

THE BALTIMORE CHOP

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BABE RUTH CHAPTER OF BALTIMORE



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH



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Summer 2022

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ESPN

Tim Kurkjian: SABR Keynoter Touches All the Bases on Way to Cooperstown

President's Message

Well, folks, it is finally just about upon us. The SABR 50 convention that we were promised in June 2019 (in San Diego) for the summer of 2020 is arriving.

The pandemic still hovers over us like a bad smog that won't disappear entirely but seems to have dissipated enough for us to get together more than 24 months later.

We certainly look at the world differently now. But thanks to Zoom and related applications, we have able to communicate with each other even during the days of lockdown and uncertainty.

As we gather together in person, we are reminded that once again it is our love of the game of baseball that unites us. Debates, discussions, and just friendly banter will be the main course over four days in August. We will be treated to wonderful speakers and panels, top-notch academic presentations,

We all know him. Most people will recognize him from Sunday Night Baseball or his other appearances on ESPN, where he has worked since 1998 as both a writer and TV journalist. But Tim Kurkjian's story goes beyond his TV fame. It started with a baseball passion that began during his youth and has never let up.

He did collect baseball cards and play baseball in his youth, but it was during high school that he decided to go the

journalism route. His two older brothers played baseball at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., but Tim headed to the University of Maryland in the Washington suburbs after graduating from Walter Johnson High School.

He wrote for his high school paper, *The Pitch*, and, while at Maryland, covered high school sports for his local county paper. Kurkjian moved to the *Washington Star* after graduation and worked

Kurkjian ▶ Page 10



SABR 50
August 17-21

You Can't Miss BBRC at SABR 50

The Baltimore Babe Ruth chapter of SABR is just 7 years old, and its impact has been growing.

Three years ago, this chapter was named to host SABR 50, the golden-anniversary convention, a notable achievement for a 4-year-old chapter and a signal that this chapter was one to watch.

SABR now has 82 regional chapters, and the BBRC now boasts the most members despite its location in the #20 metro area.

We're proud that 521 of SABR's 7,200-plus members are part of our chapter, and SABR 50 attendees will not have a hard time noticing the local flavor:

SABR 50 ▶ Page 9

President ▶ Page 5



SABR Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter

Formed 2015

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Find us on [Facebook](#), too.

Calendar

Regularly scheduled events

Zoom registration links are sent by the chapter

Peeps @ The Peeb (in-person and Zoom)

Conversation, nibbles, libations
First Wednesday of the month, 7-9 PM
Peabody Heights Brewery, 401 E. 30th St., Baltimore

Talkin' Baseball (Zoom only until further notice)

Since 2001, Bob Davids Chapter hosts a guest speaker
First Saturday of the month, 9 A.M.

Called Shot Lunch (in-person only)

BYO lunch and talk baseball
Third Wednesday of the month, noon
Babe Ruth Museum, 216 Emory St., Baltimore

Baltimore Baseball Babble (Zoom only)

Free-for-all baseball chat, not recorded
Last Sunday of the month, 7-9 P.M.

July

20: Called Shot Lunch

31: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 5

August

3: Peeps @ The Peeb, SABR member Dan Taylor on his new book on Kenny Washington

7: Talkin' Baseball, Dan Levitt on his and Mark Armour's new book *Intentional Balk-Baseball's Thin Line Between Innovation and Cheating*

17: Called Shot Lunch

17-21: SABR 50, Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor

28: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 6

September

4: Joint BBRC/Philadelphia event to Aberdeen Ironbirds

7: Peeps @ The Peeb, SABR member Kelly Park on his books *Just Like Me* vols. 1 and 2

Getting to Know ... Dan Joseph

Dan Joseph, a SABR member since 2019, is a native Pittsburgher now living in Cumberland, Maryland. He's a 20-plus-year veteran of the Voice of America, mainly as an editor in its central newsroom running the Africa desk.

His first ballgame was at Three Rivers Stadium in the summer of 1977, and he's still a Pirates fan, but he's added the Yankees and Dodgers as favorites. That's evident with his favorite players of the past (early Dave Parker and Derek Jeter) and present (Aaron Judge and Clayton Kershaw).

His favorite ballpark is PNC, with Camden Yards "a close second."

But his favorite baseball memory is from Three Rivers: "Last day of season at Three Rivers, 1979. Pirates need a win and a Montreal Expos loss to clinch the division. Seventh inning, the PA announcer asks crowd to direct their attention to the scoreboard for an update on the Expos-Phillies game. They flash Montreal's score: 0. Three seconds pass, tension builds. Then, they flash Philadelphia's score: 2. The crowd erupts with cheers. I thought that was very creative. Couldn't be done today with smartphones. People would already know the score."

He lists writing books as a hobby and has written two on baseball, a Pete Reiser biography which came out last year (see page 7) and *Last Ride of the Iron Horse*, on Lou Gehrig's final full season in the Yankee lineup, 1938, as he began to feel the effects of ALS. He's the co-author of a book on a Somali terrorist group, *Inside Al-Shabaab*, and is writing one on the Pittsburgh Steelers' legendary announcer Myron Cope.

As for something most people don't know about him, he guesses that maybe it's "that I found the audio clip of Lou Gehrig saying yes, Babe Ruth did call his shot in the 1932 World Series. I put it online on the 88th anniversary of the shot, and it's been listened to over 220,000 times." (Find it on his website danjosephauthor.net)



Welcome, New Members

Joy Absalon	Centreville
Robert Cullen	Baltimore
Wayne Fisher	Georgetown, Texas
Steve McGookin	Baltimore
John Moyer	Purcellville, Virginia
Nate Rowan	Baltimore
Johnnie Simpson	Baltimore
Andrew Weltlinger	Baltimore
DeWayne Wickham	Orlando

Chop Deadlines

Fall 2022	September 30
Winter 2022-23	December 31
Spring 2023	March 31
Summer 2023	June 30

Gil, Loretta, George, Dell, and Bill–Jimmie Foxx Fans For Life

By Mark R. Millikin

I first learned about Hall of Famer Jimmie Foxx in 1960, when I was 9 years old, opening a pack of Fleer baseball cards outside Scotties Market on Main Street in Randolph, Massachusetts. I studied Card #53 for James Emory Foxx (Double X) front and back and was spellbound by his lifetime totals of 534 home runs, 1,921 runs batted in, and .325 batting average. I was doubly impressed that Foxx hit 58 homers in one season, was the American League's MVP three times and was born in my home state of Maryland in a town called Sudlersville. Long before the internet, it was not easy to find information on the spot about Sudlersville or Jimmie Foxx for that matter, without a *Baseball Encyclopedia*. After reading a whole host of baseball biographies in the 1980s, my interest in Foxx took flight when Bill Deane of the Hall of Fame told me that no full-length biography had been written about Double X. I decided to research his life and baseball career to write one.

