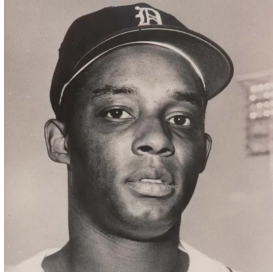# Former Tigers outfielder Lenny Green dies at age 86

Lynn Henning, The Detroit News   Published 5:41 p.m. ET Jan. 6, 2019 | **Updated 5:41 p.m. ET Jan. 6, 2019**

(Photo: Detroit News archives)

Lenny Green, who helped the Tigers nearly win the American League pennant in 1967, died Sunday morning, said his former Tigers teammate, Willie Horton.

A native Detroiter who played at Pershing High, Green died on his 86th birthday. Green played 12 seasons in the big leagues, beginning with the Orioles and Washington Senators before they relocated to Minnesota as the Twins. He was an outfielder and speedy left-handed batter who came to the Tigers from the Twins in the summer of '67 as a stand-in for Al Kaline, who had fractured his finger on the dugout bat rack with an angry shove following a frustrating at-bat.

Green batted .278 in 58 games for the Tigers as they marched to the regular season's last day, just missing an American League championship and World Series trip that a year later they would win.

"Such a good man," Horton said Sunday, speaking of his relationship with Green and how he had come to know and befriend a Detroit prep star during exhibition games at Horton's alma mater, Detroit Northwestern High. The two men together with a group of other Detroiters and African-Americans became early pioneers following baseball's erasure of the color line.

The group included Willie Kirkland and Leon Wagner, two more Detroiters who had battled entrenched racism on their way to eventual big-league careers.

Green played six games for the Tigers in 1968 before retiring.

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