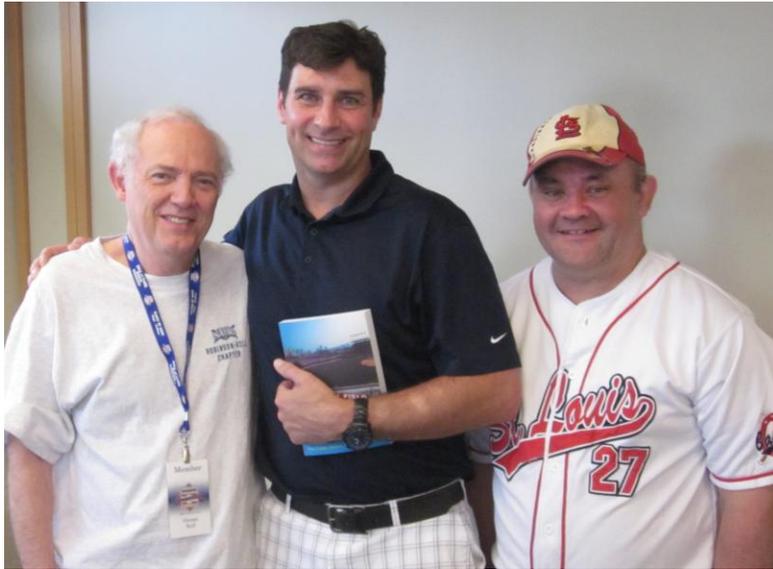




August 9, 2014

Guest Speaker: Kevin Sheredy

Little Rock, Arkansas



The Robinson-Kell SABR chapter met at the Central Arkansas Library at 12:00 p.m. There were 11 members and guests in attendance.

The featured speaker was former college and minor league pitcher Mr. Kevin Sheredy. Kevin spoke of his playing days at the University of Arkansas and UCLA and his minor league career, which included a stop with the Arkansas Travelers in 2000 when he was 0-2 in 21 games. Interesting stories and opinions that he shared included:

- He grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan as a Detroit Tigers fan listening to George Kell and Al Kaline call the games. His favorite team was the 1984 World championship team. Nolan Ryan, whom Kevin called a “freak of nature”, was his hero growing up.
- Kevin’s team high school team eliminated Derek Jeter’s team from the state playoffs in both Kevin’s sophomore and junior year. He remembered all the scouts moving from behind the plate and moving behind first to use their radar guns on Jeter’s throws to first. Kevin went on to say that Jeter was the best player and athlete that he had played against and was on the smartest, most prepared player ever.
- While at Fayetteville, they played a joke on their teammate by spiking both his Copenhagen and sunflower seeds with Tabasco sauce. Another joke they often pulled was having former Trav Stubby Clap put his false teeth in an unsuspecting teammate’s drink.
- Leaving Fayetteville after his sophomore year, he pitched in the Cape Cod League before transferring to UCLA for his junior season.
- Barely into a bus trip to El Paso while in the Texas League, the bus’ air conditioner broke down so the players opened all then windows and stripped down to their underwear. At the end of the road trip, the players who afford it took a flight back to Little Rock.
- During his 2002 season in AAA Memphis he made \$2,250 per month – only during the season.
- In the minor leagues, his favorite cities and ballparks were Oklahoma City and Salt Lake City. He said his greatest minor league season in 2001 in New Haven, where he was 0-7 but had a 2.95 ERA in 48 games in relief. The ballpark they shared with Yale was bad but the pizza was good.

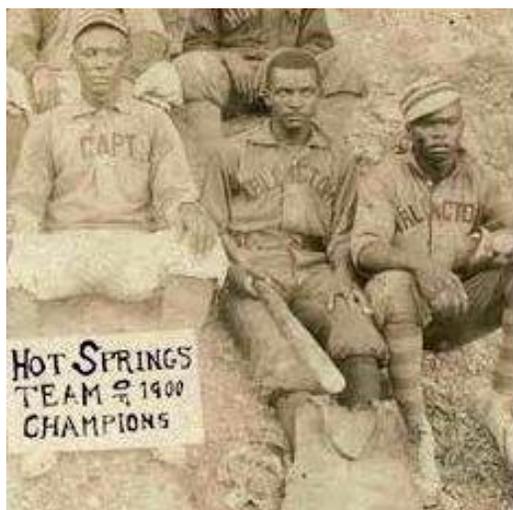
- He was a teammate with Albert Pujols, who he said was the nicest player he ever met – except when he talked smack while playing Tony Hawk video games.

- When he was young his pitching philosophy was to “throw as hard as I could”. As a pitching instructor, he strives to teach his students to repeat the correct mechanics until they become second nature, freeing them from “thinking” about their form as they pitch.

- Although he felt that professional players today are coddled, Kevin talked about how some high school coaches and coaches at smaller colleges overuse their pitchers due to the pressure to win games.



- Observations about life in the minor leagues:
 - Upon reaching rookie ball he immediately realized that it was not a team game anymore.
 - The Latin American players were routinely listed as being younger than they really were. He told a story of one player who did not know that according to the media guide that it was his “birthday”. But he noted that this became harder to do after the attacks of 9-11 created increased security of those entering the United States.
 - He talked about how a blind eye was turned toward steroid use and how it was a competitive disadvantage for the clean players.