Foxx's batting accomplishments from 1929-40 were close to Ruthian. In fact, sportswriters called him the right-handed Ruth and the next Babe Ruth because Foxx was swatting the longest home runs by a right-handed batter in AL parks while Ruth did the same left-handed. The frequency of comparisons between Ruth and Foxx increased when Jimmie slugged home runs at a rapid pace in 1932, reaching 58 before falling short of Ruth's single-season record of 60.

The handsome blue-eyed, brown-haired farm boy with the bulging biceps showing from his cutaway sleeves had his own legion of baseball fans nationwide, many of them who possibly admired Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig but tired of the Yankees' domination in the 1920s. They thrilled to the World Series radio broadcasts featuring Foxx and the A's from 1929 to 1931.

Foxx's hometown feted him thrice during his playing days. In the spring of 1925, Sudlersville held a sendoff dinner for him before the 17-year-old headed to Florida for his first spring training with Connie Mack's A's. After Foxx led the AL in batting for most of the 1929 season and led the A's to a World Series win, Sudlersville honored him again. Sudlersville saluted Foxx for a third time in the fall of 1933 after he won the Triple Crown. Many of Foxx's teammates attended the last two celebrations. The town sang a newly penned song, "Jimmie Boy! Our Jimmie Boy! to the tune of "Maryland, My Maryland" during the 1929 dinner for Foxx,

Trivia Corner

See if you can name the professional baseball franchises (major and minor league), with their leagues, that have called Baltimore home. Answer on Page 9.

Team	Years	League
	1872-1874	
	1882-1891	
	1884	
	1892-1899	
	1901-1902	
	1903-1914	
	1914-1915	
	1916-1953	
	1923-1928	
	1929	
	1932	
	1933-1934	
	1938-1948	
	1954-	

and another new song at the 1933 dinner, "Jimmie Foxx, Jimmie Foxx Is Our Hometown Boy" to the tune of "Jingle Bells."

At the beginning of my research to write a biography about Foxx, I had no idea that so many avid Foxx fans still existed. In no time at all I started meeting fans who could easily make a case for being "The No. 1 Jimmie Foxx fan."

Barbara Everett, librarian of the Sudlersville Memorial Library, arranged many of my interviews with Foxx's family members and friends or schoolmates who were still alive in 1990 and 1991. In early 1990, I met Loretta Walls, a third cousin of Jimmie's, who led the effort for a commemorative marble flag base with his name on it in the center of town in 1987. Loretta arranged several more major tributes to the Sudlersville



The card that started an odyssey.

Flash, the Maryland Broadback. In 1997, she organized the dedication of a life-size bronze statue of Foxx in the center of town. Ten years later, she spearheaded a 100th anniversary celebration of his birth in Sudlersville. She shared countless news clippings about Foxx and photos with me (as did Everett) from 1990 to the present day.

On August 5, 1990, I interviewed Gil Dunn in his Kent Island Pharmacy in Stevensville, Maryland. Vacationers motoring eastward from Baltimore across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Ocean City, Maryland, often stopped at the phar-



Loretta Walls, the person behind tributes to her third cousin, Jimmie Foxx, in the 1980s and 1990s, shows off some of her memorabilia, circa 1997.

Sam Bowens: Detoured on the Road to Stardom

By Barry Sparks

In 1964, Brooks Robinson (.317, 28 home runs, 118 RBIs) was voted American League Most Valuable Player and Boog Powell blasted 39 home runs.

But the Oriole who captured the attention of teenage baseball fans in my neighborhood was 22-year-old rookie outfielder Sam Bowens. The 6-1, 200-pounder hit 22 home runs, drove in 71, and batted .263.

Why were we attracted to Bowens? He certainly wasn't the best player on the Orioles. I think it was the exciting promise he displayed.

Like the time he bashed a solo homer off Sudden Sam McDowell in the top of the ninth to give the Orioles a 2-1 victory, or his 14-game hitting streak, or his four-hit game against the Angels, or his bullet throws from right field.

He appeared to be on the road to stardom, but, sadly, he was detoured.

Who would have thought Bowens' major-league career would end after the 1969 season?

After his respectable rookie season, he was never a full-time player. An untimely injury and the Orioles' wealth of talent in the outfield relegated him to the bench. After he retired, Bowens revealed that alcoholism contributed to his downfall.

From 1965 through 1969, he hit just 22 homers, matching his rookie total, and batted .188.

The Wilmington, North Carolina, native was athletically gifted. He won 12 letters in four sports at Williston High School and was All-State in football, baseball, and basketball. He attended what is now Tennessee State University and played three sports there.

The Orioles signed Bowens to a contract in September 1959. After playing for Bluefield in the Appalachian League and Leesburg in the Florida State League in 1960, he was promoted to Class B Fox Cities in the Three-I League, where he slugged hit homers in 1961.

Bowens had a solid year with Class AAA Rochester in 1962, but blossomed in 1963. By mid-July, he was hitting .346. But then he slipped rounding third, pulled a muscle and struggled for the rest of the season. He ended up hitting .287 with 22 homers and 70 RBIs.

Red Wings manager Darrell Johnson said: "Sam has an accurate arm, is fast and has good baseball instincts. I feel he has as good a chance as any player in the International League to play in the majors next year."

Called up to Baltimore in September 1963, Bowens grabbed everyone's attention as he got 16 hits in 48-at bats for a .333 average.

Considered the plum of the Orioles farm system, he had a good chance to play regularly in 1964. O's manager Hank Bauer intended to platoon him in right field.

Early in the season, Bauer abandoned plans to platoon Bowens, who was hitting .324 in the beginning of May. He

contributed consistently for the Orioles, at the plate and in the outfield.

He compiled a 14-game hit streak from August 2-16. And he had hit in five of six games before that streak, giving him hits in 19 of 20 games.

At the beginning of September, the Orioles were in first place, a half-game ahead of the White Sox and three games ahead of the Yankees.

Harry Dalton, the Orioles farm director, said: "Sam's hitting and making all the right plays. He fights at the plate and remarkably, he's responded to pressure far beyond what you might expect for a rookie. He's a rare one who seems to thrive on pressure."

Although the Orioles finished third, the future looked bright for both the club and Bowens.

