

Don Grate

Don Grate was born in Greenfield on August 27, 1923. As he was growing up he had a keen interest in sports as were all young boys at the time. He says he improved his batting skills by hitting rocks with a broomstick over the railroad tracks near his home.

As a student at McClain High School he earned four varsity letters in both football and basketball and three letters in baseball. He also won All-Ohio honors.

After graduating from McClain in 1942 he attended Ohio State University leading the freshman basketball team to an undefeated season. As a sophomore and junior he was elected team captain and the team made it to the NCAA Semi-Finals both years. He earned All-Big Ten and All-American honors both years.

On the OSU baseball team Don played centerfield, shortstop and pitcher, earning the award for best offensive player as a freshman, sophomore and tying for the honor as a junior.

After his junior year he signed with the Philadelphia Phillies. He played several games with the Phillies over the 1945 and 1946 seasons but spent most of his time at the Phillies's farm team in Utica, New York. An arm injury near the end of the 1946 season affected Don's pitching.

During the off season with the Phillies, Don returned to OSU to work on his degree earning his teaching certificate in 1949. He taught in the Worthington and Westerville schools before signing with the Chattanooga Lookouts in 1952. Chattanooga was in the Southern Association minor league.

In throwing demonstrations at Chattanooga he set the record for [longest throw](#) three times with his best distance at 445 feet and 1 inch. He retired in 1957, teaching in Ohio and Chattanooga. After moving to Miami, Florida, he earned his master's degree and taught high school until 1988.