

Hall of Fame Inductee T. Mitchell Burns Jr. – Englewood

The freshman Phantoms baseball team was playing in the spring of 1972 and before one game at the Sophomore Field at JFK High School, Coach Dennis Sullivan pointing out the umpire who was preparing to call the game. "T. Mitchell Burns," the coach announced with combination of grandiloquence and dismay. The player's attention was drawn to a dignified, white-haired man who looked to be oldest person they had ever seen on a baseball field. While telling the players that Mr. Burns was a long-time umpire and implied that he should not be given any grief, the coach was also rolling his eyes and shaking his head and grinning with chagrin. The coach's introduction was some suggestion that T. Mitchell Burns Jr. was more than just an old umpire.

Burns' obituary found in the Rocky Mountain News stated that Mitchell died October 25, 1985, at age 84. The obituary begins with his name and "long-time baseball umpire and sports enthusiast in the Denver area." He was born June 14, 1901, in Denver. He graduated D.U., married Helen Hudson in Denver on his birthday in 1929, and was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 1932. He ran T. Mitchell Burns Insurance Agents until retiring in 1980. Mitchell was also credited as an alternate umpire in the Western and Pacific Coast Leagues and American Association.

A March 28, 1974, Denver Post sports page feature provided these items about Mitchell:

- Umpired at various levels since 1920, approximately 5000 games
- Saw every national AAU basketball tourney for three decades
- Had 40 years season tickets to D. U. football
- Held Bronco season ticket priority number 8
- Saw every World Series for 32 years
- Attended 20 All-Star baseball games
- "On an October day in 1959, Burns saw an Air Force Academy football game at D.U. Stadium, flew to Buffalo, N.Y. to watch the Bears win the Little World Series Championship, watched a National Hockey League exhibition game that evening and at about midnight flew to New York City for next day's World Series opener."