

## ALLA CORRENTE

### Angelo Giamatti

Angelo Bartlett “Bart” Giamatti, April 4, 1938–September 1, 1989 was the President of Yale University, and later, the seventh Commissioner of Major League Baseball. He attended Yale University and graduated *magna cum laude* in 1960, and stayed in New Haven to receive his doctorate in 1964 and become a professor of Comparative Literature at Yale. Giamatti’s scholarly work focused on English Renaissance literature, particularly Edmund Spenser, and relationships between English and Italian Renaissance poets. He served as President of Yale University from 1978 to 1986. He was the youngest President of the University in its history, and presided over the University during a bitter strike by its clerical and technical workers in 1984-85. Giamatti had a lifelong interest in baseball (he was a die-hard Boston Red Sox fan). In 1978, when he was first rumored to be a candidate for the presidency of Yale, he had deflected questions by observing that, “The only thing I ever wanted to be President of was the American League.” He became President of the National League in 1986, and Commissioner of Baseball in 1989. During his stint as the National League president, Giamatti placed an emphasis on the need to improve the environment for the fans in the ballparks. He also decided to make umpires strictly enforce the balk rule, and supported “social justice” as the only remedy for the lack of presence of minority managers, coaches, or executives at any level in Major League Baseball. His tough dealing with Yale’s union favorably impressed Major League Baseball owners, and he was unanimously elected to succeed Peter Ueberroth as commissioner on September 8, 1988. Giamatti was commissioner on August 24, 1989 when Pete Rose voluntarily agreed to permanent ineligibility from baseball. As reflected in the agreement with Pete Rose, Giamatti was determined to maintain the integrity of the game during his brief commissioner-ship. While at his vacation home on Martha’s Vineyard, Giamatti, a heavy smoker for many years, died suddenly of a massive heart attack at the age of 51, just eight days after banishing Rose and 154 days into his tenure as commissioner. He became the second baseball commissioner to die in office, the first being Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

- Dr. James J. Boitano  
(Adapted from Wikipedia)