, my first stay in a fancy hotel at the World Series, and my first dinner at a fancy restaurant. (Growing up in a house of five children, the nicest place we ever ate was at a pizzeria.) I even received my first flower arrangement from Ron on Secretary's Day.

When I became engaged to my husband, Ron sat me down to make sure I was making the right decision. Don't get



Then "Commissioner" Ron Tellefsen back in the office, catches up with correspondence dictating to his secretary Theresa Cleary.

me wrong, Ron really liked my husband and was all for me getting married. As usual, he just wanted to make sure it was the right choice for me at that time of my life.

You see when I started working for Babe Ruth League, I had an overprotective boyfriend, who made my life miserable. Ron helped me see that this particular boy was no good for me, especially my self-esteem. Through his guidance and many discussions, I broke it off with this boy. Later, I met my husband-to-be.

I look back now and breathe a sigh of relief. By the way, I am still married to the same man 22 years later. Ron was correct on both counts.

I could go on and on about the many memories I have of Ron and how much it meant to have him in my life. As you can see, my existence would have been so different if it wasn't for Ron. In my eyes and heart, Ron was the sum of every wishy-washy worded Father's Day card. He was just a very vibrant and loving person. I wish I had recorded every word of advice he provided me with over the years so I could

play them back today. I really need to hear his voice as my heart is so empty without him.

I was very happy I had to chance to see Ron in the hospital just before he passed and tell him how much I appreciated and loved him. Remember to let the people who are in your life know how much you love them, because you never know how long you will have them.

Ron, if I had known that it would be the last time I'd see you as I walked out your hospital room, I would have come back after the hug and kiss I gave you and gave you one more.

Memories are precious when they're made with those we love....There was sincerely no greater person than Ron Tellefsen. He was an angel on earth and is now an angel in Heaven.

Dearest Ron, you are always in my memory. In my soul you've been engraved. In my heart you will stay... until we meet again someday.

*Forever with love and admiration,
Theresa Cleary, Executive Secretary
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

Beloved Boss, Mentor, and Friend

We called you Ron. This was not an act of disrespect, but one of *deepest* respect and affection. You were our boss, but so much more. You were a wise mentor, a beloved father figure, a loyal friend. Only Anthony referred to you as Mr. Tellefsen, or "Mr. T." This was because he grew up next door to you from a small child, and the fond title remained.

We remember.....

You loved a good cup of coffee. Grace's was your favorite brew, and Anthony always made sure your favorite breakfast cake accompanied a fresh pot.

Sharon was your in-house meteorologist. She always teased you about closing the office if the weather was nasty.....or too nice! You took it all with great humor.

Jessica was the new kid on the block, you took her under your wing.

At Christmastime, you personally selected generous gifts to us, always taking care to choose something we would enjoy. These were accompanied by hand-written notes from you.

Your wealth of stories kept us laughing.

Your many kind and charitable acts were rendered without fanfare, the good they achieved was reward enough.

Your door was always open — no matter what, no matter when.

Your courage and dignity in the face of illness, your "challenge," was inspiring.

You were one of a kind, unforgettable. We will remember you with love, and with thankfulness that you graced our lives.

*Grace Paglione, Sharon Montervino, Jessica Paul
Service Representatives
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

KS State Commissioner Salutes Great Leader

As State Commissioner for Kansas Babe Ruth Baseball and Cal Ripken Baseball for 15 years, I have known a few players and several volunteer leaders who have died. I know this same situation has happened all

over our great country with other Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken players and volunteers. And with the untimely death of

Ron Tellefsen, heaven now has a truly great president and CEO to guide and support all of these Babe Ruth people who preceded him.

We were indeed blessed to have him as our leader for 25 years. And the many great things he did for the youth and the volunteers associated with Babe Ruth League are amazing. Some of the things Ron did we are all aware of; but I'm sure many of the things he did were behind-the-scenes, dealing with things that "just happened" and we didn't really know why or who was responsible. It was probably Ron Tellefsen.

I had the pleasure and honor of being in the same room with Ron on a few occasions and generally it was for 3-4 hours for meetings. He was a proud man who brought a special level of "class" into the room. It was interesting at regional meetings

or at Headquarters the way he would basically tell volunteers "everything" about our program. It seems I always felt better about our program after listening to him and being in the presence of the outstanding

individual who led Babe Ruth League.

He would do anything for the betterment of the young people in our

program. He would always go out of his way to tell you about the importance of the volunteers in Babe Ruth League. He made me as a volunteer feel appreciated.

Ron Tellefsen was a great man and a great leader for Babe Ruth League. He will indeed be missed. But he did such an outstanding job of surrounding himself with quality people in the Babe Ruth office that I feel we are in great hands as we head into the future.

To Ron's family, we truly appreciate you allowing your husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather to share his talents and leadership abilities with the entire country.

May God bless Ron Tellefsen.

*Gary Kuntz, State Commissioner
Kansas Babe Ruth Leagues
Ottawa, KS*

“ He would do anything for the betterment of the young people in our program. ”



Ron Tellefsen poses with his family at his induction into the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame in 1994. Left to Right are: Steven and Joanne Tellefsen, Joe and Eileen Smiegocki, Ron and Loretta, and Debbie and Rich Small. Ron and Loretta moved their family from Rockland County, New York to New Jersey when Ron accepted a job working for Babe Ruth League, Inc. in 1969. The rest is history.

THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER

As I reflect on the past 15 years with Babe Ruth League, Inc., there are so many great memories, especially of President/CEO Ron Tellefsen, who passed away in March. Through Ron's leadership and guidance, I not only learned a lot about Babe Ruth League, Inc., but also about life in general. I will never forget my first experience with the *Babe Ruth Family*. I traveled to Owensboro, KY to work on the 16-18 World Series task force. I was surrounded by so many sports connoisseurs, like George Pfister from Major League Baseball; Rex Bradley from Louisville Slugger; Gene DaCosse from Wilson; our illustrious Kentucky State Commissioner, the late Donald "Quack" Butler and Ron, that I felt like a fish out of water. However, after being in their company for a while and hearing them tell story after story, I knew I had made the right decision to join the #1 youth program in the world. From that first experience, Ron taught me well. He instilled in me three important items to remember in my job as Vice President/Marketing & Operations when meeting with potential sponsors:

- When considering the program being offered by the sponsors, the local leagues must be first and foremost in our mind. The program should be special and unique so that our membership can take advantage and benefit from the deal.

- It is important that we earn the respect of our corporate sponsors and business relationships. Every deal we undertake must be done in a first-class manner and give the sponsor integrity. With the end result being, providing valuable resources to further promote their product at baseball and softball's "grass roots" level. Ron always told me that the success of the sponsor should be paramount in our minds and actions. We must give them the best opportunity to succeed; and if we hit a bump in the road, we would do whatever possible to help them prosper.

- Make sure Babe Ruth Headquarters was rewarded for the hard work and dedication they put forth in making the program a huge success.

I could go on and on talking about my experiences while traveling with Ron. I would just like to highlight a few special recollections:

- I fondly remember our trips to Anaconda Sports. We would leave very early in the morning, meet with Anaconda Sports, and end up in Cooperstown before returning home late that evening. And breakfast and lunch always had to be somewhere in Ron's hometown, Rockland County.

- Ron and I were trying to negotiate a deal with Hershey. During one of our annual Christmas Dinners at Diamond's Restaurant, he cut the party short to make sure we were able to meet with Hershey to come up with a program that would prove beneficial to all parties. The rest is history...as Hershey is one of Babe Ruth League's top partners.

- Traveling to K&K Insurance for my first time with Ron and Rosemary, we flew from Pittsburgh to Fort Wayne (where K&K is located) on one of those small jets. I can still feel myself jumping out of the seat and remember the look on my face when we were finally on the ground. Ron traveled so much that this didn't affect him at all. Another notable time is when Ron, Rosemary and I met with Rawlings. Mike Thompson, Vice President of Rawlings, was driving us to the ballpark to have dinner with the other Rawlings people. Mike's quick avoidance of a woman in the car in front of him left me and Rosemary speechless. Again, this did not faze our worldly traveler Ron.

- My most memorable trip with Ron was to Fort Lauderdale, Florida to meet with Cal Ripken, Jr. and his brother Bill. The trip started off very uneventful as we stopped at 7-11 to get the New York paper and a cup of coffee. Ron quickly opened the paper and turned to the page that listed the chart for the Gulfstream Racetrack. He took me to the Gulfstream that day so we could relax before our meeting with Cal and Bill. Ron told me to bet on Rosemary's Hosmeister in the first and second race. This great tip would have earned me \$62 for the first race and \$56 for the second race. Unfortunately, I did not take his advice and I did not cash a winning ticket the entire day. As usual, Ron said he didn't even place a nickel on this horse. We were nice and relaxed after our stint at the Gulfstream and everything seemed to be going normal. However, on the way to meet with Cal and Bill, we got stuck in traffic, with very little battery life left on our cell phones. Ron always told me and all of the Babe Ruth staff that it is important that we show up on time for all scheduled meetings. Ron reminded me of this little fact that day and said that if Cal and Bill were gone when we arrived that I would be gone after we had dinner together. (Of course he was kidding, but in everything he did, he was an excellent mentor and teacher.)

Remembering a True Competitor

At the time I became a Regional Commissioner, Ron would let the new Board members play with him on his golf team at their first Board meeting. This was done so he could make them feel more at ease at the famous golf outings. Several of the Board members, Larry Majers, Floyd Markham, and others, had taken me out the day before the golf tournament started. At that time they found out what kind of golfer I really was, which was at best, average. They "fixed" the golf score card so that it showed I had shot a pretty good round. Then they secretly showed Ron how good I had done that day, without my knowledge.

Therefore, the next day at the golf game everyone was getting their bets together and bragging about their team. At this time I did not realize how serious this was going to be! The golf tournament that is! On the first hole Ron asked me to hit first. I felt a little uncomfortable but I took a huge swing and knocked the ball approximately 250 to 275 yards right down the middle. On the next shot Ron chili-dipped his ball and I got up and hit another perfect ball within 2 feet of the hole. By now Ron is all smiles as he feels like we're going to have an outstanding day and win lots of holes. *(for those of you who may be wondering...the highest bet was \$1 per hole - just to make it humiliating to have to pay out at the end...all part of the fun).*

So here's Ron - he's patting me on the back and saying, "we've got them where we want them". At the next shot, Ron makes the putt and we have a birdie. We smugly drove to the next hole and everyone surrounded us and Ron started adding on more and bigger bets! Ron truly thought that he had a ringer at this point and a "cinched" deal. By now the other Board members didn't know if I was putting them on or putting Ron on!

Sadly to say, as the day went on, Ron and I won very few holes. We both lost a little money and did not place very high in the golf tournament. That night at our Board dinner, Ron introduced me as a new Board member and that I would be the shortest term Board member because of my play that day at our golf tournament.

Even though Ron was very highly competitive, he loved to see other people win, especially those who normally didn't win. Ron was a very gifted and talented person in many ways. He could carry on a conversation with the grounds keeper or the President of any corporation. He was an accomplished public speaker, as he could speak to 5 people or 1500 people quite well in any environment.

It was fun to travel with Ron because he enjoyed people and at times it would seem like he would get ambushed at a World Series tournament by TV stations or Sports writers. Actually he was at his best during these times while talking about our great Babe Ruth program.

In closing, I would like to say that Ron was a true friend and was always there for you whether it was good times or bad times. He had personal feelings for everyone he dealt with. Ron was a tremendous mentor and I cherish his friendship.

*James Wagoner, Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Fort Smith, AR*

Ron's voice is silent, but his spirit echoes still . . .

Respect for the rules and for doing "the right thing"
Offering the opportunity for children to play baseball or softball
Nourishing the volunteer spirit
Always positive and fair
Leader of the Babe Ruth family
Dedicated to the success of youth, in sports and in life

Team-oriented
Enthusiastic about community
Lasting memories of Host Families
Loyal and patriotic
Excited about the future of Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Faithful to the mission statement
Sportsmanlike conduct always stressed
Eager to spend time with children
Never to be forgotten friend

*by Dessa Nielsen
Vincennes, Indiana*

- No matter where we traveled, there was always a racetrack or casino in the area. You see, Ron liked to place a little bet from time to time and spend a few hours relaxing over a fresh cup of coffee.

In closing, I cannot say enough about the effort and commitment Ron made to me to help me grow both personally and professionally. Ron exemplified the spirit of humanity. He accomplished the impossible, but humbly remained in the background. Even though I consider him to be one of the best teachers in my life, he was a life-long learner; intelligent beyond his peers. Ron was dedicated beyond the call. He touched the lives of millions. There will never be another like RONALD TELLEFSEN.

*Joseph Smiegocki
Vice President/Marketing & Operations
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

“The Man in the Background Supporting Our Kids”

My name is Bob Freund and I have been involved in many facets of youth baseball including playing, coaching, serving as League President, Assistant District Commissioner, etc. for over 25 years.

Babe Ruth has been a wonderful organization during those years to be affiliated with and I have many exciting and cherished memories which continue.

My wife Ann and I have been blessed with two wonderful children that have each had to struggle with different learning disabilities. My son Bobby has just completed his Babe Ruth playing career after 10 years of enjoying the game. My daughter, Jennifer, has been fortunate enough to be able to play in a Babe Ruth Bambino Buddy-Ball League in East Brunswick, NJ. It is a struggle but the program has really helped her to feel socially accepted and active.

Being involved with Babe Ruth Baseball for so many years, I had often heard of Mr. Tellefsen and his many accomplishments. I had seen him appear at many Babe Ruth coaches clinics over the years but had never had the pleasure of meeting him.

That is until September 22, 2002. You

see that was a very special day in our household because on that date, barely more than one year after the horrible tragedy of 9/11, our family was invited along with the other families of Jennifer's Buddy Ball team to go to the White House for the “Tee-ball on the South Lawn” game President Bush hosted.

