



Al Brancato, 93, a shortstop for the Philadelphia Athletics who, while still a senior at South Philadelphia High School, was signed by Connie Mack, died Thursday, June 14, 2012 at Sunrise at Granite Run, an assisted-living facility in Delaware County. Mr. Brancato was in failing health and had recently moved into the assisted-living facility after breaking a hip several months ago, said his daughter, Sister Helen Brancato.

He and his wife, Isabel, were longtime residents of Upper Darby. They would have celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary next month, their daughter said.

Mr. Brancato grew up at his family's corner store at Rosewood and Porter Streets in South Philadelphia. His parents were immigrants from Italy, and he had three brothers and three sisters. His baseball abilities at Southern High caught the attention of the Athletics' storied manager, Connie Mack.

When he joined the A's, he was given a \$1,000 bonus, which he gave to his parents, Sister Helen said.

He started in the minor leagues and was called up in 1939 to Philadelphia, where he played until World War II, when he signed up for the Navy. He served aboard the USS Boston. He also played in a Navy baseball league with Yankees Hall of Famer Phil Rizzuto. After the war, Mr. Brancato returned to the Athletics, but his abilities had diminished and he only played one year. He played in the minor leagues for several years and also managed a team. He later coached baseball at St. Joseph's University.

In his later years, he participated in baseball card-signing events. He loved sports, and became more of a fan of football than baseball, his daughter said. "He was a character, a nice character who would do anything for anyone," said Sister Helen. "He was an extremely honest, outspoken person. You knew what he was thinking. My poor mother never knew what he was going to say."

In addition to his wife and daughter, Mr. Brancato is survived by sons Albert and David; a brother; a grandchild; and two great-grandchildren.