

Vincent 'Peck' O'Brien



Vincent L. 'Peck' O'Brien was one of Norwalk's outstanding athletes in the 1920s starting both in high school here and at St. Lawrence University before going on to play minor league baseball in the St. Louis Cardinals farm system.

Born in South Norwalk in 1907 he attended St. Joseph's Parochial School and Franklin Junior High before going on to NHS where he graduated in 1925 after starring in baseball and football.

O'Brien was a pitcher at high school and shared mound duties with the late Irwin 'Ears' Holmes. Incidentally, both were also catchers and could swap positions when necessary. Norwalk High played in the Southern Fairfield County Baseball League in those days battling Greenwich for top honors. In the game with New Haven Commercial, O'Brien fanned 15 batters and walked but one. And to top a fine performance he homered over the

left field fence at Amusement Park with a man on base. And not to be outdone, Holmes in the next inning clouted one over the fence in almost the same spot, but this time with two men on base.

Among his teammates was Ralph Caruso, who is also being honored here tonight. Other members of the baseball team were Jerry Tomey, Tom Skidd, Fred Hunt, Joe Gormley, Lawrence Dennin, John Miller, Sam Sallick, and Ray Scofield.

Following a successful career at St. Lawrence where he shared mound duties with Hal Schumacher, who later starred with the NY Giants for over a decade, and the late Albert T. Scully, who pitched for Westport teams when he taught school in that town and later became first selectman, the St. Louis Cards were impressed with O'Brien and signed him as he completed his college studies. 'Peck' worked up the Cardinal's minor league chain pitching at Rochester, NY; Greensboro, NC; and Danville, IL; until an arm injury forced him to retire from baseball.

O'Brien was a halfback in football at Norwalk High and helped his team win the County Class B championship in the fall of 1924. Everett Bulkley was the captain and quarterback of this team coached by Ferrol Green and Jim O'Boyle. One of O'Brien's top performances was against Fairfield when he scored the lone TD and Bulkley drop kicked the extra point for a 7-0 win.

'Peck' scored the touchdown in Norwalk's 7-0 win over Fairfield and the locals' lone TD in the return game, a 12-7 loss to Fairfield, he intercepted a forward pass and raced through a broken field for the tally. Needless to say, O'Brien had a big part in Norwalk's 75-0 win over Brewster High.

After his pitching days were over, O'Brien went into the retail business and has been an executive at the B. Altman and Co., Fifth Avenue store in New York City for the past 50 years.

His wife, Anne, died in 1957 after 38 years of marriage. She was a dress buyer for B. Altman & Co. 'Peck' is a resident of Manhasset, LI, and commutes daily to his office in NYC.