I could almost write a novel about the myriad cherished memories our family has from that day. We have dozens of pictures and mementos of which a selected few have been arranged for display in a very prominent place in our home.

One of those pictures on display is a picture of Jennifer running to first base after hitting the ball and clearly in the background you can see a gentleman standing by the fence enthusiastically applauding her effort. That gentleman was, of course, Ron Tellefsen.

The moment described above embodies what I think about when I remember Ron Tellefsen. You see, he was always in the background supporting all of us in the Babe Ruth organization. He clearly set the tone and philosophy of support and caring throughout the offices of Babe Ruth which permeated through the ranks right down to the Districts and Leagues themselves.

That philosophy, of which I have been a beneficiary, has always served the organization well. During Ron's tenure, Cal Ripken Jr. has joined the organization to help spread the joys of the game we all so dearly love.

During Ron's tenure, Buddy-Ball became a part of the organization which afforded my daughter an opportunity to enjoy the game and grow socially.

During Ron's tenure I have been blessed to be associated with many people who have helped to guide me during my years in the organization who believe down to the very core of their existence in the mission of Babe Ruth League that Ron Tellefsen preached.

On that day in September of 2002, I met several wonderful people whose presence commanded respect for their accomplishments and position in baseball and politics.

I met Harold Reynolds, former All-Star second baseman and current ESPN analyst who narrated the event. I met current major leaguers Geoff Jenkins, David Segui, and Brady Anderson, each of whom I had great respect for their achievements in the game. I met future superstar pitcher Mark Prior who coached first base for my daughter's team. I met Cal

Ripken, Jr. who might have been the most beloved figure in all of baseball at that time.

I met President George W. Bush and his gracious wife, Laura, who seemed to genuinely enjoy the event as much as we did.

It could be argued that the President is the most powerful and influential man in the world at that time and the present. This significance was not lost on me. However, there was another man I met that day that made as much an impression on me as any one of the people previously mentioned. This is because I could recognize that he had a much more direct impact on my life.

You see, if it wasn't for this man, I may not have had the opportunity, faith, perseverance, and inspiration to continue in the organization for so long. Without this man I most certainly would not have found myself and my family at the White House on September 22nd, 2002.

And therefore, when I think back to that day and all of the people I met, perhaps the moment that sticks out to me most is that this was also the day that I finally met Ron Tellefsen ... the man in the background supporting our kids.

Bob Freund

*Asst. District 1 Commissioner
Southern NJ Babe Ruth Leagues*

Community Mourns Loss of a Dear Friend

On Saturday, March 5, 2005, at St. Francis Hospital in Trenton, New Jersey, the community of Vincennes, Indiana lost a dear friend, Mr. Ron Tellefsen.

Mr. Tellefsen, as President and CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc., visited our community ten times in the last ten years. Ron, as many of us knew him, always brought a positive, uplifting attitude to our meetings; whether the meeting involved Indiana's governors, our mayors, or any of the hundreds of local volunteers that were associated with Vincennes Cub League.

We will always remember our conversation with Ron as he departed the 1998 Bambino World Series (our first). Ron simply stated that our community had proven to him our capabilities and that he would definitely recommend returning to Vincennes with future World Series.

Little did we know at the time that the community of Vincennes would host **two** World Series in 2001, including the first 10-Year-Old World Series **AND** the 12-Year-Old Cal Ripken World Series with five international teams and a live Fox Sports telecast.

Ron took a huge, unprecedented risk by showing that level of confidence in one community...ours.

Ron was very proud of the August 26, 2001 championship game as the citizens of Vincennes came out to pack Bilskie Field and provided a great show on Fox. Ironically, he was also proud of our efforts to raise over \$3,000 that day for our local Relay for Life, as cancer is what took Ron's life.

Ron enjoyed his visits to our ballpark during regular season play. He presented trophies to all of our T-ball players one night...he loved it! He enjoyed our town. Ron was very proud of his Sagamore of the Wabash Award given to him by Governor Kernan this past summer at the 10-Year-Old Cal Ripken World Series which was his last visit to Vincennes.

Ron's list of accomplishments as President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. over the past 25 years are unbelievable and too lengthy to list in this editorial. Ron was a humanitarian with a vision.

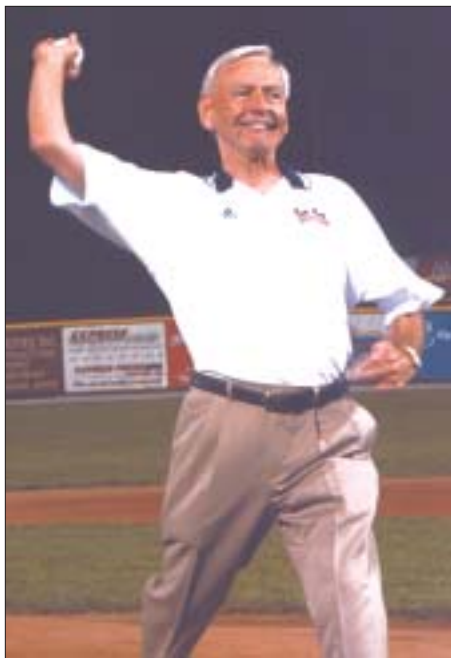
His record for personal integrity and commitment to our nation's youth is

unsurpassed. His untiring efforts as an enthusiast for youth and youth activities have significantly changed the lives for the better of millions of children worldwide, including our own two sons.

Prior to his becoming President/CEO in 1980, the Babe Ruth program registered 325,000 players. Today the program boasts a membership of approximately one million young men and women in North America.

Ron's compassionate leadership will be missed by the worldwide baseball and softball community. His example stands as a high bar for all of us to achieve. No community will miss Ron's friendship more than ours.

*Kirk and Becky Bouchie
Vincennes, IN*



Nice Pitch! Throwing out the first pitch at the 2004 Cal Ripken 10-Year-Old World Series in Vincennes, IN - Ron always made it a point to visit each of the nine World Series.



Cherished Moment - A little T-ball player with the Vincennes Cub Cal Ripken League in Indiana receives her trophy from the President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. Ron totally enjoyed giving trophies to all the league players while in town for a visit with World Series Host President Kirk Bouchie.



Ron Tellefsen and BRL, Inc. Vice President/Planning and Development are pleased to have conducted a press conference in which the local community was awarded a contract for hosting a Babe Ruth World Series. Ron always maintained a strong alliance with communities hosting a World Series to help ensure their success.

MANY LAYERS OF GREATNESS

I often referred to Ron as an “onion”. For the longest time, I wouldn’t tell him why because I didn’t want him to have that advantage over me. After a great deal of pressure – the kind only Ron could apply – I finally caved.

“An onion looks familiar on the outside and you may think you know it. But then you begin to peel. You come to layer after layer after layer. Each time you think you are finished, you find yet another layer. It seems simple, sleek, and straightforward on the outside, but is very complex under that first layer of outer skin, all the way to the center.”

My first encounter with Ron was in August over ten years ago. It was under rather touchy circumstances. Then manager of Special Pricing for Babe Ruth League’s official airline, US Airways, I was informed by a supervisor on my staff that Executive Vice President/CFO Rosemary Schoellkopf was requesting a \$230 price reduction on 36 seats to a World Series site. She asked us to match a last minute fare on one of our competitors, but we’d been holding the seats for Babe Ruth for many months.

The supervisor said if we didn’t lower the fare, Babe Ruth would most likely cancel their reservation. The departure date was only seven days away, so it would have been difficult to resell 36 seats in such a short time. US Airways would have viewed that cancellation, and Babe Ruth League, in a very negative light.

I was forewarned by the supervisor to expect a call from BRL President/CEO, Ron Tellefsen. I had never spoken with him before. She said he would be trying to put additional pressure on the issue. That didn’t set real well with me either.

Normally we had some insurance against cancellations because we charged deposits that were due at the time the reservation was booked. But in this case, we had allowed Babe Ruth League to be exempt from those deposits, so they would have had no penalty at all if they had cancelled, and US Airways would have absorbed the total loss.

I must mention one other fact. This occurred during a very challenging time period for USAir. There had been five accidents involving the airline in five years that had sent the national press, including the New York Times, into a feeding frenzy. Never mind that the airline had absolutely no control over three of the accidents; they were brought about by outside forces. The remaining two were with carriers that USAir did not own at the time of their accidents, but were subsequently purchased.

Company morale was at rock bottom as we employees truly cared about our passengers. We were grieving too.

It became common during that distressful period for group negotiators to threaten cancellation unless their fares were lowered. The line was that the groups were frightened to travel on us, but a \$25 or \$50 reduction in fare would make them feel much safer.

Having never dealt with Ron before, I was expecting more of the same. I was prepared for battle. Little did I know...

I did get that call from Ron, and frankly, I was a bit cool to him at first. He described the situation between Rosemary and the supervisor and I told him in a flat voice I had already been made aware. Never one to back away from a challenge, Ron completely threw me off balance from that point forward.

He said something that no one, NO ONE, had ever said to me before within the realm of Special Pricing. He said, “If you could just perhaps look at the flights and the fares to see if there is anything you can do I would greatly appreciate it.” Fairly normal conversation so far, because everyone requesting a fare reduction was pleasant until we had to say no.

But, then Ron said, “If you find you can’t do anything, we completely understand. We will not cancel the seats and we will pay the price we originally agreed to. That is because we are partners. We are a team through good times and bad times; all the ups and downs, when you say ‘yes’ and when you say ‘no’. We aren’t going to desert you.”

I was speechless (and that *doesn’t happen often*). *I promised to do the analysis myself and get back with him, and we worked things out. As always, Rosemary was right on target.*

Ron’s handling of the negotiation was surprise enough, but Ron was Ron, and he didn’t stop there. That December, after the annual Board of Directors meeting, I received a press release from Ron. The release stated that the Board had once again named USAir its official airline, due to its excellent safety record.

The airline *was* very safe, despite what the press had attempted to imply. I personally continued to fly on USAir, and I allowed my children to fly unaccompanied. I would never have done the latter if I wasn’t sure about their safety. But there were few people outside the company supporting its safety program. They preferred to believe the sensational press headlines without reading all the details. Ron Tellefsen was never one to “follow the crowd”. He cut his own path.

I sent his press release to our Senior Vice President of Communications. She was very excited and asked how to contact Ron. A full-length article about how Babe Ruth had gone to bat for USAir was a lead story in the next employee newspaper. Babe Ruth was instantly loved throughout our corporation. Only Ron would think to initiate such an action that helped re-motivate 40,000 employees and return their corporate pride.

Indeed, Ron believed in partnerships – all the way. It was the integrity and sincerity of both Ron and Rosemary that drew me to Babe Ruth League. When I announced I was leaving US Airways for Babe Ruth League, Inc., people were shocked. Some asked me if I didn’t think it was an incredibly risky move. I knew it was no risk because I knew exactly who I was dealing with. I knew Ron would always do the right thing.

That was the essence of Ron. He always looked to protect. He was fair. He was creative. He had a brilliant mind. He routinely requested input from his Board, his staff, many of his business partners, and volunteers before making major decisions, and often before making lesser decisions. He did this in his great wisdom as he wanted to make the best decisions possible for Babe Ruth League, Inc., considering as many different viewpoints as he could collect.

In return, I cannot count the number of times I have heard people, especially our sponsors, relate how much they learned from Ron about how to conduct business, and about life in general.

His staff felt very comfortable stating their individual views, even if it meant disagreeing with him. Often he played the “devil’s advocate” at the outset of a question just to see if we would automatically agree with him, or give him our honest opinion. He never wanted to be surrounded with “yes people”.

He demanded honesty as he was honest. He was quick to share credit for the company’s successes, while taking full responsibility for anything that didn’t work out as planned even if it was someone else’s fault.

His energy exceeded that of those 45 years his junior. We simply couldn’t keep up with him. He thrived on the job.

His favorite times were spent in the field with our volunteers and players – softball and baseball. He held every volunteer in the very highest regard and demanded the same from his staff. Whether a person was mentally challenged, held a doctorate degree, or was a corporate CEO, Ron held them with equal esteem.

I never knew a person who got as excited as Ron any time he had a chance to give; especially to a child.

All one needed was to see was that mischievous grin, those twinkling but intelligent eyes, or hear that hardy, contagious laugh, to know they were in the presence of a truly special man who genuinely loved being with people and embraced life. I don’t know how his body was able to hold that enormous heart of his.

Every member of his staff had a very special love for Ron. We would have followed him anywhere and done anything for him – no matter what it took. But we were powerless over the awful disease that took him from us way too early.

Heartbroken but determined, we will continue to carry forth his ideals and his love for Babe Ruth League. It is the best tribute we can give him.

I cannot agree more with Cheryl Pettibone of K&K Insurance who said at Ron’s services, “It feels like there is a hole in the world.”

*Debra Horn
Vice President/Planning & Development
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*



Ron surrounded by a team of softball players who wanted an autographed softball from the President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. You can be assured he knew all their names and positions before he finished signing that ball!

He always was, and is, Babe Ruth League

It is truly with great sorrow that I learned that Ron Tellefsen passed away. He always was, and is, Babe Ruth League.

I had the pleasure of meeting Ron, Steven, and the entire staff when I was the 2001 national prize winner in the US Airways trivia contest. What a tremendous experience that was, due to the manner in which the entire Babe Ruth community handled the World Series in Gulfport, Mississippi that week.

As Vice-President of the Greater Pawtucket Umpires Association, I'll always keep the September 2001 issue of the BULLPEN with my important baseball documents.

Without a doubt, this was a saddening loss. We are all going to miss Ron. In his memory I say, "Let's play ball!"

