

## Froman

in fact, the notation in the official record book.

Frick retired in November 1965 at the age of seventy-one after serving two seven-year terms as commissioner. In 1970 he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He died in Bronxville, N.Y.

Frick's legacy to the game of baseball was summarized by the commissioner of baseball at the time of his death, Bowie Kuhn, who said that during Frick's tenure, when baseball experienced unprecedented expansion and transition, he brought to the game "integrity, dedication and a happy tranquility."

[Clippings and news releases pertinent to Frick's tenure as commissioner are available through Major League Baseball, Office of the Commissioner, New York City. Frick's memoirs are in *Games, Asterisks, and People* (1973). An obituary is in the *New York Times*, Apr. 10, 1978.]

GLENN N. SKLARIN

**FROMAN, ELLEN JANE** (Nov. 10, 1907–Apr. 22, 1980), singer, was born in St. Louis, Mo., the daughter of Elmer Ellsworth Froman and of Anna T. Barcafer, a teacher of piano and voice and a vocal soloist. After her parents were divorced in 1912, Froman and her mother returned to her mother's hometown, Clinton, Mo., where her mother supported them by teaching piano and voice in the local public schools. Although the family was not Catholic, Froman received her elementary education at a convent in Clinton. Froman's mother married W. J. Hetzler, the mayor of Columbia, Mo., in 1930.

As a child, Froman stuttered. A specialist in St. Louis recommended voice lessons, and the musical talent that she possessed was developed. Froman first studied voice and piano with her mother. She attended the high school division at Christian College (now Columbia College), in Columbia, where she appeared in musicals and plays. Interested in singing and writing, Froman continued to participate in musical theater during her two years at Christian College, from which she received an Associate of Arts degree with a major in French (1924). She then spent one year at the University of Missouri in Columbia, majoring in journalism.

Froman's first big break came when she sang the leading role in the journalism department's revue. A booker from St. Louis heard her and offered her a singing job in St. Louis. Froman

decided to continue her musical studies and attended the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. In 1930, after she sang "St. Louis Blues" at a party, Powel Crosley, Jr., asked her to sing on radio station WLW in Cincinnati. In 1932, Froman joined the Paul Whiteman band and made her first appearance at the Oriental Theater in Chicago. She also appeared on radio shows and performed in Chicago nightclubs. In March of that year, Froman moved to New York City, where she sang on local radio programs and in nightclubs and worked with such musicians as the Dorsey Brothers and Benny Goodman in the Lennie Hayton band. Froman married singer-entertainer Don Ross in September 1932; they had no children. By the time she appeared in *Ziegfeld Follies of 1934*, she had become a major singing star.

In 1940, Froman appeared in the Broadway show *Keep Off the Grass* with Ray Bolger and Jimmy Durante. President Franklin Roosevelt asked her to entertain American soldiers at Camp Dix, N.J., and thereafter she performed in USO shows at other bases. On Feb. 22, 1943, Froman was a member of a USO group on board the *Yankee Clipper*, a Pan American World Airways plane, when it crashed in the Tagus River, near Lisbon, Portugal. One of the few survivors, she was kept afloat in the icy river by the injured copilot of the plane, John Burn, until help came. Froman's right arm was broken in several places, two or three of her ribs were broken, her left leg was cut to the bone, and her right leg sustained a compound fracture so severe that it was nearly cut off. For weeks she was in critical condition. Burn and Froman were in the same Lisbon hospital for months, and a strong friendship developed. Over the next seven years, Froman strove to continue her career while undergoing twenty-five operations, spending a total of nearly three years in hospitals.

Froman progressed from singing in a wheelchair, to hobbling to the stage on crutches, to walking with a heavy brace on her right leg. She endured almost thirty bone grafts and operations before she was finally able to walk on her own. (In later years, she walked with a cane. She hid scars on her arms with long sleeves and her leg brace with long skirts.)

Froman traveled to Europe to entertain wounded American troops in hospitals and camps. She divorced Don Ross in 1948 and married John Burn; they were divorced in 1956.

Froman appeared in the Broadway show *Laugh, Town, Laugh* (1942), and for the Broadway play *Artists and Models* (1943) she rehearsed in her hospital room. She weighed eighty-five pounds and was wearing a thirty-five-pound cast. Among the songs she recorded for Decca are "My Melancholy Baby," "I Only Have Eyes for You," and "Lost in a Fog." For Capitol she recorded "With a Song in My Heart," "That Old Feeling," "Blue Moon," "It's a Good Day," and others. In 1952, Froman's life was depicted in the movie *With a Song in My Heart*, starring Susan Hayward. Froman dubbed the vocals.

Struggling with enormous medical bills, Froman sued Pan American for \$2.5 million in 1953. In 1957 the House of Representatives voted to pay her \$138,000 as compensation for her wartime injuries.

In 1949, Froman became so depressed that she was admitted to the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kans. During her six-month stay, she became interested in helping emotionally disturbed children. In 1951, she established the Jane Froman Foundation for Emotionally Disturbed Children.

In spite of her injuries and constant pain, Froman starred in the television shows "USA Canteen" and "The Jane Froman Show." She also continued to sing in nightclubs, one of her last appearances being at the Flamingo, in Las Vegas. Froman retired in 1961 and moved back to Columbia, Mo., where she married a childhood friend, Rowland H. Smith, in 1962. She received a USO gold medal in 1968. In later years, Froman served as a trustee of Christian College (Columbia College), the Menninger Foundation, and the Missouri Society of Crippled Children and Adults.

The traditional training that Froman received was evident in her vocal delivery. (In the 1930's and 1940's, a musically educated popular vocalist was highly unusual.) Jane Froman was not a jazz or swing singer, but a vocalist of popular song, performing on the Broadway stage as well as in nightclubs. Her strongest appeal was in her heartfelt delivery of music and lyrics in a strong contralto voice. She died in Columbia, Mo.

[The Jane Froman collection is at Columbia College, Columbia, Mo. Articles concerning Froman include Arthur Mann, "Song in Her Heart," *Collier's*, Jan. 22, 1944; Rose Hyblut, "Comeback with Words and Music," *Etude*, Dec. 1948; and Jane Fro-

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man, "The Woman I Have Become," *Good Housekeeping*, Nov. 1952. An obituary is in the *New York Times*, Apr. 23, 1980.]

JAN SHAPIRO