The right fielder finished with 22 home runs, tying the club's rookie mark set by Ron Hansen in 1960. Bowens was being called the best all-round outfielder developed by the Orioles in the past 10 years.

The Twins' Tony Olivia overshadowed Bowens' rookie season, batting .323 with 32 homers, and 94 RBIs. He collected 19 of the 20 first-place votes for 1964 AL Rookie of the Year. Orioles pitcher Wally Bunker got the other vote.

Bowens, who turned 27 before the start of the 1965 season, was in the Opening Day lineup in right field. Paul Blair was in center field and Jackie Brandt was in left field.

In the second game of the season, Bowens pulled a groin muscle and was out for four weeks. Rookie Curt Blefary took over in right field. He made the most of the opportunity as he nearly matched Bowens' 1964 production. Curt hit 22 homers, drove in 70, and batted .260. He split 136 games between right field and left field. Defensively, he was vastly inferior to Bowens. Blefary was voted the 1965 AL Rookie of the Year.

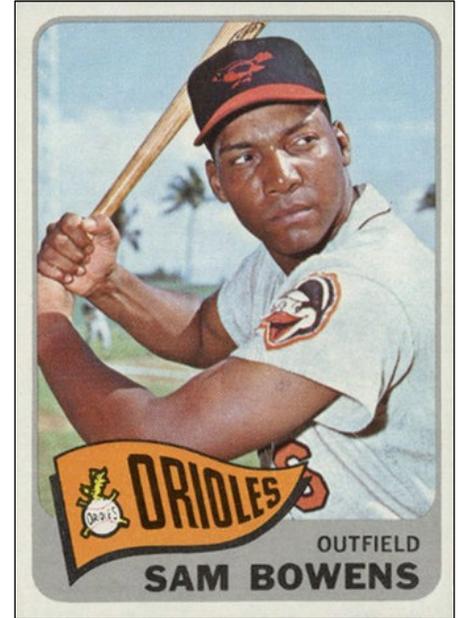
When Bowens returned to the lineup in mid-May, he struggled to regain his swing and timing. An 0-for-20 slump plunged his average to .133. He said he was upper-cutting the ball too much and failing to hit a steady diet of off-speed pitches, which once had been his bread and butter.

The Orioles outfield was crowded with Blair, Blefary, Bowens, Brandt, and Russ Snyder. Boog Powell split his time between left field and first base.

Unable to get on track, Bowens was hitting .145 at the beginning of August. The club sent him to Rochester until he was recalled in September. He finished the season batting .163 with seven homers and 20 RBIs in 84 games. His future was cloudy, at best.

Seeking more power, the Orioles acquired right fielder Frank Robinson for pitcher Milt Pappas during the off-season.

As Robinson was headed to an MVP season and a Triple Crown, Bowens was relegated to starting 56 games, being a



Bonus Trivia Corner

On June 22, Austin Hays became the sixth player in Orioles history to hit for the cycle with a first-inning single, third-inning home run, fourth-inning triple, and sixth-inning double. He is the first Oriole to hit for the cycle in the first six innings of a game and the first MLB player to do so since Freddie Freeman on August 18, 2021.

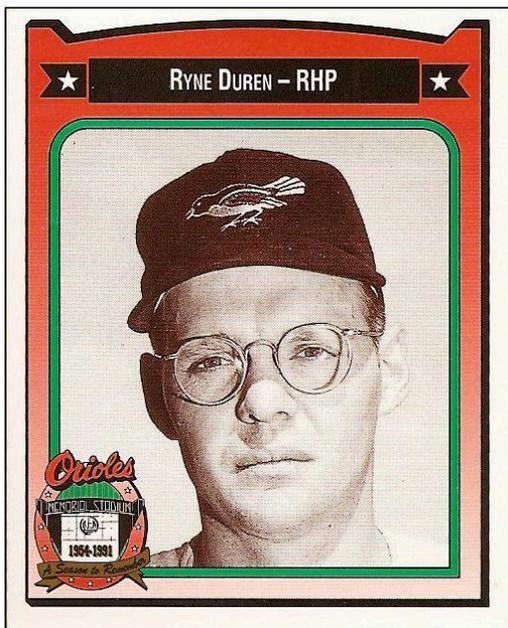
1. Who are the other five O's to hit for the cycle?
2. Hays is the fourth Oriole to do it at home. Who are the others? (Hint: All did it at Camden Yards)
3. Hays is the second Oriole to hit for the cycle from the leadoff spot. Who was the first?

Answer on Page 9.

Ryne Duren's Inconspicuous Debut

By Francis Kinlaw

Other than legendary stars of the powerful Yankees who wore pinstripes between 1947 and 1964, few members of those teams are as memorable to fans of that era as relief pitcher Ryne Duren. Duren played a particularly significant role for the Bronx Bombers during their championship season of 1958 as he posted an impressive ERA of 2.02 and led the American League in games saved with 19. (Dick Hyde of the Senators also saved 19.) Duren's success was followed



by continued personal dominance — 14 saves and an ERA of 1.88—even as the Yanks dropped to a disappointing third-place finish in 1959.

Of course, Duren is also remembered for wearing very thick eyeglasses, erratic control, and attempts to intimidate hitters by throwing war-pitches over his catcher's head. In addition, he received attention

for battling alcoholism during his career before earning considerable admiration for overcoming problems associated with the disease.

In other words, he was a well-known character during a career in which he pitched for not only the Yankees but also the Kansas City Athletics, Angels, Phillies, Reds, and Senators. But did you know that Duren made his first major-league appearance in Baltimore wearing an Orioles uniform?

After being signed as an amateur free agent by the St. Louis Browns in 1949, Duren spent nearly six seasons toiling in the minor leagues as several managers sought to develop him into a starting pitcher. He played for the Wausau Lumberjacks of the Class D Wisconsin State League in 1949, the Pine Bluff Judges of the Class C Cotton States League in 1950, and the Dayton Indians of the Class A Central League in 1951. He moved around in 1952, appearing for three clubs: the San Antonio Missions of the Class AA Texas League, the Anderson Rebels of the Class B Tri-State League, and the Scranton Miners of the Class A Eastern League. He spent most of 1953 and 1954 back in San Antonio until finally being promoted in September 1954 to the Missions' parent club, the Orioles.

Shortly after his arrival in Baltimore (and before he had appeared in a major-league game), the right-hander was sidelined by a broken bone in his pitching hand. He finally saw action against the White Sox on September 25, 1954—in the final game of the seventh-place Orioles' season.

After he had struggled in the minors for so many years, kind souls would contend that Duren deserved a successful outing on Memorial Stadium's mound on that Saturday afternoon. However, after holding the Pale Hose scoreless for one inning, events took an unfortunate turn in his second inning of work.