*Walt Kiley, Vice President
Greater Pawtucket, RI Umpires Assoc.*

An Engaging Conversation With Ron

One of my memories of Ron was when Steven, Spike Hupka and I were working the 16 Year Old World Series in Russellville, Arkansas some years back.

It was late one night, Ron, Steven, Spike, I and several more were sitting around the pool enjoying the weather and Ron was smoking one of his cigars. Around midnight, Ron told me that he wanted me to drive him to the airport the next morning. Before he told me the time of his departure, I said "yes". He then informed me that he had a 6:10 a.m. flight out of Little Rock Airport. I had never been to Arkansas much less the airport until I went there for the World Series.

Ron finally got around to telling me that we would have to leave by 3:30 a.m. to make his flight. I went to my room, made a pot of coffee, drank that one and made another one. I would not go to sleep because I knew if I was late that I would never hear the end of it. I met him downstairs as he was checking out. 3:30 a.m. – I asked the lady at the front desk if she knew how to get the Little Rock Airport. She came me some directions and away we went.

All the way to the airport (over 100 miles) Ron told me about his vision for the Babe Ruth program, along with telling me some things that I probably should not have heard. But that was Ron. We ended up making a wrong turn – went into Little Rock and finally we made it to the airport in time for him to check in.

As I was leaving the airport, I begin to think about all the things Ron had talked to me about and not paying a whole lot of attention to where I was going. The conversation was heavy and Ron had asked me some questions. All the time I was driving back, I was thinking about our conversation.

After awhile I finally saw a sign that said "Memphis 26 miles". Suddenly I realized that I was going the wrong direction. I stopped at a McDonalds for coffee and headed back to Little Rock and then on to Russellville. About half way back to Little Rock, Steven (Tellefsen) called me on my cell phone wanting to know where I was. I could not tell him at that time that I had made the wrong turn.

When I got back to Russellville I told Steven about the conversation that Ron and I had and that I had my mind on thinking about it and did not pay attention to where I was going. Of course, he got a big laugh out of it. Ron had so much heart and so much wisdom to impart and he had a unique way of getting you to think so whenever he started talking, I always would pay attention....and which is why I ended up driving over 200 miles out of the way.

*Henry Sermons, Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
New Bern, NC*

A Message Sent to New Hampshire Babe Ruth Leagues

Most of you never had a chance to meet Ron. I was fortunate enough to have met with Ron several times and had countless conversations and correspondences with him dating back into the early 80's. I consider it a privilege and honor to have been able to meet and work with Ron. He is the role model that we should all aspire to.

Generally, never at a loss for words, I was nevertheless struggling with trying to create a meaningful message that would reflect the dedication, honor, and charm that was so much a part of Ron's being. The tribute sent out by the staff at Babe Ruth Headquarters in Trenton says it best. I hope you will take a few moments to read it.

Babe Ruth League, Inc. will certainly continue in its fine tradition. However, we will all miss a truly remarkable man that was the heart and soul of the organization we love.

*Russ Monbleau, Recruiter
New Hampshire Babe Ruth Leagues
Milford, NH*



Forging an agreement between Babe Ruth League and Anaconda Sports are (L-R) BRL Commissioner Robert Faherty, BRL President/CEO Ron Tellefsen, Anaconda Partner John Stote, III, and BRL ExecVP/CFO Rosary Schoellkopf back in 1993.

The Man I Call Coach

I never could get used to calling Ron Tellefsen, Ron. To me, he was special – I idolized him from the day I met him. When I would call him Mr. Tellefsen, he would say to me "Who do you think I am? Your father? Call me Ron." After getting to know him better and listening to his thoughts and theories, he became my life coach. So...I started calling him Coach. He seemed to like that. I would hear from him at least once a week while working late in my office (obviously he was working too)...and when I would answer my phone, the voice would say "good to see you are still at work working hard for Babe Ruth." Then he would call on Saturdays as well – saying the same thing. It got to the point I would just answer the phone "Hi Coach! How are you doing?" Then we would both laugh. I truly admired his work ethic and tried to emulate him in my day to day activities. He was the hardest working individual I have ever known.

My favorite story of Coach was in Fort Lauderdale, Florida a few years back at the dog track. After a long Board of Directors Meeting, this was our favorite way to relax...yeah right. Most of the moments were spent on how Anaconda would best be able to benefit his leagues!!! The man never stopped working!!! Anyway, Ron, Lou Valentic, and I would often work as a team at the dog track. So we're studying the sheet one day, and all of a sudden we look at each other and started cracking up – there is a dog running with the name "Ron-John"! Well I don't have to tell you that we all bet it – you can already guess that it was not the favorite in the race. But...like everything you do with Ron, it turned out that Ron-John was the winner. The three of us really enjoyed ourselves that day and best of all Ron didn't talk business for at least an hour. He was too busy teasing Bill Smith, Rosemary, Robert, Joe and all his other Babe Ruth Family about his winnings. The moral of the story about the dog track is that when your name was associated with his, something good always came out of it!

Everyone around him became winners – look at his family, the Board of Directors and all who worked for him and with him. You would be hard pressed not to find a winner in these groups. At Babe Ruth Headquarters, I made a statement to Steven, Robert, Joe and Rosemary right before he passed away – "He made everyone feel like his best friend"; and you know what? He meant it!"

I am a little mad at him and I want him to know it – I hope he is reading this (we all know he is). I am really mad that he left me with a big hole in my heart and a huge void in my life. I really, really, really miss him...but how lucky for me I got to have him in my life...as a business partner, a role model, but most of all, as a "best friend".

*John Stote, III
Anaconda Sports*

PS: To this day, my day at the dog track is the most I have ever won. Thank you "Ron-John" and thank you too Coach.....



Ron Tellefsen always made time and enjoyed conversing with the Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken players. Spending time with the players made his day.



Cal Ripken, Jr. became a fast friend of both Tellefsen men - Steven (left) and Ron (right). Shown here at the annual Board of Directors Meeting in 2002.

WE SHARED THE SAME HOPES AND DREAMS

My early dealings with Ron focused on building a partnership for the betterment of youth baseball. From the moment I first met him it was easy to see how passionate he was about the game of baseball and about having a positive impact on as many kids as possible. I knew right from the start that Ron, my dad and I shared the same hopes and dreams. Still, for him to come up with the idea of naming an entire youth league after me – based on his relationship with Dad — was an overwhelming honor that I never thought possible. What I didn't know when I first met Ron was that our business partnership would evolve into a wonderful friendship that I would come to value tremendously.

Any time you try to forge a business relationship there are ups and downs and bumps in the road. All you ask for out of your partner is to come to the table with integrity and an open mind. I learned very early on that Ron was a man of high integrity. Whenever I had a question or issue I could count on Ron, the man in charge of a league with more than a million players and volunteers, to return my call within minutes. If I was really concerned about something, Ron and his staff would volunteer to travel all the way to Baltimore to talk things over in person. Believe me, Ron made the trip to Baltimore a lot more often than I made the trip to Trenton – and he never complained about it.

It was during those face-to-face meetings that I began to realize what a good person Ron was. He always greeted me with a big smile and a firm handshake. He always looked me in the eye. He always spoke passionately about the kids, the volunteers and the game of baseball. You couldn't help but walk away from a meeting with Ron feeling better about yourself, the partnership and the future of youth baseball.

I'm not sure whether Ron expected me to be as involved with the Cal Ripken Division when we first began our partnership as I have been. It may have come as a surprise to him that I wanted to have so much input. Regardless, he always welcomed my ideas and opinions, explained fully and passionately why certain things could or couldn't be done and worked diligently to implement the strategies that he could. He also allowed the Cal Ripken World Series to permanently move to our academy in our hometown and has supported the event's continued growth. I am extremely grateful to him for his patience, understanding and support for my ideas. We will always strive to make the CRWS an event that Ron can look down on with tremendous pride. We owe that to him.

Some people will tell you not to mix business and friendship. With a guy like Ron that was impossible. Ron was one of the warmest, most genuine people I have been around. I know that he thought the world of Dad, and I know he had a great relationship with Billy. We spent a lot of time socializing at lunches and dinners after business meetings, at the Babe Ruth Board of Directors meetings and during the CRWS, and Ron always made me feel like he truly cared about me as a person. He was interested in how my family was doing as well as how my various business ventures were progressing. He was the type of person you wanted to spend time with. He was the type of person who always made you feel comfortable and at ease. I considered him a good friend.

Ron will be sorely missed – not only by me, but by our entire Ripken Baseball staff. He always treated everyone here the same way he treated Billy and me, which I know really made our employees feel special. That's the type of person he was. In his absence, I am confident that we will continue to build upon all that he accomplished. Over the years Steven Tellefsen has been instrumental in helping grow our partnership, and after getting to know him I am sure that the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree.

Thanks Ron. I miss you. We all miss you. You taught me a lot about youth baseball, and I hope to continue making your dreams come true.

Cal Ripken, Jr.

Fond Memories of “The Big Cheese”

At the time that we formed our partnership with the Babe Ruth League, I had gotten to know Ron a little bit because of my dad's efforts on behalf of Babe Ruth Baseball and through various business meetings about developing the partnership. But I don't think that Ron really knew what to expect from me, and I was curious as to how the Babe Ruth League President and CEO would respond to my personality.

For those of you who don't know me, I like to have fun. I like to be loud, I like to poke fun at people and I like to bring a little humor to most situations. So, the first time I speak to a group I always wonder how my speech will go over. At my first World Series banquet I gave my, “If you practice like a moron, you're going to play like a moron” speech, which really was a funny way of communicating my dad's old expression: “Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.”

My speech that day got some laughs and seemed to go pretty well. But as a speaker you're never really sure. I was especially curious about what Ron thought. Well, I would find out soon enough as Ron would begin requesting my presence more and more. From that point on, he and I built a special relationship that I will always think about fondly. Ron appreciated me for what I had to offer. His feelings about me had nothing to do with my last name or who my brother was. He appreciated me for me. That's something I will always remember. Over the next six years, “The Big Cheese,” as I would call Ron, requested my presence at clinics and World Series all over the country. It was on those trips that I got to spend a lot of one-on-one time with Ron, and began to realize what a good man – and what a good friend – he was.

When you are traveling to small, out-of-the-way towns around the country by yourself, it's always a good feeling to see a warm, smiling face. I could count on that every time Ron greeted me at a World Series or in an airport. He always made sure I had a ride and provided me with anything that I needed to make my trip more relaxing and enjoyable. Every time I ever saw him he had a big smile on his face. He always looked me right in the eye and gave me a firm handshake – sometimes even accompanied by a big bear hug (those who know me understand that I am not a big hugger). I will always remember that smile and how comfortable Ron made me feel.

I spent hours on the road talking youth baseball with Ron. It was clear early on that we shared a passion for growing the game and making the game better for kids everywhere. It takes a very special person to dedicate his life to a cause – to something that can improve the quality of life for other people no matter how much time or effort is required.

Ron dedicated his life to kids. Right up until the very end he worked countless hours and traveled to remote locations in hopes of providing kids with something that would make their lives more memorable and enjoyable. His life was dedicated to making other people's lives better.

Knowing Ron certainly made my life better, and I know that hundreds of thousands of kids and adults around the world can say the same thing. He already is missed tremendously, but honestly, I probably won't realize how much I miss him until my next World Series.

It will be different for sure, but I know I will still be treated the same way because of Ron's strong leadership and influence on the entire Babe Ruth League.

Bill Ripken

P.S. Steven, I'm looking forward to building the same relationship with you that I had with your dad.



Ron and Billy Ripken enjoyed traveling to World Series sites where Billy was often a featured guest speaker. They had a great deal of mutual respect for one another.

His Vision Made Great Things Possible

I first met Ron in 2000 at the inaugural Cal Ripken World Series in Mattoon, IL. The thing that struck me from the start was the way that everyone associated with Babe Ruth League looked to him for guidance and with great respect. As I came to know him more personally I understood that he was not only insightful and wise but kind and generous with his time. He seemed so happy at the World Series and you could tell that his love of the game was deep. His passion was also infectious and spread through all of us working around him.

As we continue to work with everyone at Babe Ruth League to grow the game and enhance the Cal Ripken World Series we will all miss Ron and the events will be lacking without his presence. However, his influence will always be felt and it is my hope that this year and beyond he looks down at the World Series with great pride and knowing that without his vision it would never have been possible.

*Lindsay Thomas
Ripken Baseball, Inc.*

Thank You for the Wonderful Memories

There are things that will always conjure up fond memories of Ron, he enjoyed a good joke (especially when he was doing the joking), a good FRESH cup of coffee (and could get almost anyone to make one for him), a good cigar (with good friends), a cold BUD, or a JD with a twist, a little side bet on this weeks games, and, of course, his family.

He would often walk by my office door and then step back to fill me in on the weekend soccer or baseball schedule. His face would beam as he told of the contributions that his grandchildren had made to the success of their teams. He made it evident that family was the most important priority and not just his own.

Ron was always supportive of his staff and their family commitments, I experienced this personally when my first grandson Tyler was born requiring open heart surgery when he was just 13 days old and then later when my Mom, who lives in Florida required emergency open bypass surgery. I knew what I needed to do and he made sure that I knew that *whatever* I needed that he and the Babe Ruth family would be there. He made it comforting at a very stressful time.

One of my fondest memories of Ron was my first Board Meeting. Part of my responsibilities at Babe Ruth is working with the Regional Commissioners on their finances; the Board Meeting is the perfect place for me to meet and discuss the regional finances. So, off to Florida I would go.

Well back in the day when the "Golf" ruled the conversation at the Board Meeting, I was greeted in the hotel lobby by the Chairman of the Board. After making our introductions to a whole lot of people he made the statement that I was to be on his team come tournament time and that Ron had told him not to fret as I "hit the ball like a man". Although flattered, I was a bit scared that I would not measure up. During the days that followed, I was amazed at the number and intensity of the "trades" that were made. Well, tournament day finally arrived and I was still on the Chairman's team and by now rattling in my shoes. Thankfully, the golf gods shone on me that day and I did not embarrass myself.

