

# Kelleher was a real clothes-horse

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outfitted. When he married Shirley, Al owned a tuxedo, eight or nine suits, wide fedora hats and two or three overcoats.

"Having kids changed that," Shirley laughs.

While playing for the Tigers, Al played with Todd Sloan who played for the Chicago Black Hawks and the Toronto Maple Leafs, George 'Chief' Armstrong who played for the Toronto Maple Leafs and he worked out with Hector "Toe" Blake who later coached the

Montreal Canadiens.

In 1949, Al went to spring training for the St. Louis Browns.

In 1950, the Pittsburgh Pirates picked him up. For the fourth year running, the Major Leagues were within grasp. But, once again, Al's dream eluded him.

"In those days, there weren't as many teams as there are now. You had to be able to do everything. Al was not the greatest hitter in the world. He practised and practised."

Practice does not always make perfect, however.

The Major League slipped further away.

"From there he went to the Albany Senators in New Jersey, in the Eastern Class A league. Then he finished out the season in the Ottawa pro league and he played for the Smiths Falls Royals. There he was big."

The Royals took the OBA championship that year.

In 1951 Al played for Kingsway Lumber in Toronto until he pulled a leg muscle and had to go home. That pull bothered him the rest of his life.

Once home, Al coached, and as soon as he could, he was back on the diamond. Then, in

1952, he noticed Shirley, was determined to meet her, and eventually a mutual friend introduced them. The rest, as they say, is history. In 1953, Shirley and Al married.

"Al had all these young friends and every spare moment was to play baseball. He'd get these young guys up on (Belleville Collegiate Institute) campus. He'd hit the ball and they chased the ball for him as long as the light was in the sky."

Some of those guys were James Hearst, Dick Hearst, Harvey Stoliker, Gerry Goyer and Peter Carver.

"He'd get all these kids up,

but he taught them how to play also. He always respected them because they knew how to play."

Al always wanted to give something back to the game.

"The guys he did teach, to this day they know how to play ball."

Al continued to play ball. He coached and eventually umpired as well.

When given the chance to become a professional umpire, Al turned it down to stay with his family.

And, he told Shirley years later, he never regretted it.

Good-bye Al, we miss you still and always.



In 1952, Al Kelleher was back in Belleville playing for the Belleville Batas.

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P.M.

KELLEHER, AL.