

RETROSPECTIVE

Ray Yochim

1922 – 2002

Professional Pitcher and Diamond Club Founder

by

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Ray Yochim, a New Orleanian whose 13-year professional pitching career included stops with the St. Louis Cardinals and the New Orleans Pelicans, died on January 26, 2002 in New Orleans. He was 79 years old.

In addition to a distinguished career as a player, Yochim served as a scout in the New York Yankees organization and managed the Pelicans briefly at the end of the 1958 season. His travels as a professional ballplayer took Yochim from Columbus, GA to Columbus, OH, and from Fresno, CA to Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Yochim was first noticed as a pitcher at S.J. Peters High School in New Orleans. He signed a pro contract with St. Louis and by 1941 Ray Yochim got his first taste of professional competition with Fresno in the California League.

Yochim's major league experience was the proverbial *cup of coffee* with St. Louis in 1948 and 1949. His four National League appearances amounted to just over three innings pitched. He had some strong minor league seasons at the Double-A and Triple-A levels, including three separate stints with the Pelicans.

Yochim served a 3-year hitch in the Marine Corps during World War II. In his return to organized ball in 1947 he won 14 games for Triple-A Rochester. He had a 15-win season with Double-A Birmingham in 1950.

Yochim was the founder of the Diamond Club of Greater New Orleans in 1959. Always popular in the community of former players and coaches, Ray Yochim rallied them into an organization, the Diamond Club, and served as its first president from 1959 through 1961. He held various offices in the organization as it grew in the years that followed. Along with his younger brother Lenny (also a

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talented professional pitcher), Ray Yochim was inducted into the Diamond Club of Greater New Orleans Hall of Fame in 1972.

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