

# El Paso Baseball Hall of Famer dies

By Bill Knight

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EL PASO — Jack Harris, a member of the El Paso Baseball Hall of Fame and one of the truly nice guys of this city's athletic scene, passed away Saturday after a long illness.

Harris, who was born in 1943, was an all-district third baseman for Ysleta High School and was a shortstop on Texas Western's first baseball team in 1962. He hit .304 as a senior for the Miners under coach Andy Cohen.

"Jackie and I were on the first baseball team at Texas Western," said long-time friend Mike Barrueta. "We all went to tryouts for that first team. Jackie was my shortstop and he was one of the most mechanically sound, clean playing shortstops you ever saw. You would see the guy walking out there, wearing his glasses and you would think he was an engineering master's student or something. But then he started playing and he was just so smooth and so fluid in everything he did. An old sinker ball pitcher like myself really appreciated a good shortstop. He was a great hitter, too.

"The neatest thing about Jackie, though, was that you would never see him in a fight," Barrueta added. "Jackie was just a nice, nice guy. He was very smart and he played great baseball but he was really a nice guy and he carried that on into the rest of his life.



Harris

He was just a super, super great guy — always willing to help."

Bob Osborne, Burges High School's Hall of Fame baseball coach, said, "I knew Jackie's entire family. I played with his older brother at Ysleta. But Jackie was a nice man, a very, very conscientious man. He approached everything that way. We played on a church softball team together. He grew up playing baseball with his family in the backyard and his dad just about willed them all to be baseball players. They would work on the fundamentals in the backyard over and over. But Jackie was just a nice man and, as I said, he was very conscientious and he applied that to everything he did — from baseball, to teaching, to his work with the Hall of Fame to his every day life."

Steve Enders, also a long time friend, said, "I met Jack 22 years ago when he coached my son in a YMCA league. Because of Jack and his teaching, my son was able to go on and play Division I college baseball. We became friends over the years and I think the word that always comes to mind with Jack is caring. He was a very caring man and he valued friendships and always kept friendships alive. He was just a very warm hearted per-

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# Harris

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son."

Harris played baseball professionally in the Los Angeles Angels organization. He was a long-time school teacher, teaching at Ysleta High School for more than 30 years and then at Bowie. Soft-spoken and polite, Harris always had great passion for the game of baseball and for the El Paso Baseball Hall of Fame. He was inducted into that hall of fame in 1994 and worked on the board of directors until the time of his death.

Harris, in failing health, was introduced at the 2009 Hall of Fame banquet on Oct. 20 and received a standing ovation.

Funeral services are pending.