I teed off on the first whole while the crowd watched; (whew) the worst was over. My foursome set out for a day of fun, golf, and refreshments, not necessarily in that order. At the end of the day, we had accomplished it all. We found out we topped the list for refreshment consumption; we were tied at the top of the leader board and we certainly had a lot of fun. We were summoned for one player "sudden death" tee-off. As you might have guessed Ron's team was also tied for the lead. Well, even though there were 3 board members on my team, I knew that I needed to be the one to tee off.

So there I stood on the "red tees" (my little bit of an edge) and I did in fact give it my best shot, only to be CRUSHED (thankfully).

Whew, Ron's team came in first AND my job was safe for another day!!

Thanks, Ron, for the wonderful memories!!

*Donna Mahoney, Executive Administrator
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

We Carry On Through His Vision

I had a profound sense of loss at hearing the news of Ron's death. I had known him for more than thirty years and can honestly tell you that he was one of the main reasons I have stayed involved with Babe Ruth for so many years.

He was great man, honest and caring, who kept young people as his focus in his capacity as President and CEO. I have tried my best (though not always successfully) to emulate his philosophies and principles in my capacity as Idaho State Commissioner. He always treated everyone with respect and dignity, even when their opinions differed from his beliefs. It has been a privilege to have known and worked with him.

I have frequently wondered to myself how we'll carry on without Ron, but then I remind myself that through his vision and leadership, we are all equipped to move forward in the pursuit of providing the best youth baseball and softball program possible for our young people.

He will never be forgotten.

*Jerry Bodden, State Commissioner
Idaho Babe Ruth Leagues
Lewiston, ID*

"Umpsy" Will Be Missed

I am sure "Umpsy" will be missed by all. As one of his long time friends from School Days I share in your loss. Our lives touched in many ways. Same High School, teammates on the Baseball Team, friendly card games over the years, and we shared a special bond because we had the same birthday, April 7th. *I will celebrate as usual this April, however, I know it will not be quite the same.*

"Umpsy" was a special guy.

When I decided to join the Rockland County Umpires Association, as President Ron told me flat out that there would not be any special favors because I was a friend. He had me come to his home two or three nights a week to prep me on the rules. Of course with his help I passed the test and enjoyed working games under his tenure as President.

I know that Ron really loved the game of Baseball and helping kids. Under his guidance and a very dedicated staff, Babe Ruth Baseball flourished. I know that you will carry on in his name and continue his legacy. I sincerely wish you well in your work at Babe Ruth Headquarters. If I can ever be of any help, remember that you have a friend in Arizona.

*"Big Al" Ryan
Phoenix, AZ*



Conducting another successful Coaches and Umpires Clinic at Princeton University are (left) MLB Player Al Oliver, Ron Tellefsen, former Cincinnati Red great George Foster, BRL, Inc. Commissioner Robert Faherty and retired Princeton University Head Baseball Coach, and Babe Ruth National Baseball Camp Director, Tom O'Connell.

HE TURNED MANY A LOSS INTO A WIN

In baseball, as in every sport, you learn very quickly how to deal with a loss. You learn it's a part of the game. You learn it's a part of life.

When kids first learn how to play baseball, they lose more than they win. They strike out more than they connect. They drop the ball more than they catch it. They throw more balls than strikes. When they actually cross home plate, they feel like they've won, even if their team loses. Sometimes parents aren't sure why their kids come back. But Ronald Tellefsen knew why. That's one of the reasons he became the President of Babe Ruth League. Don't get me wrong, Ron Tellefsen wasn't a fan of losing. He just never forgot what it was like to be a young player. From experience, he knew how a loss builds character. How a loss builds strength. How a loss builds perseverance. And he knew how good it felt when a loss turned into a win.

For almost two years, Ron competed with cancer, and turned many a loss into a win. We all admired his courageous battle. When he succumbed to his illness on March 5th, he lost his courageous battle. However, during his final days – more than ever – he reminded us that teamwork and sportsmanship are the most important part of the game...not winning.

That's right. Teamwork and sportsmanship. More important than winning.

From his hospital bed, he called a final staff meeting to remind us that with everything we do, the kids must come first. Ron's passion for the Babe Ruth League program and youth worldwide was infectious. During the numerous road trips I accompanied Ron on, we would have many a late night or early morning wrap-up session. Discussions about the program and how we could make it better for the participant.

Ron was an innovator and a visionary leader. He was not afraid of change and helped the Babe Ruth program achieve much success with programs like the Prep League, the Bambino Division (now known as the Cal Ripken Division) and the Softball Division. He always called forth the best in people and brought them together around a shared sense of purpose. Ron was a staunch believer in the tradition of the great game of baseball and fought for such Babe Ruth League institutions like the Host Family Plan and recognizing the dedication of our volunteers.

The one thing Ron treasured above all was FAMILY – not just his immediate family, but also his Babe Ruth Family. You see, Ron treated all of us at "home plate" and our families as his own kinfolk. I am very grateful to Ron and his wife Loretta for always treating my wife Nancy, daughter Marly, son Jack and me with love and generosity.

Ron was one of a kind. He was an accomplisher of the impossible, but humbly remained in the background. His untiring efforts as an enthusiast for youth and youth activities significantly changed the lives, for the better, of thousands of children worldwide.

I truly miss Ron. He taught me a lot, not just about Babe Ruth, but about life. I know that he would want the ideals of teamwork, sportsmanship and a commitment to the welfare of youth to be his legacy. He would want everyone in the Babe Ruth Family to make sure these valuable lessons and traditions are passed down from one Babe Ruth generation to another. In memory of Ron and as a tribute to his life's work, let's all head out the playing fields and share his passion for the great game, the Babe Ruth program and above all else, the kids.

*Robert Faherty, Commissioner
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

Ron Remembered Everyone

I'll never forget Ron's ability to remember the names and faces of everyone he came in contact with even if he had only met them once and had not seen them for a great period of time. This is and was so important to the people in the field as it made them feel like he really cared ... and he did.

His sensitivity for the down trodden and less fortunate was touching. It seems he would go the extra mile to make them feel better, and do what he could for them. We have all seen this many times in things he did. His expression of great feeling toward people is an example for all to follow.

*Norm Travis, Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Burlington, CO*

A Champion of Children

Unforgettable.

There are some people you never forget. Some people leave indelible prints on your heart and soul, never forgotten, regardless of where they are. Ron Tellefsen is one of those people to me.

I met Ron years ago. He was in Wilson to sign a World Series contract with the local Babe Ruth league. You see, Ron is the president of Babe Ruth League, Inc.

His handshake was warm, his smile as inviting as a crackling fire on a cold winter's night. The white hair reminded you of grandpa, which he was. He traveled the country promoting kids. Baseball and softball were just the vehicles that helped him help kids.

Babe Ruth might have started with the Sultan of Swat, but its soul was wrapped around the Children's Champion. Ron could care less if a coach or administrator got miffed. His concern was the boys and girls who make Babe Ruth what it is. They were the ones who drove him to fly thousands of miles across the country each year visiting World Series sites, watching games and morphing Babe Ruth into a

powerful force in youth athletics. He was passionate about his job, his life, his calling.

Ron Tellefsen WAS Babe Ruth League, Inc.

Now, he is answering another call. A few years ago, Ron found out he had cancer. He shunned all treatment. If zest for life was all that mattered, Ron Tellefsen would have belted those cells out of his body like one of Babe Ruth's mammoth homers. But it wasn't. Ron Tellefsen is going home.

The man who once stood bigger than life, who brought Cal Ripken into the Babe Ruth fold and watched the softball division go from doormat to dominant, is in a hospice unit at a hospital. His family has requested no visitors. He will be gone at any moment.

And while that will truly be the biggest victory of his life, it will be a big loss for the ones he leaves behind. His enthusiasm and determination are unparalleled. The drive he had for making Babe Ruth the best it could be for the kids is something that won't be matched by two or three people.

But that is not all Ron was.

He loved his family dearly, especially his grandkids. You couldn't spend time with him and not hear stories about their games or watch him take a call from one of them.

To have him call you friend was one of the greatest feelings in the world. Watching him listen intently to every story during dinner, you realized how much he cared. When he asked how you were doing, he really wanted to know.

I saw Ron last year in Winston-Salem. Unfortunately, we were reunited at a funeral for Jaime Horn, Babe Ruth's National Softball Commissioner.

It was like old home week, like the time since our last meeting had been just a blink of an eye.

You couldn't tell the damage the cancer was doing to his body. He spoke at the funeral, drawing laughter from the tears and being for us all what we needed, a kind, gentle voice in a time of distress.

That voice is now still.

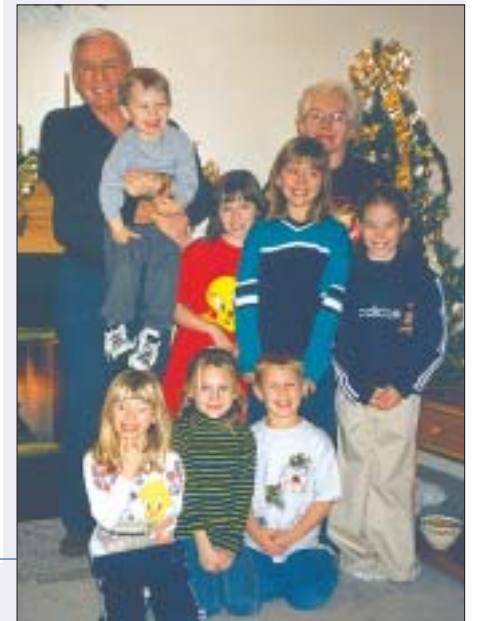
To be sure, Babe Ruth leagues from Surry County, [North Carolina] to Southern California will find a way to honor him this season. Without a doubt, Babe Ruth

League, Inc., will find a way to keep his legacy moving forward.

The marks he left around the world will not soon fade away.

The prints he left on my heart will stay forever.

*Phil Goble, Jr., Managing Editor
Mt. Airy News, Mt. Airy, NC*



Devoted grandparents Ron and Loretta Tellefsen pose with their seven grandchildren Christmas of 1998. (standing left to right) Ron holding Kevin Smiegocki, Jennifer and Lauren Ann Small, Megan Tellefsen, (kneeling left to right) Kirsten and Jaclyn Tellefsen, and Steven Smiegocki.

An Appreciative Boss Will Be Missed

As the "rookie" on staff here at Babe Ruth headquarters I didn't get to know Ron near as well as many, a fact that left me feeling somewhat bereft when he left so suddenly. What I did know about Ron, though, has been confirmed and expanded upon by all of the wonderful thoughts and stories that have poured in here from the many people he touched.

When I'd been working here part-time for about two months, I went to our office holiday party. We were all laughing and talking and I walked up to Ron and boldly told him that I was going to be sure to accomplish something every day I was in the office that would make him appreciate me. He just smiled, that "Ron" smile, and said that he was sure I would. A few months later, and even now as a full-time staff member, I would continue to try to make good on that promise. Whenever his computer would "break" he would call me in to fix it. He got used to having his little "blue jackets" on his desk whenever he had to travel anywhere and liked having all of that information at his fingertips (heaven forbid it got there late!). I learned to make sure he always got the best seats.

And that last time I saw him at our last "staff meeting" it was all I could to fight back the tears because he was still so unbelievably strong and selfless in the face of this terrible challenge. When I had a private moment, and tried to put into words my respect and awe, he instead stole the moment to tell me that he'd "appreciated" what I'd achieved.

Thank you, Ron.

*Colleen Higgins, Executive Assistant
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*

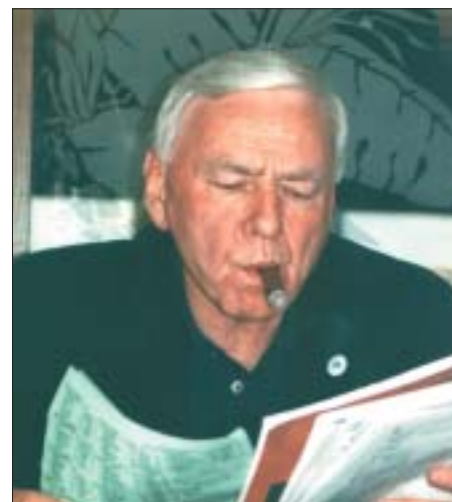
He Was Always Supportive of the Umps

I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ron Tellefsen. I had no idea he was ill. I knew Ron through the numerous World Series I umpired, and through speaking with him at the ABCA conventions. He was an important person in the lives of many people, through the example he set in leading such a great program as Babe Ruth Baseball. I doubt we can ever count the number of lives he touched.

It was an honor for me to represent Babe Ruth Baseball as an umpire and Ron's appearances at the tourneys were always a highlight. He loved to discuss the game and was most supportive of us as umpires. He was a true gentleman who will be sorely missed and most difficult to replace. It has been a tough last year for the Babe Ruth family, but I know Ron would want all of us to move forward and continue to help young people grow into productive citizens. His belief that no child should be cut from the program is one of the true legacies he leaves, because without the opportunity to participate, from the best player to the weakest, many youngsters would be denied the adult leadership so many sorely need and would not have positive role models.

I will keep his family in my prayers. It was an honor for me to be associated with this fine gentleman. We should all be able to do for others what Ron strived to do. He will be missed, but never forgotten.

*Barry Chasen
NUA Member
Simsbury, CT*



Ron was notorious for never taking a (real) vacation. But, he did find time to unwind and enjoy a good cigar, an occasional day at the races and a game of cards with his Rockland County buddies. As his staff always said....all roads lead to Rockland County... where Ron maintained many close friendships from his grammar school days.