Duren replaced starter Don Larsen at the beginning of the third inning with the White Sox leading 3-0. He struck out future Hall of Famer Minnie Minoso (an impressive accomplishment) before surrendering a single to left field by Phil Cavarretta. Cavarretta stole second base, but Jim Rivera was retired on a ground ball to second baseman Bobby Young with Cavarretta progressing to third base. But Duren closed the inning by fanning Willard Marshall.

In the top of the fourth inning, Sherman Lollar singled to center field and Joe Kirrene walked. Billy Pierce executed a sacrifice bunt, with Lollar moving to third base and Kirrene to second. Chico Carrasquel then drove both of his teammates home with a single to center field. The inning continued with Nellie Fox reaching first base on a fielder's choice, but an error by Orioles shortstop Billy Hunter allowed Carrasquel to get to third base and Fox to move to second. Carrasquel scored as Minoso was thrown out on a ground ball to third baseman Bob Kennedy. Duren escaped further problems when Cavarretta grounded to first baseman Frank Kellert.

Mike Blyzka was sent to the mound at the beginning of the fifth inning as the curtain came down on what would be Duren's only appearance in Memorial Stadium while wearing a Baltimore uniform. He would later reveal that manager Paul Richards ordered him to become a breaking-ball pitcher during the Orioles' 1955 spring training. Duren said that when he began to throw curves and sliders, "the result was a sore arm."

The Richards-Duren relationship never improved. At the end of spring training in 1956, Richards (who was also the club's general manager) optioned him to Vancouver of the Pacific Coast League, and in September of that year Duren was sent flying from Birdland in a multi-player deal with the Athletics. His career path remained rocky for a couple of more years, but by 1958 his name had become familiar to baseball fans, and his occasionally uncontrolled pitches were striking fear into American League batters.

President ▶ From Page 1

and the ability to see people that we may have never met in person before.

As a veteran of four conventions, I have been looking forward to this for many months. I want to connect names with faces, see people I have not seen since 2019, make new friends, get some books signed by baseball authors, and just enjoy the company of people who are just like me.

We are celebrating 50 years of SABR, and the 30th anniversary of Camden Yards. But mainly we are celebrating baseball and the fact that we survived and will once again be uniting, a little later than maybe we hoped, to continue a tradition that began in Cooperstown, New York, back in 1971.

Please come up and say hello at the convention. I will be there soaking it all in, and I hope you will be as well.

—Peter Coolbaugh

O's Rosenbaum promoted

BBRC member Eve Rosenbaum was promoted to Orioles assistant general manager, baseball operations on June 10. The Orioles say that Rosenbaum will "oversee roster management, transactions, financial planning and major league operations and administration while continuing to play a key role in player evaluation and acquisition across the pro and amateur markets." Rosenbaum, who has been with the O's since December 2019, will advise executive vice president and general manager Mike Elias and assistant general manager, analytics Sig Mejdal.

40 Years Ago in Milwaukee, John Shelby Unleashed 'The Throw'

By Jody Madron

For Orioles fans one of the highlights of the 2022 season has undoubtedly been seeing Austin Hays throw out enemy base runners with his outstanding arm in left field.

Hays' five outfield assists at the end of June is tied for second in the American League. And his June 2 throw—clocked at 95 mph—to nail the Mariners' Jesse Winker may end up being the season's top defensive play.

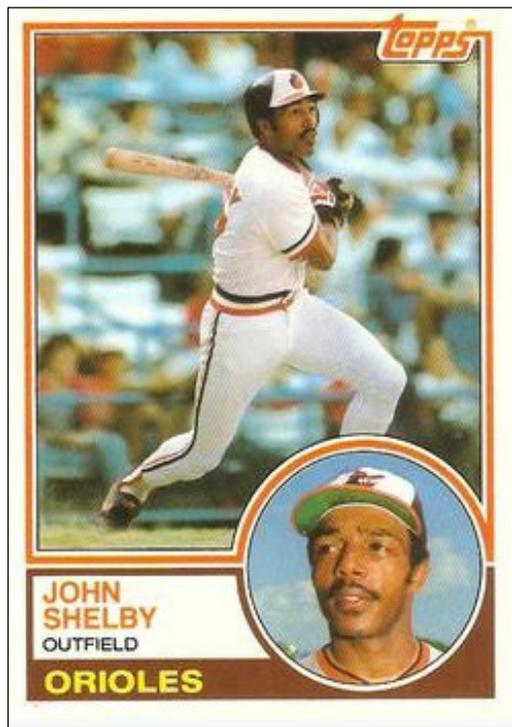
Hays' throw was noteworthy, but 40 years ago this September, one of the most impressive—and most consequential—throws in team history was made by rookie outfielder John "T-Bone" Shelby.

In the eighth inning of a critical game on Sunday, September 26, 1982, Shelby unleashed "The Throw," an astounding defensive effort that is still talked about four decades later.

The Stage and the Stakes

After beginning 1982 with a 6-12 record in April, the Orioles would need another red-hot summer to climb back into contention for a division crown.

A 10-game winning streak beginning in late August moved the O's into second place behind the Brewers, and the deficit stood at three games when they flew to Milwaukee for a crucial three-game weekend series beginning September 24.



A 15-6 loss in the series opener Friday night put the Brewers four games ahead with just nine left. But the O's rebounded on Saturday with a 7-2 win and headed into the series finale on Sunday just three games behind.

48,161 fans filled Milwaukee's County Stadium to see Baltimore's Dennis Martinez battle the Brewers' Jim Caldwell in what was a tremendously important game for the Orioles.

The Early Innings

Milwaukee's Gorman Thomas hit a solo home run in the second inning to open the scoring, and Eddie Murray answered in the fourth to tie the game. Cal Ripken Jr. singled home Rick Dempsey in the fifth to give the Orioles a 2-1 lead.

Martinez pitched brilliantly into the eighth before allowing three singles and a sacrifice bunt to the first four batters of the inning, wiping out an insurance run the O's scored in the top of the inning and cutting the Baltimore lead to 3-2.

Manager Earl Weaver then called upon left-hander Tippy Martinez to replace Dennis with left-handed-hitting first baseman Cecil Cooper due up and the potential tying run—outfielder Bob Skube—at third base.

