

My name is McLendon Hill. I have the privilege this morning to talk to you about Daddy B and one of his passions. I happen to share that passion with him, and that passion is a love for Sports. Daddy B didn't just love to watch sports, but he was quite the athlete himself. I'm actually lucky enough to get to share a few stories with you to illustrate his skills.

Daddy B went to Cadwell High School, where he participated in football, basketball, and track. He probably would have been on the baseball team as well, if they had one. He was asked to compete in the state track meet in two events: the high jump and the discus throw. Back then, the high jump had different rules and regulations. There was no padding on the other side of the bar. So for the jump to count, you had to clear the bar and land on your feet on the other side. Daddy B arrived at the high jump event wearing pants and his only pair of shoes, brogans (farm shoes). After the bar reached five feet, most of the other competitors had been eliminated. At this point, Daddy B's track coach asked one of the other students if his athlete could borrow their shoes. After squeezing his big feet into them, he noticed a huge difference in the weight. This was a very good decision by the coach. Daddy B went on to make a jump of 5 feet 8 inches, which was high enough to win him first place and a state championship. He actually set a state record with this jump which stood until the regulations changed.



Next, it was time for the discus throw. At this point, Daddy B did not know the correct form to throw a discus. When he arrived at the event, he had to learn by watching the other athletes during their throws. Also, the discus Daddy B had was made of wood, much less up-to-date than the rubber ones used by the other throwers. However, he was still able to compete. After his second-to-last throw, the wooden discus wasn't returned to him. As a result, Daddy B had to borrow one of the newer models for his last throw. This throw resulted in 129 feet, which was long enough to win him first place and another state championship.

As good as Daddy B was at all sports, he did have a favorite, and that favorite was baseball. His love for the game started in the 1930s when he would wake up every morning to check the sports page of the paper first, in order to see the stats of his favorite player, Jimmie Foxx. Even as he grew old, Daddy B still checked the sports page first.

At this point, Daddy B had never even seen a real baseball. He and his friends would make their own out of old seams from flour and Croker sacks. They used cloth for gloves and added cotton for padding as needed. Their baseball diamond was a pasture filled with gallberry bushes and tree stumps. The tree stumps were used for bases and also came in handy whenever there was a fly ball hit. "STUMP!!!"

Daddy B didn't just play baseball for fun either. Shortly after his high school days were over, he had attracted the attention of at least one baseball scout who believed he had a career in the game, but that dream was put on hold due to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but that's another story.

Speaking of Daddy B's Marine experiences, he once said that the sports he played growing up gave him the confidence he needed to be successful in the Marine Corps. Daddy B instilled a love for sports in his children and grandchildren at a young age. This is apparent to anyone who just visits the Bedingfield house. There are 3 basketball goals in the backyard, gloves, bats, and balls of all kinds in the next door house, a pool table, ping-pong table, and exercise room as well. I used to think Daddy B taught us this love for sports for nothing more than fun. However, now I know that he wanted to instill that same confidence in us. Daddy B knew how much his athletic experience had helped him in the Marines, and he wanted the same confidence to apply to each and every one of his children and grandchildren, in whatever we happen to do in life. Even from the beginning, Daddy B was always thinking of our futures. And I love Him for that. Thank you.