

Last Rites Held Yesterday In Manhattan for Babe Ruth

Funeral services were held yesterday morning at 10 a.m. in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in New York for the greatest slugger that baseball has ever known—Babe Ruth. Francis Cardinal Spellman presided.

Now that the Babe is dead, sports writers and fans all over the world are reminiscent of the many incidents and gestures which contributed to the "color" that made him famous.

There may be other ball players who will hit more home runs, others who may top his pitching feats, still others who may become greater all-around sluggers and hitters. But one thing is sure—there will never be anyone who will supplant the Babe in his popularity with the fans and especially kids.

All the fans who saw Ruth play, and many of those who didn't, still remember his famous "called" home run in the 1932 World Series against the Chicago Cubs, when Ruth pointed to the spot in the bleachers where he intended to hit a home run—and then did.

There were two things that Ruth did for baseball that should earn him the eternal gratitude of all the fans of the "national pastime."

The first contribution was that he restored the confidence of the fans in the game after the famous, or rather infamous, Chicago Black Sox scandal of 1919. Everytime he hit a home run or performed one of his colorful gestures, the fans began more and more to return to the game—and they loved the Babe for it.

His second achievement was raising the salaries of almost every player in organized baseball. His famous pre-season holdouts for higher salary eventually made him the highest paid player in the history of baseball at \$80,000 per year, thereby forcing bigger paychecks for other players.

The tragedy of Ruth's association with baseball was that he was never able to return to the game permanently after he once left it. His greatest ambition was to manage the New York Yankees, the team for which he performed his greatest feats, but he was always bypassed for someone else.

And it was the same way everywhere else in baseball.

Toward the end of his life, baseball men began to realize the mistake they had made in ignoring the man who restored baseball's integrity. He was given a job with the American Legion and the Ford Motor Company in a promotional scheme which was to enable thousands of youngsters around the country to play ball.

Commissioner A. B. (Happy) Chandler, upon viewing the Babe's body Wednesday, said, "When I became commissioner, I was planning to get the Babe back in active baseball in some capacity."

Others thought the same thing, however, but nobody ever did anything about getting Ruth back where he belonged—in the majors.