As Bill Free wrote in the next day's *Baltimore Sun*, "Shelby could hardly have picked a more dramatic moment to stall

the Brewers' championship drive and carry Baltimore within two games of first place with seven to play."¹

Shelby's Secret

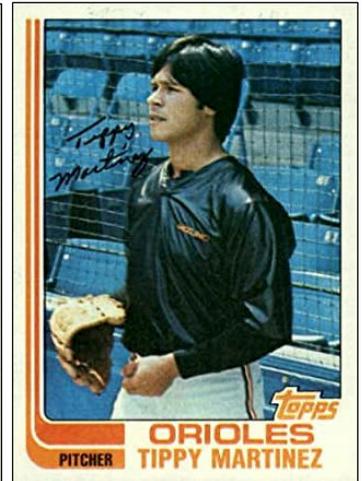
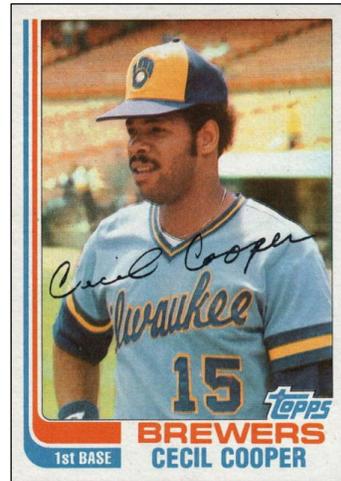
But as Cooper stepped into the batter's box to face Martinez, there was a secret that Shelby was hiding from the Brewers out in center field: His arm was killing him.

The Orioles and Weaver knew about Shelby's pain, yet they valued Shelby's defensive skills so highly that they started him in such a crucial game over veteran Al Bumbry.

According to the *Sun*: "the elbow flared up whenever Shelby warmed up his arm, so he stopped doing it. He didn't play long toss, didn't do anything that would bring back the pain. It was a clubhouse secret, kept away from the media, as Shelby recalls, so teams wouldn't run on him at every opportunity."²

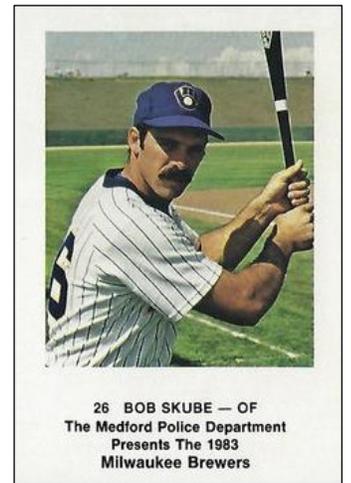
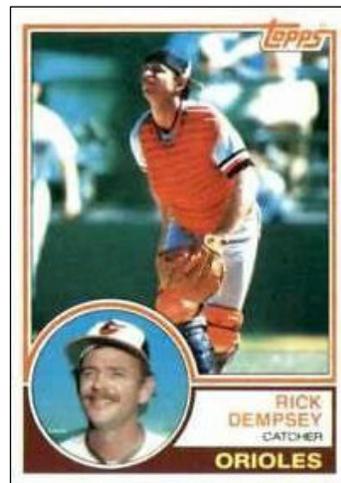
"At the time they called me up [in 1982], I had bone chips in my [elbow] and couldn't really throw," Shelby told author Louis Berney years later. "I was going to have surgery after the season. ... And Earl Weaver, when they called me up, he asked me if I could throw. And I told him that if I didn't have to take infield practice before the game, I could make a throw," said Shelby.³

As Skube was about to find out, Shelby absolutely could still make a throw when it was needed.



The Throw

Martinez fired a fastball on the outer half of the plate and Cooper took a healthy cut, sending the ball to medium-depth center field for what looked like a game-tying sacrifice fly.



An Opening Day 'Tradition' That Became a 50-Year Streak That Became a Book

In the Spring issue of *The Baltimore Chop*, Mike Gibbons wrote about his Orioles opening day streak, one that dates from team's arrival in 1954 with a couple of years missing (as baseball cards of the 1950s and '60s called it "in military service").

Another BBRC member had an opening day run that ended in 2020.

Michael Ortman's odyssey took him to three cities, with five home teams in six ballparks cities, and involved four generations over 50 seasons, from 1970 to 2019.

He has put his streak into a book, *Opening Day: 50-for-50*, which was published before Opening Day 2022, and a companion website (openingday5050.com). His 50-year journey went from Washington to Baltimore to Chicago and back to Baltimore and Washington. The book's 50 chapters cover the games, their times, and Ortman's memories and research.

TBC interviewed him by email.

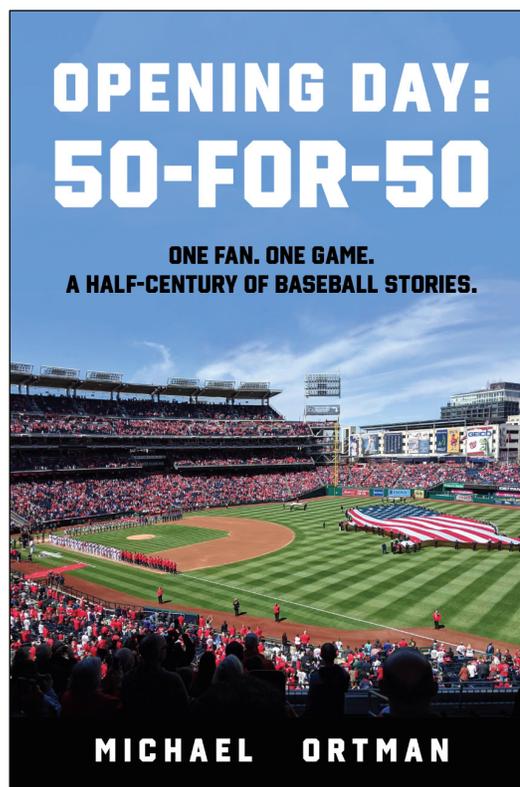
TBC: What drove your streak, once it had become a streak, and did it ever stop being something you loved doing?

MO: For the first 20 years or so, it wasn't really a "thing." The streak should have ended multiple times, like when my hometown Washington Senators left for Texas just two years in, or when I went off to college in 1978. Heck, my wife was in surgery on Opening Day Eve 1985! But the baseball gods held it together until it became an annual ritual. My love for baseball and Opening Day only increased over time, especially once we got baseball back in Washington in 2005.

TBC: Did it stop because of COVID or because 50 is a nice, round number?

MO: Yes, it ended because of COVID, but as I weighed my options, I realized 50 was a nice, round number and started writing. Working from home during the pandemic allowed me to convert commute time to research time and writing time. I investigated the possibility of renting an apartment with a view of Nationals Park in July 2020 but it wasn't financially possible. I had friends telling me 2020 shouldn't count against the streak, but I wasn't buying that, either.

