



Photos submitted

*Michael Kelleher, Aug. 5, 1995*

*Kelleher, Al*

Kelleher shows his form at first base for the Smiths Falls Royals semi-pro squad in 1950.

# Kelleher maintained family tradition, says son

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following letter written by Michael Kelleher, son of the late Al Kelleher, was given to the *Intelligencer* sports department and is printed here in its entirety.

Dad was many things to me. Since I have been a boy, Dad was exciting to be near.

As my mother has said, those who knew Dad knew that God came first, family came second and baseball came third.

Dad loved the game.

I have yet to speak to someone who understood baseball more than Dad. So you have a sense of his commitment to God and his family.

When Dad was here, he maintained a tradition of athletic achievement that began with successes on the baseball field by his father and carried on through by his brother: On Sept. 28, 1919, while playing for the Belleville Grand Trunks, Joseph Alexander Kelleher, in the final game of the Ontario Amateur Baseball Championship, hit a triple to score three runs to defeat the Hamilton Harvesters at the old Belleville Fairgrounds diamond. Jack Edward Kelleher, while serving overseas during the Second World War, wrote home describing the joy he felt pitching for a Canadian Army team and defeating an American team as American

Army generals looked on.

Dad's own baseball career began in 1940. When he was 12-years-old, Dad played for the Army and Navy Juniors softball team. He was coached by Homer "Red" Townsend and played on diamonds at the Fairgrounds and Queen Victoria School. In 1942, Mr. Townsend and Bob Blaind revived the Belleville Baseball League, where games were played at the



Al Kelleher

Alemite.

In September of 1945, Dad played for the Kiwanis Juniors who put out Peterborough and Oshawa only to be defeated by the Wrightville Juniors in the OBA championship semi-finals. Other members of this team included Dick Fitzpatrick and Donny Dolan. A reunion of this team was held earlier this year.

The first time Dad was paid to play ball was in 1946 while playing first base for the Kingston Ponies. He was paid \$200 per month. Ken Colling, a sports-writer for the Ontario *Intelligencer*, told him to go and try out.

In 1948, Dad was scouted by the Brooklyn Dodgers and played

semi-pro ball in Vero Beach, Florida. In 1949, he played with a farm club of the St. Louis Browns in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas and in 1950 he played with the Pittsburgh Pirates farm club in Brunswick, Georgia.

After injuring his left leg, Dad coached in the Lakeshore League. He last played ball in 1954 for the Belleville Batas in the Viaduct League. After 1954, Dad umpired until the end of his life.

For this story and many others, I, like the rest of my family, miss you, Dad. I didn't think I would lose you so soon.

I love you.

Michael.

*Carl T*