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Office of University
Communications

September 4, 2014

Roger McKee was MLB pitcher, GWU alumni leader, Navy veteran

Information contributed by The Shelby (N.C.) Star

Roger Hornsby McKee served his country, his community, and his university.

Photo courtesy of The
Shelby Star

The 1966 Gardner-Webb University alumnus — remembered as a Navy serviceman and former Major League Baseball player — passed away Sept. 1.

In his military service days, he participated in the funeral for U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

As an athlete, McKee signed a Major League Baseball contract at 16 years old and led Shelby (N.C.) Post 82 to its first American Legion Baseball state title.

He also worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 30 years and served on the Gardner-Webb University Bulldog Club Board of Directors.

The local sports legend, who would have turned 88 on Sept. 16, is perhaps most widely remembered for his pitching success in the 1940s, reaching the Major Leagues with the Philadelphia Phillies, and for his longtime service with the Shelby (N.C.) High School and Post 82 baseball programs.

Photo courtesy of The Shelby Star

As a 16-year-old Major League rookie in 1943, McKee became the youngest player in the 20th century to throw a nine-inning complete-game victory.

McKee was also the ace pitcher of Post 82's first state championship squad in 1942. He earned a 3-2 win in the final game in Wilson, N.C., to clinch the title.

In 2009, the Philadelphia Phillies honored Rogers during Phillies Alumni Weekend.

McKee was a 1977 Cleveland County (N.C.) Sports Hall of Fame inductee.

A funeral service for McKee is set for 11 a.m. Friday, Sept. 5, in the Sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Shelby.