TBC: Are you aware of other opening day streaks?



MO: I'm starting to meet owners of similar Opening Day streaks and may help some of them research and write their books. A couple of weeks ago, I met Ken Cirulo who's been to every San Diego Padres home opener since the franchise was born in 1969—54 straight! He was a guest in someone's condo on OD '20 with a view of the field! I also learned of a ticket taker in Pittsburgh who may have attended at least 50. As I find more of these fans and friends of the game, I may consider making this some sort of book series with local editions.

Michael Ortman recently retired after a long career in sports, marketing and TV—he was one of the original employees of Home Team Sports in 1984.

Joseph's Reiser Bio Wins Gabriel Award



BBRC member Dan Joseph's book *Baseball's Greatest What If: The Story and Tragedy of Pistol Pete Reiser* has been selected as the winner of SABR's Ron Gabriel Award in 2022.

The Ron Gabriel Award annually honors the author(s) of the best research, published or unpublished, on the subject of the Brooklyn Dodgers completed during the preceding calendar year.

"The selection panel was particularly impressed by the depth of the book's research and how Joseph's work sheds new light on a prominent figure in Brooklyn Dodgers lore," according to John McMurray, chair of the Ron Gabriel Award committee.

See Page 2 for the BBRC Spotlight on Dan Joseph.



O's Rock the Fourth at Home

2022 marked the first time the Orioles have played at home on the Fourth of July since 2008, also against the Rangers, and the O's won both times, 7-6 in 10 innings this year and 10-4 in 2008.

The Orioles have played in Baltimore on Independence Day 20 times in club history (since 1954), going 15-4-1 with a 6-6 tie against Kansas City in 1964 at Memorial Stadium.

The O's have hosted seven Fourth of July matchups at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, going 5-2.



Gil Dunn and his Jimmie Foxx display, August 1990.

macy to see his Jimmie Foxx display—a stunning collection of photos on the back wall and a large collection of memorabilia in a glass display case. Deeply troubled by the lack of recognition Foxx was receiving in baseball circles in the 1960s, Dunn erected his own tribute to his favorite boyhood baseball idol. Dunn told me that he lived in Baltimore during Foxx’s peak years for the A’s and “looked through the box scores every day, and Jim never disappointed me.”

Foxx shocked Dunn with unannounced trip to the pharmacy in August 1966, a year before his death. It was a jaw-dropping dream come true for Dunn, meeting his idol for the first time and receiving Foxx’s 1934 All-Americans jersey he wore in Japan playing baseball with Ruth, Gehrig, and Mickey Cochrane, among others; a crown he received for one of his MVP awards, plus other memorabilia from his playing career.

On September 9, 1990, I interviewed George Jenkins in his home in Claymont, Delaware. While we sat in his “Foxx’s Den,” completely devoted to his baseball idol, he told me how he met the Sudlersville Slugger. Jenkins recalled the day when he went to a game at Shibe Park in Philadelphia with his father and Foxx’s Uncle Benton in 1930 or 1931. They saw one of the guards before the game, and Uncle Benton said, “Could you go see if Jimmie Foxx can come out here?”

“So, we stood there [waiting],” Jenkins said. “And I’ll never forget the sound on the concrete. Steel spikes.”

Then Jenkins looked up (he was 10 years old again and looking up at his baseball idol) ... “God! There he was!” (Jenkins had goosebumps as he was recalling the whole scene). “I can remember his arms. They looked like steel ca-



Dell Foxx, a frequent speaker about the exploits of his uncle Jimmie and model for the life-size statue of the Hall of Famer in Sudlersville.

bles.” He laughed at the memory--Foxx was wearing his cutoff sleeves.

“Uncle Benton, how are you?” the ballplayer said.

“Well, Jim, we come up here and we come to see you play ball, but we don’t have a ticket,” the uncle said. “And I thought maybe you could manage to get us in to watch you play baseball. And this is Mr. Jenkins [George’s father], and...”

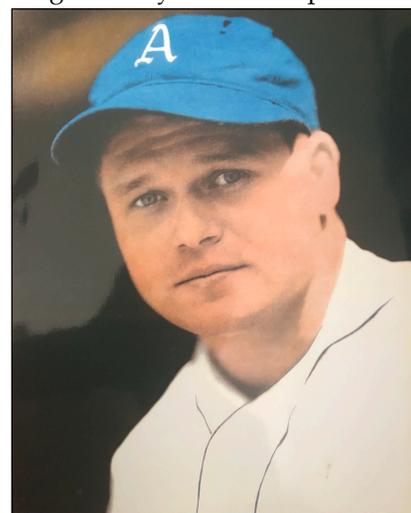
“And who’s this?” Foxx said referring to little George.

“And he shook my hand,” Jenkins told me (George’s voice was shaking, more goosebumps). “I didn’t wash it for six weeks. They had to give me a typhoid shot.” (He was in no rush to wash that hand.)

Foxx told them to wait, and he’d be right back. He returned with two 10-dollar bills and three box-seat tickets on the first-base side near his fielding position.

“And Mark, he creamed one that day,” Jenkins told me, “And, Jesus, the ball looked like an aspirin tablet [leaving the playing field].”

In May 1991, I interviewed Dell Foxx (Samuel Dell Foxx III), Jimmie’s nephew, in his office at County Banking Trust Company in Elkton, Maryland. It was a stirring moment for me to spend time with Dell because I realized at once that this was the closest I would ever come to seeing Jimmie Foxx or hearing his voice. For years before our meeting and many years later, Dell often spoke to civic groups and communities on the Eastern Shore about his Uncle Jim’s out-sized baseball feats and the generosity and warm personality that made him so popular among his teammates, opponents, and fans. When sculptor Ken Herlihy met Dell for the first time, he had the same reaction I had, asking Dell to sit for him in his studio more than once while Ken began crafting the life-size statue of Jimmie for the town of Sudlersville.



Jimmie Foxx photo colorized by Bill McAlister.

Bill McAlister (from Countryside, Illinois), another rabid Jimmie Foxx fan, called me on December 28, 1998, a few months after my book, *Jimmie Foxx: The Pride of Sudlersville*, was published. Telling me on my answering machine that he received my biography about Foxx as a Christmas present from his daughter, he said he is “ ‘The all-time number one’ Jimmie Foxx fan ever since he was a kid. He grew up in Southern Illinois in the 1930s following Foxx’s baseball exploits and received autographs from Foxx on two successive days in 1937 at St. Louis’ Sportsman Park. Starting early in 1999, McAlister sent me many envelopes over the next several years packed with news clippings about Foxx, Wheaties panels of Foxx, and plenty of Foxx photos, some that were suitable for framing, especially those taken by George Burke. McAlister colorized some photos of Foxx and other players of the 1930s, reminding us that those days were not black and white, that they were just as colorful in every way as the current day.

