

Wes Lillie

March 19, 1929 -

Wes Lillie grew up on Galt's east side, at 21 Lowrey Ave. N., and was destined to have a lifelong involvement with local sport. He went from batboy with the Galt Terriers base ball team to player, executive, president. He followed a similar path in hockey, playing Jr. B, refereeing Jr. and Sr. A, and serving as GM for the Galt Hornets, one of the dominant Senior hockey organizations in the nation.

The stories Lillie could recount were legendary, and he crossed paths with many local legends who went on to greater sports glory in the pros. "Sports was everything in this town," he recalled decades later.

He was active in sport from a young age. As a kid, Terrier manager George Weaver would let him stand behind the mound during batting practice, and by 1944 that he began to make his mark with the Galt Junior Pups as a player. That year Lillie played second base for the Junior Intercounty champions.

He played with the juniors again the following year, and in 1946 played second base for the OBA champion Galt Intermediates.

In 1947-48 he played in the middle infield with both the junior and senior clubs, and in 1949 was a regular with the senior Terriers -- a club that would be regarded as one of the strongest Intercounty teams of all time. That season the Terriers, under playing coach Tom Padden, a former big leaguer, won the league pennant, though they were defeated in the post season by the rival Brantford Red Sox.

In 1950 Lillie was traded, much to his surprise, by team president Gus Murray to the Waterloo Tigers for power hitter Don Gallinger, a former NHLer. The Tigers won the championship that year when Lillie, who was never known for his hitting, knocked in the winning run in the longest Intercounty game ever played (21 innings).

"That was the highlight of my baseball years," said Lillie.

But by 1953 Lillie was back with the Galt Terriers, and stayed active with the club until 1959, when he retired.

Between 1961 and 1963 Lillie coached the Galt Juniors, winning the Intercounty title in 1962.

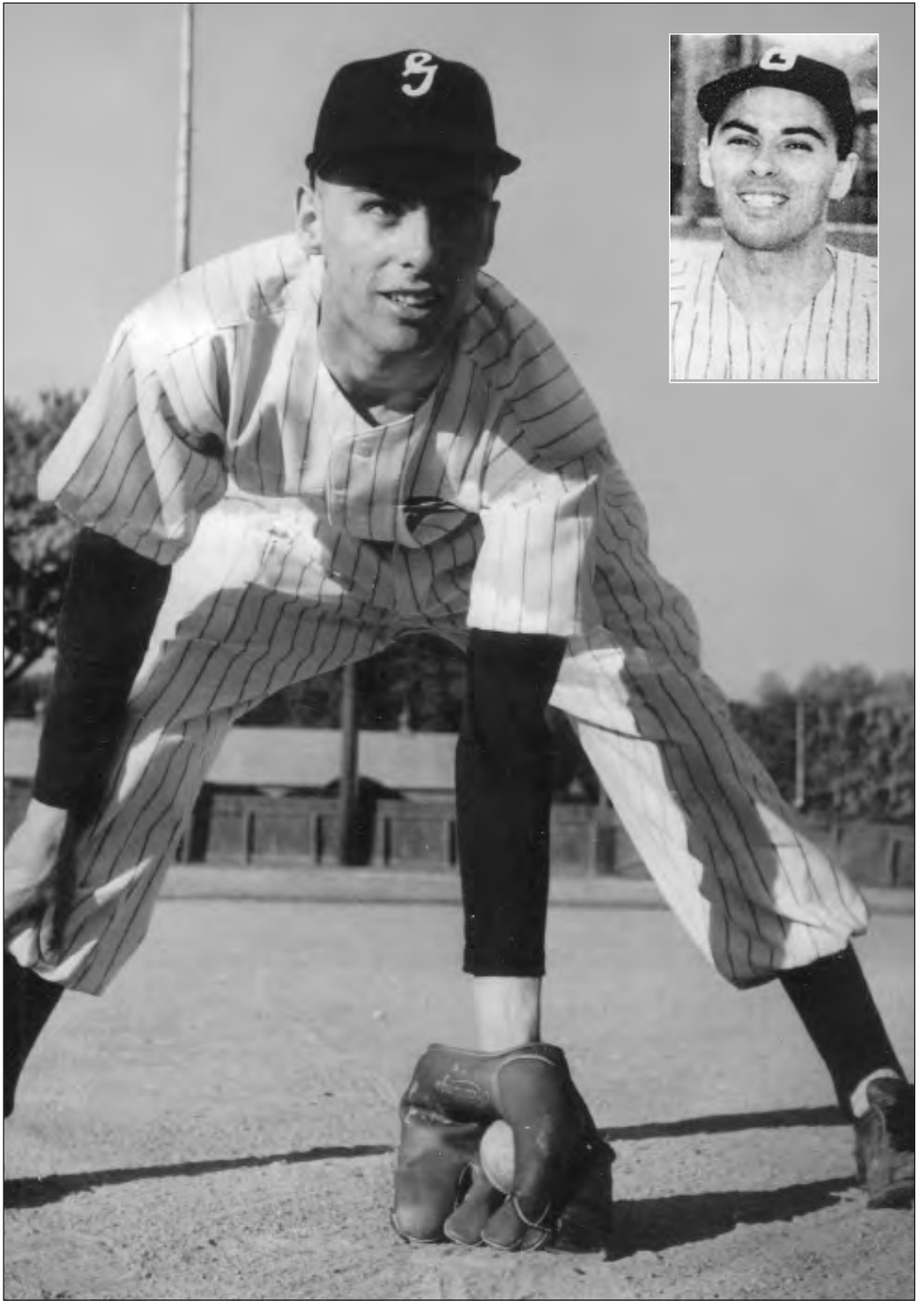
He is one of the only men to manage both the senuior hockey and baseball clubs in Galt's history at the same time. He was field manager and president of the Terriers from 1966-1967, and that year the team won both the pennant and the playoffs.

