

From professional baseball player and internationally known prized pigeon breeder to sheriff, Wilmer Bryan "Rip" Schroeder is one that people remember.

Wilmer, called Rip, was born on December 12, 1908, in Omaha, Nebraska. His parents were Frederick M. Schroeder (1885-1914) and Johanna Hannah Henriette Hamann (1886-1926).

Rip played baseball, basketball, and football in high school in Omaha. In 1927, when he was 18, he signed a professional baseball contract with the St. Louis Browns of the American League. He spent 13 years playing minor league baseball. He was a member of the 1937 Columbus, Ohio, team that won the American Association pennant and playoffs.

Rip married Viola Iona Sudmann (1905-2005) on May 1, 1931, in Union, South Dakota. Vi was the daughter of Wilhelm Henry Friedrich Sudmann (1869-1943) and Wilhelmina Marie Felton (1872-1948).

Rip played nine seasons as a minor league player, in Sioux City, Omaha, Des Moines, and Knoxville area.



In late 1941, efforts were made to clean up illegal gambling that had been going on in Shakopee. Pictured are Sheriff J.P. Wermerskirchen and deputy W.B. "Rip" Schroeder with some slot machines that were confiscated and destroyed.



Rip joined the sheriff's department after he injured his pitching arm.

Rip was sheriff of Scott County from 1951 to 1971, a county record. He was deputy sheriff for nine years before that and worked for the State Sheriff's Association as executive director for nine years after retirement. In his five successful bids for sheriff, Schroeder was more often praised by his opponents than criticized. George Mankowski, who lost to Schroeder in 1962, called him "one of the best sheriffs in the state," said an article in the October 25, 1986 *Minnesota Star and Tribune*.

In 1953 Rip was elected president of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, according to Scott County's "History of the Sheriff's Office." Sheriff Schroeder was responsible for modernizing the sheriff's office in many ways, including purchasing the first marked patrol car, implementing uniforms for deputies and himself (which made Scott County the first Minnesota county outside a metropolitan area to have uniformed sheriff's deputies), overseeing building the Scott County Public Safety Building in 1959, purchasing a patrol boat, and starting a radio dispatch headquarters for Scott and Carver counties.

In 1955 Schroeder attended the FBI academy in Quantico, Virginia, according to Hennepin County Sheriff Don Omodt. "For a sheriff in a rural county to attend the FBI academy ... and graduate with honors ... was an inspiration. The sheriffs of Minnesota owe him more than they can repay."

"The other side of Rip is that he was perhaps one of the most respected lobbyists the Minnesota Legislature had the pleasure of working with in the years he represented Minnesota sheriffs. He was a gentleman ... He was a diplomat," said the October 25, 1986 *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*.

Rip Schroeder

Position: Pitcher
Bats: Both • **Throws:** Right
6-3, 175lb (190cm, 79kg)
Born: December 12, 1908 in Omaha, NE
Died: October 23, 1986 in Gaylord, MN
Buried: Valley Cemetery, Shakopee, MN
High School: Tech High School (Omaha, NE)
Full Name: Wilmer Bryan Schroeder

Although receiving numerous honors and awards in law enforcement and civic contributions, among his friends, Rip was known as “Giant of the Pigeon World.” He was a prolific writer of articles on the King breed of pigeons. He was past president of the National Pigeon Association and the American King Club and was secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota King Club for 25 years.

Rip was also past president of the St. John’s Lutheran Church council and





congregation in Shakopee and a member of Faith Lutheran Church.

Wilmer Bryan “Rip” Schroeder died of cancer at age 77 in Gaylord, Minnesota on October 23, 1986. He was buried at Valley Cemetery in Shakopee. Rip’s wife, Viola Iona Sudmann Schroeder, died on December 31, 2005, and was buried near her husband at Valley Cemetery.

Bibliography

“History of the Sheriff’s Office.” *Scott County*. www.scottcountymn.gov/1520/History-of-Sheriffs-Office.

Minnesota Star and Tribune, 25 Oct. 1986.

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1908-1986

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