Dunn, Jenkins, and McAlister remained devoted fans of Jimmie Foxx throughout their lives, long after their childhood, and Walls and Dell Foxx still are. They helped spread the word about Jimmie Foxx’s baseball accomplishments, determined to make as many fans as possible aware of the chief rival of Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth, from 1929 through the 1930s.

SABR 50 ► From Page 1

• Six featured speakers are members: Mike Gibbons (Babe Ruth Panel), Jennifer Grandahl (Women in Leadership Panel), Tim Kurkjian (keynote speaker, SABR Awards Luncheon), Eve Rosenbaum (Women in Leadership Panel), Janet Marie Smith (Research Committee Meeting: Ballparks), and Bill Stetka (Oriole Park at Camden Yards Panel).

• As he has since 2009, Bruce Brown will serve as Master of Trivia.

• Every presentation at the convention includes a BBRC member, and only two presenters are not members.

• Seven posters were researched by BBRC members.

It will be impossible to hear every presentation by a BBRC member because the schedule has created conflicts.

For those interested in learning more about Baltimore and Maryland baseball, try not to miss:

- Babe Ruth Panel (Thursday, 10 A.M.)
- Historic Ballparks Bus Tour (Thursday, 4 P.M.)
- Angel on His Shoulder: The Life and Times of Moe Drabowsky (Friday, 8 A.M.)
- Baltimore's Baby Birds: Their Impact and Legacy (Friday, 8 A.M.)
- Roland Hemond, My Mentor, My Friend (Friday, 8:30 A.M.)
- Baltimore Orioles' 17-Year Minor League Highs and Lows: 1966-1982 (Friday, 8:30 A.M.)
- The Forgotten Man: Harry Dalton, The Best Team in Baseball, and the Oriole Way (Friday, 9 A.M.)
- Bambino, Shmambino! The 1918 American League Pennant Race and the Curse of the Three-Penny Mayor (Friday, 9:30 A.M.)
- The Real Strength of the Famous 1971 Orioles (Friday, 9:30 A.M.)
- Oriole Park at Camden Yards Panel (Friday, 10 A.M.)
- Richard Stoll (Dick) Armstrong: Orioles Public Relations Pioneer and the Original Mr. Oriole (Friday, 1 P.M.)
- From Reggie to Camden Yards: Baltimore's Small-Market Success in the Post-Messersmith Era (Friday, 2 P.M.)
- Jackie Robinson Comes to Baltimore (Friday, 3 P.M.)
- Cardboard Birds (Friday, 3:30 P.M.)
- The State of the Union: The Life and Death of Union Park, Baltimore's First Mythical Stadium (Saturday, 8 A.M.)
- Jim Crow Plays Hard Ball (poster)

For all the latest on SABR 50: sabr.org/convention

Trivia Answer

Note: Minor-league teams in italics.

Team	Years	League
Baltimore Canaries	1872-1874	National Association
Baltimore Orioles	1882-1891	American Association
Baltimore Monumentals	1884	Union Association
Baltimore Orioles	1892-1899	National League
Baltimore Orioles	1901-1902	American League
<i>Baltimore Orioles</i>	<i>1903-1914</i>	<i>Eastern/International Lg.</i>
Baltimore Terrapins	1914-1915	Federal League
<i>Baltimore Orioles</i>	<i>1916-1953</i>	<i>International League</i>
Baltimore Black Sox	1923-1928	Eastern Colored League
Baltimore Black Sox	1929	American Negro League
Baltimore Black Sox	1932	East-West League
Baltimore Sox	1933-1934	Negro National League I
Baltimore Elite Giants	1938-1948	Negro National League II
Baltimore Orioles	1954-	American League

Bowens ► From Page 4

defensive replacement, and pinch-hitting. He remained a shadow of himself at the plate, hitting .210 with six home runs.

The Orioles won the 1966 World Series in four straight against the Dodgers, and Bowens did not play, as the club used just 13 players.

After the World Series, the taciturn Bowens asked the club to be traded. Once the O's brightest outfield prospect, he had become the club's forgotten man. He was convinced, however, that he was still an everyday player.

In March 1967, Sam told the Baltimore Sun, "If I'm going to waste my time in the majors sitting on the bench, then I should be looking for something else. I know I'm not part-time worker, never have been, never will be, if I can help it.

"I came into pro ball to play, not sit on the bench. If I didn't have the ability to play regularly, I might be willing to sit on the bench, but I have more tools than that. There isn't anything I can't do--run, throw, hit, field and steal bases.

"I want to get out of here, and it doesn't make any difference where I go. I'm not content to sit down."

Despite his plea, the Orioles didn't trade him. In 1967, he was limited to 62 games and 120 at-bats. He batted .183 with five homers.

After three consecutive sub-par seasons, Bowens' trade value hit rock bottom. The Senators purchased him on November 28, 1967.

Once again, however, he was part of an overcrowded outfield. He battled Cap Peterson, Hank Allen, and Fred Valentine for the starting right fielder's job. An old shoulder injury hampered him early in the 1968 season.

Bowens split the season between Washington and Class AAA Buffalo. In 57 games with the Senators, he hit .191 with four homers.

He continued to struggle in 1969, spending most of his time with Buffalo. He saw action in just 33 games with Washington and batted .193.

Released by the Senators, Bowens spent 1970 with Class AAA Columbus Jets, a Pirates affiliate, and the Class AA Shreveport Braves, a Braves affiliate.

Once a promising star, Bowens' major-league career lasted just seven seasons. He finished with a .223 lifetime average and 45 homers.

After his playing days, Bowens admitted that alcoholism played a role in his downfall. He also said a beaning in 1965 seriously affected his hitting ability.

He said his drinking started when he reached the major leagues and beer was available in the clubhouse after every game. "I would drink six or seven a day," he said. "It was like drinking soda pop."

Discussing the beaning, Bowens said: "I'd pull my head out up at the plate. I wouldn't stay with the inside pitches. I would bail out and drop my hands."

Despite Bowens' contention, he was not beamed in 1965. The records show he was hit by a pitch on 10 occasions during his career, but newspaper accounts of those games don't mention his being hit in the head. Several of his former teammates also didn't recall his being hit in the head.

The excitement Bowens generated in 1964 was short-lived and his potential unfulfilled. He died in 2003 at the age of 65.