During his heyday with the Terriers, Lillie stood out as a shortstop in a league that was at its zenith with many former major leaguers.

"I was always impressed with his hustle and fielding skills," said London player and contemporary Bill Winegarden, who played against Lillie.

After his playing days, Lillie continued to be active in coaching and administration for many years.

As GM, he was one of the architects of the nation's best Sr. A hockey franchise during the late 1960s and early 1970s with the Galt (later Cambridge)



Wes Lillie was an outstanding baseball player -- he is shown here with the Galt Terriers -- and became an instrumental part of the Galt Hornet executive in the 1960s and 1970s, left. As GM, he helped build two Allan Cup teams (1968-69; 1970-71).

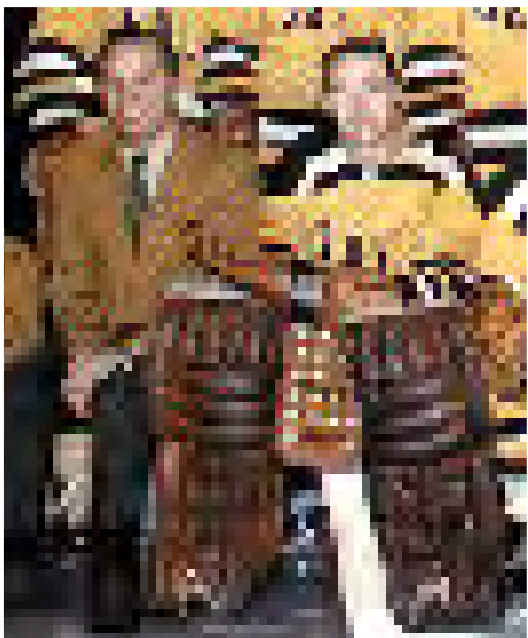
Hornets, a team that would win multiple Allan Cups, emblematic of senior hockey supremacy in North America.

Lillie served as general manager with the Hornets for a decade, from their inception in 1964, during which the Hornets won two Allan Cups.

"As far as I am concerned, winning the first Allan Cup (1968-69) was my biggest thrill," he said. "I think the fans in Galt saw some pretty good hockey during those years."

From 1978-1990 Lillie was the colour man on Kitchener Ranger radio broadcasts with Don Cameron. He had a seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of players and understood the game and its history. "I enjoyed doing radio for all those years, and got the chance to meet a lot of people, but I didn't like all the travel."

Being inducted into the CSHF is a fitting tribute for a man who was such an integral part of the sport fabric in the Region of Waterloo.



Inducted 2010