*Paul Newton
World Series Associate
Vallejo, CA*

Fox Sports Net Family Mourns Loss of Babe Ruth League CEO

As producer of the Cal Ripken World Series on Fox Sports Net (FSN), I had the great pleasure to work with Ron, but more importantly to know him personally. When FSN first began televising the event four years ago, Ron flew me up to New Jersey to meet the Babe Ruth family and to treat me to the best Italian food this Texan could imagine.

Ron's passion for Babe Ruth Baseball, and more importantly, the kids that played the games around the world, will be missed by me and the entire FSN family. He was always complimentary of our work and I can't generate the words to compliment him enough on how he handled his role and the people that worked with and around him.

He always made me feel that the work we did was special. I have a feeling he left that same impression on everyone else that had the fortunate opportunity to meet him. I always looked forward to producing the Cal Ripken World Series each year; because I knew I'd see Ron again.

That said, I will miss him, but I smile knowing his indelible imprint will remain on our show and Babe Ruth Baseball.

*Robert Steinfeld
Fox Sports Net - Producer
Cal Ripken World Series*

One of the Guys

I have a very vivid memory of Ron during the 1992 World Series in Vallejo, California. At the end of the Series I volunteered to take Ron, Robert and 3 other officials to the airport after the Series was over. They were the consummate professionals until the door closed and then they let off a lot of steam; they were like a bunch little kids in the car. I laughed all the way to and from the airport listening to these officials letting off steam and just being "the guys" and venting.

Remembering a Business Associate, Mentor and Friend

Ron was such a competitor who liked his action. I remember playing golf with him at a board meeting a number of years ago; Debbie Horn was on our team. We were vying for the lead. On the 18th green I had a putt that would win the event for our team.

Ron said to me as I was standing over the putt, "If you want to keep the Babe Ruth account you had better make this putt." He laughed with his devilish laugh, only half kidding.

I took a step back, being a little nervous over the putt, and made the putt.

Ron said to me as we were walking off the green, "Well I guess you've got the Babe Ruth account for another year" as he patted me on the back.

This story is from my first lunch with Ron after getting the Babe Ruth account. I was just a virtual kid in my twenties, and I went to pick up the tab: Ron fought me and won in picking up the tab.

After we finished and were walking

out of the restaurant, which I believe was Diamond's, Ron leaned over in a fatherly way, and said to me "I'm the customer; you should not have let me win in picking up the tab."

He told me this to help my growth in business. He never said it in a mean spirited or spiteful way. He did this many times over our time together to assist me in my growth in business and as a person. He was the epitome of "win-win".

Ron and I would often share notes about running an organization and a business. He would share the issues he was dealing with at the time, whether it was a legal issue, organizational, staffing, etc. But as he grew older, even though he loved to travel and meet the various league representatives, he would tell me "this is getting old, and I would not mind being home a little more." His schedule was at the least very challenging. With this being said he would do whatever it took for the good of the organization, always for the

good of the organization, and always for the kids.

Another topic he would love to talk about with pride and concern was the one child he sort of "adopted" who had a tough life and whose father was in prison.

I can't quite remember the name of the child or the exact circumstances that he came to meet this boy, but I do remember him telling with deep-felt sincerity how he had taken the boy under his wing.

He related how he would buy Christmas and birthday presents and send them to this young man under the father's name who was in prison. Ron and this prisoner corresponded often. Ron was very instrumental in having this prisoner turn his life around and become a better person, especially for his son.

When we were together in a group I always admired Ron's story telling ability. He always had a great baseball story to fit whatever situation he was in at the time. These stories usually centered around the

many players he had come in contact with during his career - especially his favorite, Lefty Gomez. The stories always seemed to end with his distinctive laugh. His laugh was like a little kid knowing he had just got away with something - devilish and funny.

In working with the organization for over 20 years I have been witness to the growth and success of the Babe Ruth organization.

I have been privileged to witness Ron's dealings with people, and how he deftly would handle situations. You don't grow an organization as he did without good leadership and this is what Ron obviously provided. He went out of his way to assist you and had a way of making everyone he came in contact with feel like a personal friend.

Ron was someone I respected and someone that I will miss.

*Keith Baldwin, President
Spikes Trophies*

Florida Commish Pays Tribute

I've reflected on many memories that I have had of Ron and what his influence has meant to me. Many years ago when I first met Ron I was awed by the fact that he would take the time to talk to me as a league president.

After sitting talking in the hotel lobby during one of the World Series that we were lucky to have attended, someone asked me who I was talking to.

When I told them who it was, I remember their reply to me was, "That is amazing that a President/CEO would take the time to talk to just anyone." I learned from that point on, everyone should be treated the same, no matter where they were on the ladder. That has not only been evident for me around baseball but it has followed me in the teaching profession as well.

Another influence that I took from Ron was the desire for ALL kids to participate in baseball or softball.

Ron and I talked about this one time and I remember his passion for the games of baseball and softball was for them to be enjoyed by not only kids with ability but for kids who did not have ability. I instigated this philosophy during my 20 year league presidency in Sarasota. We made sure we had a program within our program that would service every child who had the desire to play. To this day I stress to all my leagues the importance of molding their program so that they service ALL kids and not just the ones who are great ballplayers.

When I received the Lefty Gomez Volunteer of the Year award I was so impressed that Ron would personally come to Sarasota and in front of all my friends and family present me with this award. He was such a people person and this was so important to me and many others in the Babe Ruth family.

He always made me feel a part of this family, whether I was league president or

state commissioner.

When he would call and ask my opinion of something, that was special. "John Lucas? Ron Tellefsen." That rings so clearly with me!

It was always a pleasure to speak to him because I had that sense that he was really listening and really wanted to hear what I had to say.

My trip to Trenton with all the Florida District Commissioners was so special. We have always been close as a team, but Ron and all of you at Headquarters made us even closer.

Everyone could see the "family." I think this was the most important thing that everyone got out of our trip. Integrity, commitment, positive environment, honesty were some of the other words mentioned on our return. These same words came up in the emails I received after notifying everyone of Ron's passing. He just had a special way of bringing everyone together.

There were many times when I would think to myself "Why am I doing this?"

It wouldn't take long for me to remember some of the reasons why I do this and why many others do this as volunteers. This is mainly because of Ron's leadership.

I know that there are many others who feel the same as he did and will carry on his legacy.

Ron's hard work, his ideals, his philosophies will be carried on by the current leadership. I'm fully confident of this. If we all make this commitment then Ron's dreams for the program will continue to be reality.

Hopefully, there is something that I can do to help make Ron's dreams come true.

*John Lucas, State Commissioner
Florida Babe Ruth Leagues
Sarasota, Florida*

A Great Boss - My Neighbor "Mr. T."

I've known Ron for most of my life. He and his family moved into the house next door to mine 37 years ago. As a young boy, everyday when I saw Ron come home from work I would go up and talk to him. He always took the time to speak with me and ask me what had happened that day in the neighborhood. Not being a shy kid, I would tell him about every little detail. This became a ritual between Ron and me.

As time went on, he nicknamed me the "Mayor of Martha Drive". I don't know if he knew it or not, but I loved the fact that he gave me this special title. It made me feel important. Ron always had that unique way of making everyone feel special. As time went on, I didn't even have to run over to Ron. When he got home he would yell over to me "HEY MAYOR what's going on today?" And believe me, everyday I filled him in.

I always called Ron "Mr. T". I guess it was because Mr. Tellefsen was too long and hard for me to pronounce when I was young. To this day, I still call him "Mr. T".

Mr. T. and I developed a great friendship over the years. It didn't matter what kind of a day he was having (good or bad) he always made time for you. He was just the friendliest guy you'd ever want to meet. He was the type of person who would do anything for you.

About five years ago there was an opening in the mailroom at Babe Ruth League. I applied for the job and got it. The last four and a half years working for Mr. T. have been great. Even though he is gone, it still feels like he is just out of town on business and that he will be calling me to let me know what time to pick him up at the airport. I'm still waiting for that call. Mr. T was more than the man next door - he was a super boss, mentor and great friend. I miss him more than words can say. So Mr. T. until we meet again...good-bye for now.

*Your friend always,
Anthony Chell, Mailroom Coordinator
Babe Ruth League, Inc.*



Ron with six of his seven grandchildren enjoying a visit at the 2002 Cal Ripken World Series in Aberdeen, Maryland. Shown are (left to right) Lauren Ann, Kirsten, Kevin, Steven, Jennifer and Jaclyn. You can be sure these kids got the royal treatment from their Pop-Pop.

He Represented All That is Good About Amateur Athletics

Ron was a great friend to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee and particularly to the Kiwanis Club and our local Babe Ruth Baseball league. He was personally involved in the hugely successful Babe Ruth World Series held in Lawrenceburg in 1978 and 1981. Ron always said that Lawrenceburg was the perfect town in which to host a Babe Ruth World Series.

He spoke often of the VFW fish fry at David Crockett Park, the command performance of "Gentleman from the Cane", and most especially, Landon Cole. (Landon was mentality handicapped.) To my knowledge, Ron was the only person for whom Landon ever bought a cigar.

Ron Tellefsen represented all that is good about amateur athletics. He believed that the game was for the kids. An example of that belief is the Babe Ruth rule that the players must stay with host families, not in hotel or motels. Many Lawrence County families still have regular contact with the young men who visited us in 1978 and 1981. I will always remember the excitement at Flannigan Field when Los Angeles (remember their "phantom infield"?) played Seattle for the World Championship in 1978. One of the largest crowds in Lawrence County history, gathered to watch two teams of young men from far away, all of whom by then were a never ending part of OUR town. Ron truly enjoyed telling folks all over the USA of that warm welcome and gracious hospitality the folks in Lawrence County shared with him, Walter Johnson, and all the others here for the Series.

Ron Tellefsen was my friend. I respected him and what he stood for. I will miss him.

*Paul Plant
Lawrenceburg, TN*

Editor's Note: Any time Ron was visiting Lawrenceburg, very early each morning Landon would be knocking on the door of Ron's room to get him to go have coffee with him. Ron always did. Ron would send Landon birthday gifts every time Landon would call and remind Ron it was his birthday – usually four times a year. Ron and Landon were fast, forever friends.

I AM FREE

Don't grieve for me for I am free
I am following the path God laid for me.
I took His Hand when I heard Him call
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,
I found that peace at the close of day.
If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy.

Be not burdened with time of sorrow,
I wish for you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full, I savored much
Good friends, Good times, a loved one's touch.

A long life, yet all too brief.
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts and share with me,
God wanted me now. He has set me free.

*Anonymous
(Submitted by Henry Sermons)*

A Caring Leader with an Unforgettable Smile

I think the most memorable thing I remember about "Mr.T", as we called him in the back mailroom, was his great smile.

I am in my 8th season working for Babe Ruth and every year we all gathered in Ron's office to sing Happy Birthday (tried to sing anyway) to him and he would beam from ear to ear. I missed last year after being out for a dental problem.

The next day I asked Theresa "Do you think it would be OK if I went into his office to give him a belated birthday wish?" and she said, "Of course."

As I walked in and he looked up from his desk I began to say I was sorry I missed his birthday (and the cake) and wished him a belated "Happy Birthday." I told him I had a dental problem and he began to ask me what was wrong, what dentist did I go to, am I all right now, etc. Once I mentioned my dental problem he forgot about my saying Happy Birthday. All he cared about is that I was OK.

As I left his office I began thinking how I went in to give him birthday wishes and he turned everything around about me... That was "Mr. T" always caring about the other person.

That smile, I really miss seeing that smile.

*Lorraine LaBau
Hamilton, New Jersey*

He Ain't Heavy - He's My Brother

Friends are friends, some are casual acquaintances that you enjoy seeing at various times during the year, some you can have contact with once or twice a week and others you consider very close. When the close ones are no longer around it is tough.

Heart attacks and cancer are breaking up that old Babe Ruth Baseball gang of mine. In 1967 while becoming very active in the Ohio Valley Regional, there were old stand by people that you had contact with quite often. Slowly but surely that group has passed from this earth and with each funeral you attend the group gets smaller.

This past Sunday a very dear and close person left the baseball community and his absence from the baseball world will be felt all over the United States, Canada and some foreign countries. Ron Tellefsen, President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. succumbed to an 18-month battle with cancer.

Whether you are supposed to get close to your big boss, one doesn't know, but Ron was a very close friend.

The success Ron had directing the youth baseball program for 25 years in his present position came from hard work and common sense. Most bosses are workaholics or they would not be in that position, but Ron was a super workaholic.

Meeting people is such a key to success and this man did it extremely well. Made no difference how big or how small the person was, Ron had that knack of saying the right thing or giving that clever smile to make the meeting a success.

Many weeks he would be on an airplane traveling to various parts of the country. His popularity was so immense that he was wanted and welcomed wherever he could go.

He had a place in his heart for kids who needed help. A gentleman who was in a southern prison somehow got Ron's name and address and sent a letter. Consequently the past few years for the son of this man the birthday and Christmas time was enjoyed by nice gifts from the President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. The son thought the father was sending the gifts, as Ron wanted to stay in the background. At a World Series a couple of years back a young man was around the ball park quite a bit and Ron found his situation was not good and likewise he has been well rewarded with generosity of the "Big Cheese".

His grandchildren were the apple of his eyes. It was difficult to have a conversation with him that some of his grandchildren were not discussed. He would think nothing of getting off a plane and going directly to a gym or field to see one of his grandchildren play.

Ron was all for kids. He came to work for the program as a commissioner and did a lot of umpiring. He knew the baseball rules inside and out. Sometimes he would play games with you by testing you with a question to see if you really did know the rules.

Insurance is a big part of any athletic endeavor. He became a student of the insurance involving accident and liability for youth programs and spent many hours negotiating to make sure all the leagues had the cheapest yet the best insurance for their programs.