Bonus Trivia Answer

1. Brooks Robinson, July 15, 1960 at White Sox
Cal Ripken Jr., May 6, 1984 at Rangers
Aubrey Huff, June 29, 2007 vs. Angels
Felix Pie, August 14, 2009 vs. Angels
Jonathan Villar, August 5, 2019 vs. Yankees
2. Huff, Pie, and Villar
3. Villar

Throw ► From Page 6

Shelby, who had been playing Cooper in deep center, stayed back at first, even though the ball clearly appeared to be in front of him. He tapped his glove with his bare hand once before taking a half-dozen short steps in to run under the ball.

Finally, Shelby tapped his glove one last time just before he caught the ball—while still running forward—and unleashed the one strong throw he had left in his aching right arm on that Sunday.

The throw bounced once on the County Stadium grass roughly 10 feet in front of home plate, where catcher Rick Dempsey waited. Dempsey grabbed the bounce chest-high while blocking the plate with his left leg, tagging Skube as the runner crashed into him just in front of the plate.

Like a triumphant prize fighter, Dempsey held up both arms to show home plate umpire Jim McKean the baseball. As McKean called Skube out with an enthusiastic pump of his right arm, Martinez—who had been just a few feet behind the plate backing up the throw—threw his left arm into the air.

In just a matter of seconds, a potentially season-ending threat—runners at the corners and one out—had turned into an inning-ending double play ... and the Orioles still clung to that 3-2 lead heading into the ninth.

As reported in the *Washington Post*, right fielder Dan Ford told Shelby: “Man, I thought you’d misjudged it when you broke back. I was screamin’, ‘In, in, come in!’”

The *Post* story continued: “I was just getting a running start,” said Shelby, who dashed more than 10 yards at the last instant. ... “I wanted to keep the throw low enough to hit the cutoff man, so if we didn’t get him at the plate, the go-ahead run [on first base] wouldn’t get down to second.”⁴

The Aftermath

The Orioles tacked on a pair of insurance runs in the top of the ninth inning, and Martinez then pitched around a one-out walk in the bottom of ninth to seal the 5-2 victory.

The win cut Milwaukee’s lead to two games and helped set the stage for the fateful final series of the season the following weekend at Memorial Stadium.

And while Don Sutton and the Brewers would defeat Jim Palmer and the Orioles on the season’s final day to take the division and send Weaver into retirement, that 1982 season was one filled with memorable highlights.

Perhaps the most exciting of those highlights – a play still being talked about four decades later – is Shelby’s season-saving throw on that September Sunday in Milwaukee.

“I had a good arm, and I knew the only way [manager] Earl [Weaver] was going to put me in the game was if he felt like I had a chance to get somebody,” Shelby said. “After the throw it seemed like everyone knew who I was.”⁵

Of course, everyone’s awareness of Shelby was heightened because of his great throw in such a critical moment.

Except, as reported years later in the *Sun*, Shelby didn’t know just how critical the moment was at the time.

“Running off the field, Shelby couldn’t understand why everyone in the dugout had moved up to the top step, waiting to pound him on the shoulders and back. ... Cal Ripken Jr. turned to him and said, ‘You don’t know what you just did, do you?’”⁶

“Shelby wasn’t aware of the urgency of the moment,” John Lowenstein told the *Post* after the game. “Otherwise, he’d have thrown the ball waaaaay over his [Dempsey’s] head and asked to the right. Sometimes, it’s better to have an unconscious rookie than a seasoned veteran.”⁷

Jody Madron is a freelance copywriter and marketing consultant who lives in Sykesville. A SABR member since 2003, he is a lifelong baseball fan, has been an Orioles’ season-ticket holder for over 30 years, and occasionally writes about the Orioles on his personal blog, www.TrustYourStuff.com.

Sources

1. Bill Free, “Shelby’s arm dazzles ‘em,” *Baltimore Sun*, September 27, 1982.
2. Roch Kubatko, “Right on Time,” *Baltimore Sun*, May 27, 2008.
3. Louis Berney, *Tales from the Baltimore Orioles Dugout: A Collection of the Greatest Orioles Stories Ever Told* (New York: Sports Publishing, 2012), 167.
4. Thomas Boswell, “Shelby Throws Orioles Back Into East Race,” *Washington Post*, September 27, 1982.
5. Jeff Seidel, *Baltimore Orioles: Where Have You Gone?* (New York: Sports Publishing, 2006), 156.
6. Roch Kubatko, “Right on Time,” *Baltimore Sun*, May 27, 2008.
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Kurkjian ► From Page 1

there until the paper folded in 1981. He then moved to the *Baltimore News-American* but relocated to the *Dallas Morning News* several months later as the baseball beat writer covering the Texas Rangers (aka Washington Senators II).

In 1986, he returned to Maryland, working for the *Baltimore Sun* and covering the Orioles, which gave him daily access to Earl Weaver, who was in his final season as manager.

In 1987, he took a job as a senior writer for *Sports Illustrated*, where he remained until 1998, when he started at ESPN, just prior to the “Great Home Run Chase ‘98”.

Kurkjian is also the author of three books on baseball and is widely known for his cutting box scores out of the newspaper and saving them in notebooks for nearly 20 years.

While he has been a SABR member since 1994, his devotion to stats and numbers predates that by many years. His father was a mathematician/statistician by trade, so even as a youngster when the talk always moved to baseball, he found himself figuring out strikeout ratios and other “saber-metric” approaches long before the rest of the world did.

We will get to hear Kurkjian as our keynote speaker next month at the SABR Awards Luncheon in Baltimore. That will be only a few weeks after he joins the immortals (of baseball journalism) in Cooperstown.

We are proud to have him in our chapter and in our state. And we look forward to welcoming and honoring him when he is here in August.

--Peter Coolbaugh

Volunteers Needed for SABR 50

It’s not too late to volunteer to help out at SABR 50.

Contact Peter Coolbaugh: peterc@baberuthmuseum.org

2 Notable No-Hitters



Before relocating to Baltimore as the Orioles in 1954, the Browns spent 51 seasons in St. Louis. They were no-hit eight times, while their pitchers notched four no-hitters (the O’s, in their 69th season, have been no-hit seven times and have six no-hitters).

Two of the Browns’ no-hitters are notable:

- Earl Hamilton was the first major-leaguer to throw a no-hitter without striking out a batter, beating the Tigers 5-1 in Detroit on August 30, 1912.

- Bobo Holloman, in his first major-league start, no-hit the A’s in St. Louis on May 6, 1953, the only no-hitter in a major-leaguer’s first start in the modern era.