

DAVE TOMLINSON

Dave Tomlinson gave up the promise of a big league baseball career with the St. Louis Cardinals and the Philadelphia Athletics to teach and coach at Menaul High School.

He dedicated his adult life to the Presbyterian Mission School where he spent nearly 40 of his 73 years as all-sports coach, athletic director, student guidance counselor, volunteer and caretaker.

His always-competitive Panther teams won more than 1,200 athletic contests.

He's remembered best for his 1975 football team that compiled the school's only unbeaten, untied and unscored upon club during the regular season. The only loss that year was in post-season play.

He went to work for Menaul on Oct. 14, 1945, and left employment there on Dec. 31, 1984. He contributed time as volunteer coach of the women's basketball and track teams after his formal retirement in 1976.

Tomlinson, who died of cancer on Jan. 12, 1985, was selected Albuquerque's coach of the year in 1975.

Tomlinson was born and reared in Bridgeport, Conn. The New York Giants tried to sign him as a pitcher when he was 18 years old, but his mother refused to give her consent.

When he was 20, Tomlinson signed with the St. Louis Cardinals and played briefly with the club's Class C team in Maryland. He played the next year for the Philadelphia Athletics' Penn League team where he was MVP, but he chose not to remain with the A's

organization.

It was then that he decided to move west.

He came to Albuquerque in 1944 to teach special education at a private school, but the job fell through, so he worked at a feed store.

Because he has served as an assistant coach in a private school in Pennsylvania, he accepted a part-time job in the spring at Menaul. That fall he became head coach in all sports.

In 1983 the National High School Athletic Coaches Association, in its annual convention here, presented him its prestigious distinguished service award.

Tomlinson received many honors. The one he treasured most, however, was in 1976 when the Menaul student body voted to name the school's football stadium in his honor.

Tomlinson worked up to 12 hours a day as a teacher, counselor, coach and campus caretaker, but it didn't keep him from continuing his education. He attended classes at the University of New Mexico. In 1964 at age 53, he received his degree in education.

The Albuquerque Sports Hall of Fame presented him its Award of Distinction in 1985—a week before he died.

At the time of his death Tomlinson held the longest continuing membership in the New Mexico High School Coaches Association (38 years).