If you hurt, he hurt as well. He was very concerned about all of his people whether it be a long time employee in the office or a member of someone's family associated with the program. Ron and I shared one thing in common via the fact that we were old fashioned enough not to be too excited about the computer environment during earlier years. Yet for the past year or so there was hardly a day went by that we did not exchange at least one e-mail per day. Perhaps the many hours he put in took its toll in the end. He would think nothing of sitting and talking until the wee hours of the morning yet he would be up never later than 6 a.m. addressing some part of the program. He always said he would make his coffee in his hotel room and it had to be bottled water, and that this was his best thinking time of the day.

Everyone has some problems and his biggest seemed to be keeping possession of a cell phone. Somehow they always managed to drop and break or involuntarily were left someplace. While he expected you to be on time for a meeting, the meeting might be delayed because he was finishing a cell phone conversation. Thank goodness he had the unlimited minutes plan.

The previous week before being hospitalized he had spent two full days in the office. The Saturday afterwards he was hospitalized again and started to go downhill. He had nothing against doctors but he wanted it to be on a social scene not an office scene. Tuesday of last week a call came that he was probably not going to beat his challenge. He had called his illness a challenge and referred to it as getting curve balls thrown at him or a called third strike. He asked to meet one more time with another fellow Board member and myself and we headed to Trenton for a special visit. It was not an easy visit as the man who had all the get up and go laid there unable to show the great love of life he had always extended. With his lovely wife and three super children we shared some experiences and hoped we were able to keep him in comfort. You never want to see your close friends in such circumstances but it was nice to be able to say a final word. This week will be another trip back to the Trenton area to say that final goodbye. Some time later it will be another trip to find a person to assume Ron's position. Ron's task of building the Babe Ruth program the past 25 years was not an easy task but he met it with a word he often used, a challenge. Likewise this week will be a challenge to say that final goodbye and it certainly won't be easy.

Thanks Ron for all your help, love, and compassion for everyone you came in contact with. My final thoughts will be, "You ain't heavy you're my brother."

*Bob Dickson, Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Alexandria, IN*

Editor's Note: Bob Dickson writes a column for the Alexandria Times-Tribune. This article appeared under his "Dixie Quotes" column on March 9, 2005.

Coaches Have Memorable Meeting With Ron

It was with great regret that we learned of Ron's untimely passing. When I heard about it, it really made me stop and take stock about what he, and ultimately, the Babe Ruth program, has meant to my fellow coach and dear friend, Tim, and me.

We both started coaching, because we loved the game of baseball. We felt we had enough knowledge about the game we loved to at least coach the kids in our area. What we found out was that a lot of people knew more about the game than we did; we just happened to know more about kids.

The Babe Ruth program that Ron had so successfully run for so many years, gave Tim and me an avenue to do something we loved and to make a difference in our community. Babe Ruth has touched our lives, and in turn touched the lives of so many players in our area. It has been a positive environment/outlet for all the kids involved, but the real surprise is that it became a huge positive for us.

I will never forget the time we first met Ron; it was in Jamestown, New York in 1999. Though we had never met, he was so happy to see us, shook our hands, looked us straight in the eyes, and told us "thank you" for all the time and effort we had put into coaching.

I remember going back to the room with Tim and saying, "Wow! I can't believe

the President of Babe Ruth was thanking us for something we loved to do." He made us feel so appreciated and important. To us, that speaks volumes about a person. He didn't know us but he went out of his way to make us feel accepted, and that we were making a difference in kids' lives.

In the fall of 2001, my best friend and longtime coach, Tim Stevens, was in a serious car accident that left him a quadriplegic. We had coached a team of amazing players who reached the World Series for two consecutive years.

I remember sitting up at the hospital on that fateful night, wondering what was in store for my best friend. Then the most amazing thing happened. One by one, each of the players from our team made their way to the hospital. They came to support Tim, for he had touched their lives in such a positive way. It all became very clear to us at that moment. Coaching these kids was more than the game of baseball, it was more than doing something we loved, it was about community, it was about friendship, and it was about life.

Ron Tellefsen and Babe Ruth League made this all possible. It was very important for those of us who loved Tim, to get him back on his feet (so to speak), and to move on with his life. Babe Ruth League had a huge hand in this.

It is so funny to take a group of individuals from all over the country, bring them together in competition, and see what happens to them. We had met a group of coaches from Staten Island, New York during the '99 and 2000 World Series. Yes, we had fun together, competed against each other, and had some great memories, but you then you sadly think you will never see them again.

It was so amazing to me that these two coaches from Staten Island flew out to Portland, Oregon, after hearing about Tim's accident. They didn't call, they just showed up. It was a testament to who THEY were, but an even a bigger testament about the people involved in the Babe Ruth program. It is such a classy organization it draws these kinds of individuals to its ranks.

Between the two coaches from New York, and the players on our team, we made sure that Tim was going to continue coaching. This had a huge impact on him and how he saw the life in front of him. It has been different, he obviously cannot be as hands on as he once was, but he was still able to coach and touch the kid's lives.

In 2002, our team once again made it back to the World Series. This could have been a problem as traveling with a quadriplegic is not the easiest thing in the world. I know for a fact that Ron went out

of his way to make our travel, and a vehicle at the site that would accommodate Tim, happen. Most people won't bother to try when a situation can be a headache or becomes difficult, but not Babe Ruth Baseball. They accommodated us with a different hotel that had a handicapped access room available; they provided us with an ambulance to transport Tim and his wheelchair. They did everything possible to allow Tim to do what he loved to do.

I cannot say enough positive things about Babe Ruth League. It has touched so many lives and all in a positive way. Tim and I eventually met Ron a total of five times. Each time he remembered our names, had nothing but positive things to say to us, and encouraged us to keep on doing what we loved to do.

I believe a person leaves a legacy of things they have accomplished in their lifetime. Ron's legacy is Babe Ruth Baseball. Not just the game, but also the kids, the coaches, and all the volunteers whose lives he had touched. Ron Tellefsen was Babe Ruth League, and his legacy will live on through all of us who believe in what he did, and was trying to do. Ron you will be missed. You have touched our lives and all those who we have coached.

*Our Deepest Sympathies,
Jason Brooks & Tim Stevens*

Thank You, Ron Tellefsen

I stumbled upon something quite accidentally that made me think. It was the memorial for Ron Tellefsen.

Until today, I didn't know who he was or what he did. But I know and enjoyed the results of his decades of labor with Babe Ruth League, Inc. I played Babe Ruth Baseball after Little League, as did many of my friends in junior high. I was lucky enough to live in a community where Babe Ruth Baseball was available for kids my age - many other communities didn't have the organized league.

I was, and am, a "baseballhead," and can't imagine growing up without playing it myself. I used to get in trouble a lot at that point in my life, and I suspect that without baseball, I would have had just that much more time for problem-making.

I'm glad Ron Tellefsen did what he did. And the same holds true for everyone who has worked with that organization, for building up the Babe Ruth baseball league and bringing it to kids. It made a difference for me.

*Wayne Kessler
Camp Hill, PA
Played in Livermore, CA BRL*

Editor's Note: These thoughts were found on a blogger site as a result of a search for "Ron Tellefsen". Mr. Kessler didn't know Ron, and is not directly involved with Babe Ruth League, but upon coming across the notice of Ron's death, he felt compelled to post his thoughts on his website given his childhood experience in Babe Ruth Baseball. It is reprinted with his permission.

Newsletter Reader Touched by Caring Words

I did not know Ron Tellefsen other than through his encouraging words shared through this e-newsletter.

Just about a year ago, he corresponded with me about some concerns I had for my 14-year-old son who was having a rough baseball season his with Babe Ruth league. His words were warm and caring.

He offered his insights and concern with genuine compassion. I was amazed at the kindness and understanding he shared with me. His words helped me to continue to support my son through disappointments around baseball.

Your Tribute helped me to know him a bit better, yet somehow I could have guessed all these wonderful things about him even from my brief experience with him. His compassionate leadership will certainly leave its mark.

*With sincere sympathy,
Stephanie Marisca
(newsletter subscriber)*

World Series Memories of Babe Ruth President

The first time that I met Mr. Tellefsen was at the Cal Ripken 10-Year-Old World Series in Bakersfield, California in the summer of 2002. Even with all that was going on in Bakersfield, knowing that he had several World Series going on at other locations, and had several places to be at the same time, he was



always warm and friendly and found the time to personally speak to anyone who had a question or comment. I was one of the few who were fortunate enough to return to the 12-Year-Old Cal Ripken World Series in Aberdeen, Maryland during the summer of 2004. We were treated with the same kindness and respect that we enjoyed in Bakersfield. I know how much Mr. Tellefsen cared for the players, coaches, volunteers and the whole Babe Ruth organization and it was very evident in everything he did for the program. I would also like to praise the Board of Directors for making a great choice in his successor. I also got to spend a little time with Steven in Aberdeen, and know that the Board could not have made a better choice. I will always cherish the attached photo and keep the Tellefsen family in my thoughts and prayers.

*Barry Bryant, Vice President
Southeastern Cal Ripken Baseball
Lexington, KY*



Batboy for Rockland farm team. Took initiative and wrote letter to general manger of team to ask to become bat boy. Arrived very early for away games to make sure he could get a ride with the team. He was only 10 years old.

Transcript of Interview with Ron Tellefsen at 2004 14YO WS

by Richard Sarmiento,
WHIG-TV Correspondent &
President of Nash County (NC) BRL
Transcript of Taped Interview with
Ron Tellefsen at the 2004 Babe Ruth
14-Year-Old World Series
Pre-Game Show, Wilson County, NC

Richard: Here at the 14-Year-Old World Series, my guest tonight is Ron Tellefsen, President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. Headquarters in New Jersey where it all started back in 1951. This man has not only been to this World Series, but he has been to all nine World Series. He plays a nine inning game like the boys do and he's here. He goes to every one of them like the boys do and he's here tonight for his final one – the 9th one in August. Ron, I don't know how you do it. You have to be on the go at all times. This must be a big month for you. Tell us about the different types of trips you make to all of these Series.

Ron: You know it is great to travel, but as I go to each World Series site, I cannot help but think it is because of the great volunteers that we have. I can always remember when Dr. Bobby Brown, President of the American League said to me, "Ron what makes Babe Ruth League so good each year? You always grow each year." I said, without hesitating, that we have the best volunteers and that is what is exciting. You can see the volunteers enjoy having these teams come from each region of the

country. At the Cal Ripken World Series, we have five international teams that participate.

Richard: It is a wonderful experience for the boys to have such great volunteers like you said from all over the country. We were out in Van Buren, Arkansas last week where I first saw you. The host program there worked like a charm. I am sure they do at other places. Tell us the differences between the World Series sites this year.

Ron: In Arkansas, they had a goal for a field of dreams. The Mayor had a challenge as he has Lou Gehrig's disease. His challenge was to make it to the World Series. I think because of this the entire community united together as you saw. They had 3,000-5,000 fans at every game. The host parents were excellent. You know what; it was a great tribute to Nash County. You guys are here and also participated in Van Buren, Arkansas. I know you had a great experience in Van Buren.

Richard: It was certainly a great experience. Here, closer to home, it has also been a wonderful experience. We are not staying with host families here as we are only 30 minutes up the road. But the excitement of coming to the ballpark everyday and seeing a World Series is no different than the Major Leagues. Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken have given these boys a tremendous experience through the years. Your staff

has got to be very proud of what everybody has done for Babe Ruth Baseball.

Ron: You have to be proud too. I am standing here thinking while you are talking that if I am correct, Nash County came in 3rd in Van Buren.

Richard: That is correct.

Ron: Here tonight you are again in the finals. Who knows, maybe tomorrow you will be playing in the championship game. You had indicated this is the first time your league has participated in the World Series.

Richard: First time in any age group.

Ron: To get there twice in one year is unbelievable.

Richard: The one thing Ron probably won't tell you on camera is that in Van Buren, he had no choice but to root for Hamilton Township, New Jersey, where the Babe Ruth program started. It has been a great experience for the boys that have come through the program. You have many years behind you. You celebrated your 50th Anniversary. I am sure you have great things in store for the future. Tell us about Cal Ripken coming on board.

Ron: Cal Ripken, Jr. means a great deal to the program. He is a great icon. In Babe Ruth League, what two greater names can you have other than Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken, Jr.? You know what is good about Cal. It is not just his

name. Cal is very active. At the Cal Ripken World Series itself, once a team is eliminated, Cal and his brother Billy personally take them to one of their mini-stadiums (Camden Yards, Fenway Park, and Wrigley Field) and give them a clinic. We are so honored and proud he and Billy are so active with us.

Richard: Nash County is very honored to have been at the 13-Year-Old World Series in Van Buren, Arkansas and here at the 14-Year-Old World Series in Wilson County. My guest has been Ron Tellefsen. We are ready to watch the semi-finals game of the 14-Year-Old World Series in Wilson. It has been a pleasure to have you on the show.

Ron: Thank you. Can I just say one last thing? Host President Mickey Davis does a fabulous job. I just want to say that he is unbelievable. The host families here in Wilson County and the neighboring communities have done an excellent job, not only at this World Series, but at every World Series.

Richard: For sure. Mickey Davis is the reason Nash County is getting very involved now and the fact that you are back here at another World Series. Mickey has been a great host for plenty of them. I am sure we will see you again, not only in Wilson County, but also in Nash County.

Ron: Thank you very much.

A True Gentleman - Real Class

I wanted to send you some thoughts that help me think of Ron and how our lives had moments to remember. I hope that if you see it appropriate, please share these with his family and the entire Babe Ruth family.

First, Jim Amadei, John DiTuri, and I are all shocked at his passing. He truly has left a strong impression on all of us and he will be remembered in our prayers and thoughts.

I can fondly remember meeting Ron at the Aetna in the mid 80's when he would come to Hartford for renewal meetings. Ron especially was always gracious in including me in any discussion and making me feel important to the process even though I had only recently become involved in an existing situation.

