

A Moment of Silence for Joseph Bartlinski, DC

FORMER TRAINER FOR BALTIMORE COLTS FOUNDED BROOKLYN HOMES BOYS CLUB AND COACHED YOUTH FOOTBALL

Editorial Staff

Joseph "Doc" Bartlinski, a chiropractic pioneer who spent more than four decades treating young athletes free-of-charge in the Brooklyn area just south of Baltimore, Maryland, died September 2, 2002 of a pulmonary embolism, less than two months shy of his 77th birthday.

Born on October 23, 1925, Dr. Bartlinski moved with his family to Maryland in 1942. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, seeing extensive duty in Burma and Indochina. Wounded in the right knee by shrapnel, he returned home and enrolled in medical school at the prestigious Johns Hopkins University. He spent two years at Johns Hopkins, then transferred to the Columbia Institute of Chiropractic in Baltimore, earning his doctor of chiropractic degree in 1950.

Dr. Bartlinski was an avid sports fan. He started the Brooklyn Homes Boys Club in 1948, with programs in football, fast-pitch softball and boxing. In 1951, after opening a chiropractic office in Brooklyn, he instituted a policy of treating, for no charge, any young athlete who came in with an injury that needed treatment - a policy that lasted more than 40 years.

"Back when I started, nobody had insurance for kids playing ball, and somebody had to take care of them," Dr. Bartlinski said in a 1992 interview. "I never worried about getting paid. It was my contribution to the kids."¹

Although Dr. Bartlinski loved all sports, he was especially passionate about football. In 1953, he began coaching youth football teams, starting with a Pop Warner team called the Brooklyn Blue Devils. After leading the Blue Devils to a combined 25-1 record in two seasons, he was hired as an assistant trainer by the Baltimore Colts in 1955, one of the first chiropractors to work for a professional football team. During his tenure with the Colts, he treated some of the top football players of that era, including NFL Hall-of-Famers Johnny Unitas, Lenny Moore, Gino Marchetti, Buddy Young, Art Donovan and Don Shula.

After two years as a Colts trainer, Dr. Bartlinski founded and coached a semipro football team, the Baltimore Broncos, winning three championships in six seasons. He also coached his sons and grandchildren in various youth leagues, served as an assistant coach at Mount St. Joseph High School in Baltimore, and started the football program at Archbishop Spalding High School in Severn, Maryland in 1984.

The citizens of Brooklyn honored Dr. Bartlinski's contributions to the sports world in 1992, when he became one of the first people inducted into the Anne Arundel County Sports Hall of Fame. Pat O'Malley, a columnist for the Baltimore Sun, had this to say about Dr. Bartlinski at his induction ceremony:

"His compassion for his fellow man and tireless efforts to help everyone who needed help without recognition puts the man in a class by himself. It's doubtful if you could find anyone who would utter a bad word about the man."²

Dr. Bartlinski is survived by his wife of 54 years, Charlotte; sons Joe Jr., James and Edward (a fourth son, Johnny, died in an automobile accident in 1983); daughter Nancy Bush; nine grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

References

1. O'Malley P. Spencer, Barger, Laramore lead '92 class. *Baltimore Sun* October 7, 1992.
2. O'Malley P. Fame for Barger, Bartlinski, Laramore, Spencer and Walker. *Baltimore Sun* October 25, 1992.

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