He was also a gentleman in his dealings. He told me the story of dinner one night with one of my associates. Sometime into the evening my associate made a commitment that was rather generous.

Ron asked my associate about it the next day so as to give him a way out. Though my associate honored his word, it was a touch of class for Ron to be such a gentleman.

I always felt that Ron was a true Baseball historian. I bet he knew that Morgan Bulkeley, the son of the Aetna founder, was a US Senator, President of the Aetna, but also one of the first Baseball Commissioners of the National League. I

am sure that was one of the deciding factors on why he wanted the Aetna to be his carrier.

I also found him to be extremely loyal in all his business transactions. I believe that this would be true with all of the Babe Ruth family. And that did not stop for me when I had to deliver the news that the Aetna was moving away from special risk business.

I remember the meeting we met with the president of the company to try and get the decision reversed and his understanding when he found out that we had to move on. I still got to Owensboro and Rhode Island for the World Series and still sat on the dais at dinner, had some good times with some of the old players like Lefty Gomez, and felt included in all the events. Again, real class.

I loved his stories about several of the players. I remember the Mantle ones, and the one he told several times about when he was with the elderly Mrs. (Babe) Ruth. Seemed she needed some assistance with straightening out her pantyhose. Ron, the gentleman that he was, faced a dilemma. Should he aid another woman, especially of Claire Ruth's renown, or should he run like heck. Ron tells the story that Claire solved the problem by yelling "There's nothing new here, so help me grab them and pull them up."

And I was happy to see you folks again in your dealings with AIG. Jim and John probably could tell a lot more stories but

the one I heard about was your golf trip to Morefar. It seems that at dinner one of the AIG associates was talking Ron's ear off to the point that Ron gave John the high sign for help. Again, Ron was too much of a gentleman to just cut him off.

I have always wondered about what happens to the entirety that makes up a person when they pass. Where does all that collection of knowledge and experience go in the universe? I have come to the conclusion that it does not leave but becomes part of everyone who was touched by it. I've shared a few stories that will always be with me. And that's the key. If we remember to share, then Ron will always be with us.

I'll remember him in my prayers and be sure to share Ron in my future travels. Our thoughts are with you all, Ron's family, and the entire Babe Ruth team.

Joseph Puzzo, Regional Director
AIG Life Insurance Company
New York, NY



The President meets the President – former President George H. W. Bush and Ron Tellefsen meet in the Rose Garden at the White House in 1991 when our Babe Ruth World Series Champions and MLB's World Series Champions enjoyed an audience with the President and Mrs. Bush.

Memories Will Linger Forever

I am thankful for the opportunity to have had Ron Tellefsen in my life both on a professional and a personal basis – of which, he had the unique ability to blend the two together and for which I will always be grateful. I, like everyone else, was made a better person by making his acquaintance.

Memories of Ron Tellefsen will linger forever in my life.

Russ Diethrick
Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.

A Friend And More ...

When I first received the news that our Babe Ruth newspaper, THE BULLPEN, was going to publish tributes to Ron, submitted by friends for a special June issue release, I thought what a wonderful and fitting tribute, and I naively thought how easy it would be for me to jot down something and forward it to Headquarters.

Little did I realize how difficult it would be to recollect and sum up a 20+ year relationship, or to select one special memory out of all those special memories, of the many meetings, events, and special activities. I must point out that the remembering part was easy, as numerous recollections sprang to mind. The difficult part was to reduce to writing, how Ron became not only a mentor, but a friend.

Softball was new in 1984, and as a League President, I was looking for a national program that I could recommend to my member leagues that had the best interest of each and every player at the center of their program. I read the softball brochure, the rulebook, the president's handbook and the official's handbook. I liked the fact that the age divisions were broken down to skill levels, and with the geographical boundaries, my small leagues could compete with like leagues at tournament time.

In the early years growth was a bit slow, and most post-season tournament competitions stopped at the State level. Then with Ron's challenging, but encouraging support, the Middle Atlantic and New England Regions held a Bi-Regional softball competition, then Tri-Regional post-season tournament competitions were scheduled, adding the Ohio Valley Region. During these early years, softball also was under the baseball administrative umbrella. After several in-depth discussions with Ron and the late Larry Magers, a former Board Member, softball was not only more strongly supported, but more actively promoted. We soon had a Softball Commissioner in the administrative lineup.

In the years leading up to 1999 and our inaugural World Series for 12U and 16U, the softball program underwent many refinements, most under the leadership of Ron and our current Vice President, Debra Horn. Ron had listened, prodded, challenged, encouraged and supported strong developments and administrative changes to the program. Softball stood as its own program, and Softball Coordinators became Softball Commissioners.

Over the years, and with my involvement with the softball program, Ron always made me feel an important part of the Babe Ruth program. He was very generous with words of "Thanks" and "Congratulations". (In fact, his sincere expressions of thanks and congratulations were extended to all volunteers.) Ron had that special quality of leadership that could be called charisma – he had that unique and special gift to be able to relate to

people and inspire the best in everyone he met. Although he was a very public and approachable leader, he also was a private person. Some of my most treasured memories are when Ron would share his many stories, and he had many, of his early years, his acquaintances with baseball players and dignitaries, or of his beloved grandchildren.

Although I have covered 20+ enjoyable years and memories as briefly as possible, the one that stands out for me best portrays Ron Tellefsen, the man. The year was 1999, the event was the 12U World Series, the site was Jamestown, New York. Softball people had looked forward to this tournament level for so long, and excitement was at an all time high. Jamestown outdid themselves in hosting this first Softball World Series – a downtown parade with not only Buster the Babe, but Babe Ruth's car as well. We had team floats, cheering crowds and noted dignitaries. Babe Ruth Board Members were in attendance, and Margie Wright was to be the keynote banquet speaker. Wow!

I was extremely honored by an appointment to the World Series Task Force, which was shared not only with my fellow Task Force Members, but also with my family, who attended. As with a first time undertaking of this magnitude, a helping hand or assistance is always welcome. Such was the case with my grandson Shawn, age 13. Shawn knew a little bit more than the rest of us when it came to taking the computer and printer out of the box, setting them up in working order, and writing and storing a recording system of stats. He quickly became an important volunteer. In discussion, Ron was informed of Shawn's assistance to the Task Force.

As was typical of Ron, and although there were many, many attendees at the World Series that wanted to meet with him, he took time in his schedule to take Shawn to lunch, one-on-one. When I questioned Shawn later about his lunch date, he was absolutely thrilled that President Tellefsen had singled him out for lunch, then thanked him for his help, and talked with him for an hour about school, his activities, his interests, his future goals and his encouragement to pursue them.

As a proud grandmother, this very act of kindness and consideration extended by Ron not only touched my heart, but stood out as a very special memory among many others. So to you Ron, with your impeccable hair style, effervescent smile, and genuine thoughtfulness, "thanks for the memories!"

*Ruth McCullen, Softball Commissioner
Middle Atlantic Babe Ruth Softball
Pine Hill, NJ*

Aussies Remember Ron Well

I had the pleasure and honor of meeting Ron for the first time at the Cal Ripken World Series in Mattoon in 2000 and was so over-awed by such a fine person and gentleman. Ron made sure everybody including us "Aussies from down under" were made to feel welcome and happy during our stay in Mattoon. I'm sure his legacy will never be forgotten by those he met and who came in contact with him and his hard work, memories and great stories will live forever.

*Greg Morriss, Australian Dingos coach
2000 Cal Ripken World Series*

His "Love for the Game" was a "Love for Life"

I worked for the Babe Ruth organization for five seasons throughout going to college. During this time Ron always asked how my classes were and offered his solid advice. I could tell that his advice stemmed from being the head of an organization that thrives on the growth of youth. I truly admire his work ethic and leadership; I think that he worked hard to make his experiences what they were.

Besides being hard at work, he had a "love for the game" which I interpreted as a "love for life." As I ended my last season at Babe Ruth in August 2004 and embarked into a new phase of my life, I did not know it was the last time I would see Mr. T. I'm glad that it ended with a warm hug, smile and wishes for the future.

*Patti LaBau
Hamilton, New Jersey*



Ron Tellefsen enjoyed a little bout with "the greatest" Mohammed Ali. The two met at the All Star Game in Houston last year. They really "hit" it off!



Ron always had an open door policy. Whether you were on staff or a visitor, he always made himself available and gave each person his undivided attention.

Greatness IS... Ron Tellefsen

Ron is truly missed, not only by me, but by every member of the International Board of Directors and the **Babe Ruth Family**.

Ron's communication skills were uncanny. He had the ability to walk into a room of people, not knowing anyone, and by the time he left, he personally knew each and every person AND they knew him.

Ron truly loved kids. Everything he did and everything he accomplished for the Babe Ruth program was for the kids. Anytime his travels brought him in contact with a young player or players, he always took the time out of his busy schedule to talk with them. He had a knack for getting them to open up on a personal level. He stressed to them the importance of schoolwork and getting a good education. He stressed to them the importance of family and community. Most of all, he loved to talk about the great games of baseball and softball, what position they played, and offered tips on how to have fun and improve their skills in the game. And when Ron returned home from such travels, he would always follow up with a letter to the player(s), which often included a special gift, such as a baseball or softball.

Ron made everyone he came in contact with feel important to the program and to themselves.

I always enjoyed our visits and listening to his endless wisdom. I will sincerely miss his stories about his experience in the Babe Ruth program and the positive attitude he projected to all who surrounded him.

Greatness is a person who bears honor in his heart. Greatness is knowing you have done all within your power to live life fully and fruitfully. Greatness is a person with vision who does not keep it to themselves.

Greatness is RONALD TELLEFSEN.

*Leonard Hammer, Board Member
Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Fowler, CA*

He Was a Great Umpire and Teacher

Your "Tribute to a Legend" was most appropriate and well done highlighting Ron's personality, accomplishments and devotion to family and job.

I've known Ron since 1956, when I became an umpire in New York State. Ron was the president of the Rockland County Umpire Association and he did the umpire assigning.

Ron was an outstanding baseball umpire. His techniques, mechanics, and judgment were of a professional nature.

Ron was also able to train and teach his skills to fellow umpires. It was an honor to know and be associated with Ron in Babe Ruth Baseball, but my fondest memories were being on the field umpiring with him.

*Bill O'Brien
NUA Member
Surfside Beach, SC*

Remembering Two Very Special Umps

From 1965-1967 I was a teen playing Babe Ruth Baseball in Clarkstown, New York. During one of those years I played in a game where I was very impressed with the two umpires who called the game. It should be noted our team did lose the game.

At the time, our local newspaper (The Journal News) would send a sports reporter to cover the game and an article and box score would appear in the paper the very next day. The box score would include the names of the umpires. I read the article, then noted the umpires' names because they were so good.

The names were Tellefsen and Springstead. I remembered that one man was called Ron and the other Marty.

In 1989 I met Ron at the 13 Year-Old World Series in Millville, N.J. (The Clarkstown Team had advanced to the Series.) I can't say it was the same man, but since Ron was so involved with Babe Ruth and he had been a member of the Clarkstown Babe Ruth family I'm sure it was.

I'm also fairly sure the other man was the same Marty Springstead who went on to become a Major League umpire.

I sometimes tell the story that at least one of my Babe Ruth games was umpired by the head of Babe Ruth and a future Major League umpire.

*Peter J. Palko, Vice-President
Clarkstown BRL
Clarkstown, NY*

Editor's Note: Yes, Mr. Palko, they were two and the same. Both men umpired many, many Babe Ruth games in their younger years. Ron, of course, ultimately became President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc., while Marty Springstead went on to become Supervisor – American League Umpires.

A Fine Gentleman

I am so sorry to hear of the loss of Ron. He was a fine gentleman. He was very interested in helping kids.

When I was a rookie 20 years ago, I bounced several issues off him. He was instrumental in helping me and our kids. I will certainly miss his wisdom and counsel and wonderful concern for the game of baseball.

*James Quinlan
American Legion Baseball*

He Made Dreams Come True

During the fall of 1997, Babe Ruth League, Inc. made a major step forward in the Babe Ruth Softball Program. The first Softball Regional Commissioners' (previously referred to as "Coordinators") workshop was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, one of Ron Tellefsen's favorite places. The eight Softball Regional Commissioners, along with National Softball Commissioner (at that time) Debra Horn, Executive Vice President/CFO Rosemary Schoellkopf and President/CEO Ron Tellefsen worked very hard over a three day period to set the goals, policies and direction as directed by the Babe Ruth League, Inc. Board for the future "road" of Babe Ruth Softball.

Fall coincidentally revolves around the completion of Major League Baseball's playoffs and World Series and it just so happened to involve the Florida Marlins battling the Cleveland Indians for

the title. As luck would have it, the third game of the Series would be in Miami on the Sunday evening that we completed our intense but productive regional softball workshop meetings.

As we wrapped up everything at the last meeting on Saturday, Ron indicated he happened to have a single "extra" ticket to that third World Series game; he inquired if anyone would be interested in "joining him."

Arrangements would have to be adjusted for the return flight, etc. but it could be worked out. Being a longtime baseball fan, I promptly spoke up and volunteered. Since I was one of the few commissioners in attendance without their spouses along for the ride, it worked out for me to go. I did not hesitate, getting permission from the home front and telling work I would be a day late.

This was my first ever World Series



Ron Tellefsen, before he was hired by Babe Ruth League, Inc., is shown with fellow umpires working at a Babe Ruth World Series.

50 Years of Friendship and Baseball Memories

Ron was a very close friend for over fifty years; it is hard to believe it has been that long. During the summer of 1950 just before entering high school we got together enough kids from West Nyack, New York to play some baseball on an improvised field. At that time there weren't any organized summer baseball leagues.

One day it was arranged that we were going to play ball against some kids from New City, the next town to the North. The date was set and we met at the field behind the Rockland County Courthouse.

As you might guess, the person who organized the game and told us the rules of the game was none other than Ronald Tellefsen. If I recall correctly, the losing team had to buy soda. I think West Nyack bought!!!

That September I entered Congers High School as a freshman and so did Ron. During those four years Ron and I became very good friends and had many great times.

In all the years that followed we remained very close and were in each other's weddings. We both had three children. Ron was always involved in sports, including being an umpire.

In 1969 Ron and his family moved to Trenton, New Jersey where he had accepted a position with Babe Ruth Baseball. As the years went by, our children married but we all kept in contact.

When Ron was promoted into his position as President and CEO, his commitment became greater. However, he would always find time to call and make a date for golf and always loved a good poker game with his friends back in New York.

Ronald, his wife Loretta, and family mean so much to our family. He was like a brother to me and many others, and I surely do miss him.

*George Miller
Fort Montgomery, NY*

game and except for having to place and later lose a small "wager" with Ron (he rooted for the Marlins and I thought he was an American League Fan!), I had a great time. Being a kid is not reserved for our youth. I got to experience a longtime dream, one that I had since I was a kid.

The only regret is that I was unable to share the experiences with my son; what better expression of "America" than a father and son at a World Series game....a dream I carried with me, as my son, an avid and still an active baseball player, was 14 years old at the time.

...But all was not totally lost. Checking out of the hotel on Monday, preparing to depart for home, Ron asked me to follow him to another part of the hotel to meet someone....lo and behold, it was Lou Brock.

I was somewhat speechless, as I had watched Mr. Brock play baseball on

television and admired the way he played. A short conversation later, Ron asked me if I wanted Mr. Brock's autograph, and thinking to myself, I replied, "That would be great". What did I have for him to autograph?

....I opened up my wallet and pulled out my son's Babe Ruth League "baseball card". Mr. Brock signed it. "Best of Luck Taylor, Lou Brock." Wow! Of course when I presented the card to my son, he was envious at first since he could not be there, but was so thankful for the gift.

This experience set the tone for my relationship with Ron. While we may not have always seen eye to eye on things, there was always that mutual respect between us.

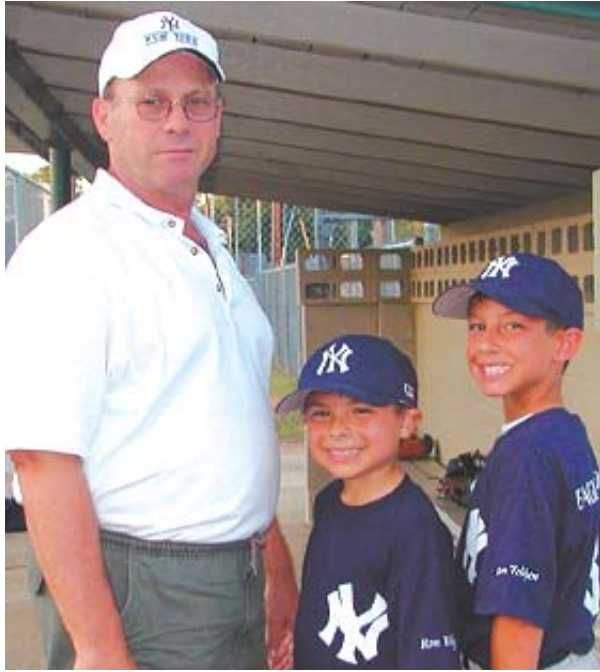
*Thanks Ron.
David L. Hargrove,
Regional Commissioner
Midwest Plains Babe Ruth Softball
Denver, Colorado*

League Dedicates Season to Ron

The A.A. Comeaux baseball league has dedicated this year's season to Ron Tellefsen, former President and CEO of the National Babe Ruth Organization. All players in the league local league are wearing Tellefsen's name on the sleeve of their jerseys in his honor.

Earlier this year Tellefsen died of cancer. Tellefsen was personally known in local baseball leagues and had worked with Vermilion Youth executive director Tommy Picard on more than one occasion. "He was a man dedicated to youth and baseball and did a lot for the organization," said Picard. "He will be missed and this is just a small way we can honor him and give him recognition for all he did." Tellefsen has been to Abbeville on many occasions to meet with baseball officials and attend several of the Babe Ruth World Series held here.

Tellefsen began his affiliation with the Babe Ruth program in 1956 as a manager for the Clarkstown, New York Babe Ruth League. In 1969, he began his professional career with Babe Ruth League, Inc. as Development Director, administering the national 16-18 program. Promoted to Field Commissioner in 1971, he assumed responsibility for the entire field operation, which at that time was the 13-15 and 16-18 divisions of Babe Ruth Baseball.



Tommy Picard stands with Jack and Alec Toups, wearing Ron Tellefsen's name on their uniform sleeve.

In 1973, Ron was named Commissioner of Babe Ruth League, Inc. He was promoted to Vice President/Commissioner in 1978, making him a corporate officer. September of 1980, the International Board of Directors elected Tellefsen to the position of President and Chief Executive Officer. He just celebrated his 25th Board Meeting in December. He held that position until his untimely passing.

Ron Tellefsen was respected for his knowledge of baseball and as a result was a long-time member of the Advisory Board of the Major League Baseball Rules Committee.

His Loss Affects Thousands

My deepest sympathy goes out to the entire staff of Babe Ruth League, Inc. for the loss of your fearless leader. I always admired Ron for the person he was. He was such a kind, generous, and decent man that always treated me with respect and was never too busy to inquire about how I was doing or converse with me about the hot topics in the sports world. We shared many laughs and good times during the years I worked in his office and the trips I made to the World Series sites.

Without knowing, Ron taught me so much. By watching him I learned how to treat people, to always act professionally, and how to carry myself. I admired his work ethic and his love for Babe Ruth League, Inc. I always try to pattern myself after Ron Tellefsen, and hope to be a great leader like him someday. I will always be a better person for knowing him. I know Ron's loss will be felt far beyond his family and staff, affecting thousands of people across the country. I know Babe Ruth League will overcome his loss because of the strong staff Ron has worked so hard with.

Patrick Hardiman
Hamilton, NJ

Farewell to a Class Act

Printed in the Sports Section of the Trenton Times, Sunday, March 13, 2005

One million children lost their best friend when Ron Tellefsen, President and CEO of Babe Ruth Baseball, passed away last week. Tellefsen was a humble Everyman who just happened to be in charge of one of the biggest programs in America for young people, and organization which calls Trenton home.

The kids always came first with Tellefsen, and he never forgot – or allowed anyone else to forget – that seemingly simple premise. When Tellefsen was named President/CEO of Babe Ruth League, Inc. in 1980, there were 350,000 boys ages 13-18 playing in that organization. Twenty-five years later, the program boasts over 1 million boys and girls ages 5-18 annually playing baseball and softball.

A man of quiet integrity, Tellefsen leaves behind a loving family, countless friends and colleagues, and untold numbers of grateful baseball and softball players and volunteers, as well as a lasting legacy of what youth baseball should be. Those who follow him in leading Babe Ruth Baseball in the 21st Century will be challenged by his memory and his vision.

Farewell to Mr. Babe Ruth

By George O'Gorman
The Trentonian March 11, 2005

Ron Tellefsen wasn't born in Trenton, but he certainly became one of its favorite sons. That's what will make it hard this weekend for all of those who knew and admired him to see Ron Tellefsen laid to rest. Mr. Babe Ruth Baseball, as he came to be known in the Trenton area, Tellefsen was more than just the President/CEO of the world's largest youth baseball program. He was a hard working, very energetic and highly intelligent sportsman/businessman who had the insight to market the youth baseball program born on the sandlots of Hamilton and take it to an international audience.

Trentonians take special pride in watching the growth of the teenage baseball league founded at Switlik Park a half century ago. Babe Ruth Baseball never enjoyed such tremendous growth as it did during Ron Tellefsen's reign. Babe Ruth Baseball Inc. will continue to grow because it is still run by the energetic staff Ron Tellefsen assembled during his nearly 25 years as head man at international headquarters on Brunswick Ave.

Few men in the history of Babe Ruth Baseball ever had as much impact on the program as Ron Tellefsen, a former manager in the Clarkstown (N.Y.) Babe Ruth League who knew how valuable volunteers were to making the 13-to-15 year old program so enjoyable to watch. The tremendous success Babe Ruth Baseball's World Series enjoyed at Moody Park in Ewing and Switlik Park in Hamilton not to many years ago would not have happened were it not for Tellefsen's insight to bring the program back to its birthplace — and the locale were it always has and will continue to enjoy its greatest success.

Nothing seemed to put a bigger smile on Ron's face than seeing youngsters learning baseball's fundamentals and enjoying the game in the Cal Ripken or Babe Ruth League programs that have had such tremendous growth over the past quarter century. A world-wide traveler, he went to all corners of the country to help spread the gospel of Babe Ruth Baseball and recruit new leagues into what he loved to call "the Babe Ruth family."

That family has lost its great leader, but will keep his memory alive every time another young boy or girl put on their first Babe Ruth uniform and learn to enjoy the game the way Ron Tellefsen always wanted them to.

His Wealth of Knowledge Unmatched

It is with great sadness today that I inform you of the passing of Ron Tellefsen, President and CEO of Babe Ruth League Inc. Ron was fan of Cherry Hill Township and the Cherry Hill Youth Athletic Association. This past September he visited the complex and awarded Cherry Hill to be the host of the 2005 Babe Ruth World Series for 12U Softball. I had the honor of working with him and getting to know Ron over this past year as we joined Babe Ruth League on January 1st, 2004. I was amazed at how he could remember every detail of the 1989 Babe Ruth 13-15 Baseball World Champion team that came from Cherry Hill. He remembered players' names, local officials and game highlights as if he just came from the game. His wealth of knowledge of the games of baseball and softball and how they pertained to the development of youth sports will never be matched.

Since last August and traveling to the 2004 12U World Series to meet with Ron and other Babe Ruth officials, I had the opportunity to get know him and see how he worked and how much he enjoyed doing what he did for Babe Ruth League. I will never forget as we worked out details on the World Series he reminded me time and time again that we will be partners in this endeavor, and together we will make this one of the best World Series ever. A lot of what people will see in the World Series in Cherry Hill, as well how operate our regular season programs, is what we have learned from Ron. We have all taken a piece of his knowledge and desire to provide the best sports experiences to the players of today and tomorrow.

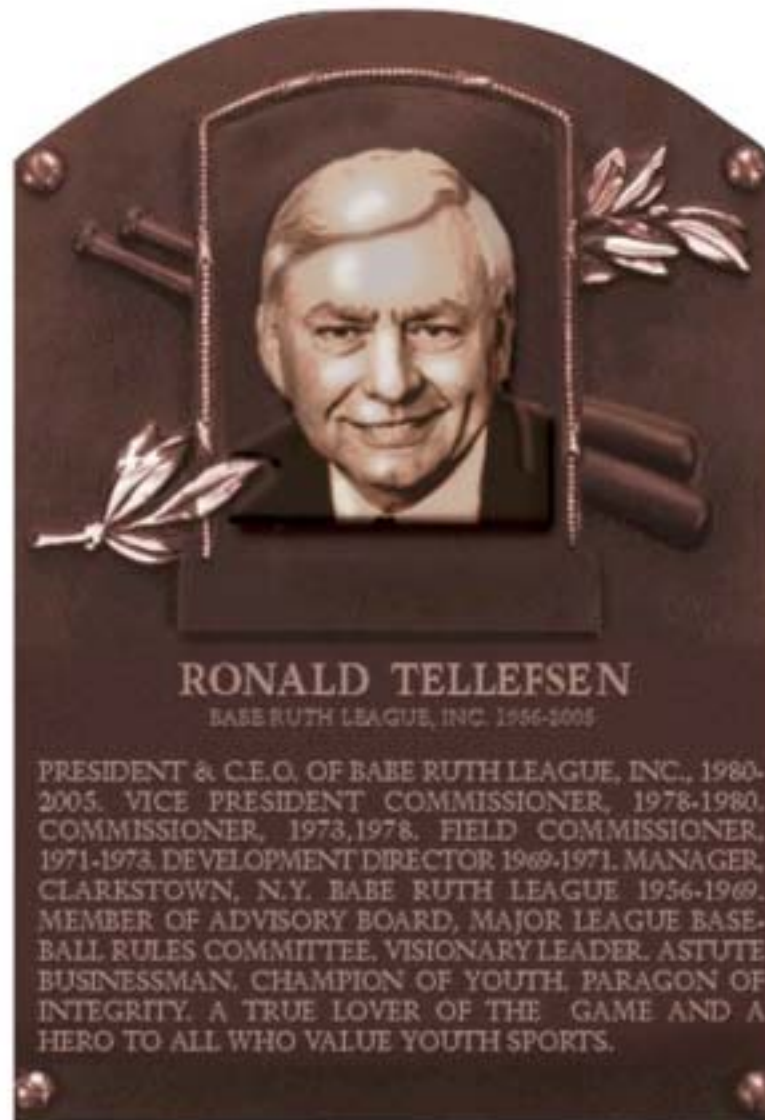
Rob Connor, President
Cherry Hill Youth Athletic Association
Cherry Hill, New Jersey



Our heartfelt thanks...

... go out to all of you who helped us remember Ron with this special tribute. For the articles and memories you shared and the time so carefully spent preparing them - you are appreciated more than you will ever know. Thank you for helping us immortalize and remember all the special things that made Ron so endearing. He will forever be remembered through your memories and will be treasured by all those who knew and loved him.

Babe Ruth Headquarters Staff
International Board of Directors



Babe Ruth League Hall of Fame

The Hershey Company salutes
the exemplary life of Ron Tellefsen.
His record of personal integrity and commitment
to our nation's youth was unsurpassed.