Caleb Hardwick gave the first presentation, which was entitled “*Quapaws and Arlingtons: Early Black Baseball in Arkansas*”. From his research, the earliest known mention of black baseball in Arkansas was in the *Arkansas Gazette* on August 8, 1873, in which a “serious misunderstanding” occurred and one boy struck another with a bat, killing him. Town teams began to emerge in the mid-1880s to early 1890s. In 1896, the Quapaws and Arlingtons formed, played against regional opponents and received significant attention from the white press. Dave Wyatt, a Negro baseball journalist from 1907 to 1922, joined the Arlingtons in 1897. His accounts and newspapers confirm the existence of a league in 1897, possibly the earliest Negro League in the south. They also played the first interracial

game and were competitive although they lost them. The *Gazette* reported that the games “went off smoothly. There was no useless kicking or rowdyism on either side”. The Quapaws and Arlingtons played 17 known games against each other, with Arlingtons winning ten times. Although the year is uncertain, according to Wyatt, Negro League legend Rube Foster, who worked at a Hot Springs restraint circa 1902, played with the Arlingtons. Another notable player was Hot Springs native Eugene Milliner, who joined the Chicago Union Giants in 1902 and later played for teams in Brooklyn, St. Paul, and Kansas City.

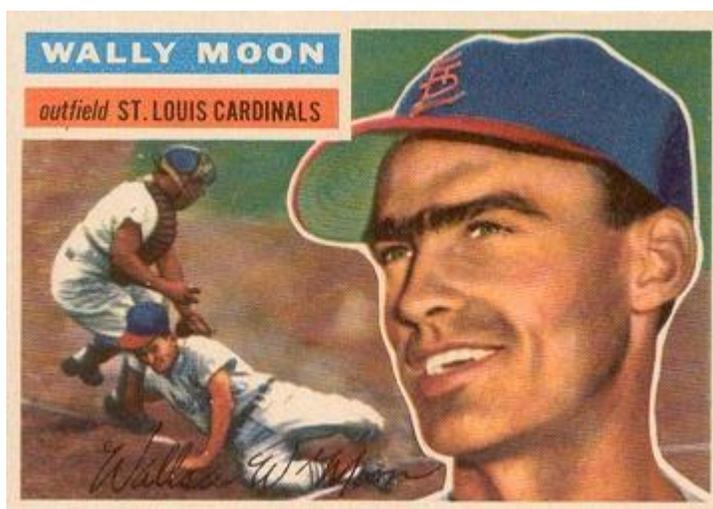


Finally, Caleb spoke of Arkansas native Julian Ware, who captained a Wisconsin baseball team and was light-skinned enough to play professionally with the white league in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan in 1904. In addition to a baseball player, at different times in his life Ware was a teacher, silver prospector, electrical engineer and a doctor.

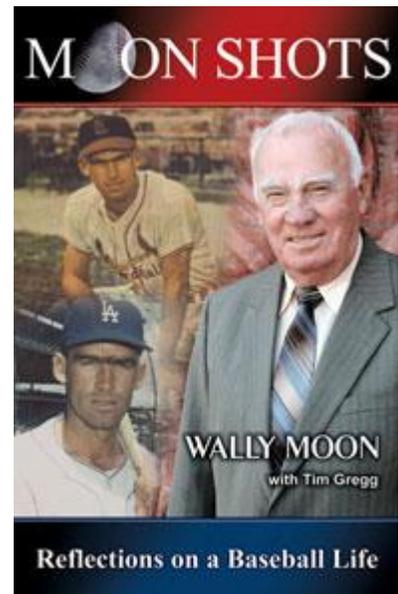
Next was mathematics professor Fred Worth, who presented a series of statistical oddities that he had compiled. He also discussed his upcoming mathematics textbook book in which he uses baseball as the vehicle for the teaching various subjects and concepts. Finally, Fred quickly showed the draft of a book that he is attempting to get published that deals with his long-time research project of visiting the graves of former major league players.

Attending his first Robinson-Kell meeting, Mark Randall jumped right in with a presentation entitled *We Want Eno! The Rookie Debut of Wally Moon*, which detailed the career and circumstances which led to Moon's debut in place of Cardinal fan-favorite Enos Slaughter. Highlights included:

- Wallace Wade Moon was born on April 2, 1930, in Bay, Arkansas. He was named after University of Alabama football coach Wallace Wade, who won three national titles.
- Moon grew up in a house on a gravel road with no electricity or indoor plumbing and helped out by feeding the barnyard animals, milking the cow, tending the family garden and picking cotton, which he credited for developing his body especially his hands and wrists.
- Moon considered basketball to be his best sport and was prepared to accept a basketball scholarship to Hendrix in Conway, Arkansas, until Pirate scout Ziggy Sears convinced him that he was destined to be a baseball player and advised him to head to a Texas school to play baseball in the warmer climate.
- When offered a half scholarship to play baseball and a half scholarship to play basketball, Moon agreed to attend Texas A&M sight unseen. The phone call he received at the school from the Texas A&M baseball coach offering the scholarship was his first time to use a telephone.
- In the spring of 1950, the Detroit Tigers offered him \$18,000 to sign but his father thought he need more experience and turned it down because anything over \$6,000 would qualify him as a "Bonus Baby" and require him to go straight to Detroit.
- Moon eventually narrowed it down to the Yankees and Cardinals and signed with the Cardinals for \$6,000 because this father felt the Yankees minor league teams were loaded with left-handed hitting outfielders, whereas the Cardinals teams were not.
- Moon played for the Omaha Cardinals in the Western League in 1950 but missed the pennant chase when he returned to college for his senior year. He graduated in June 1951.



- When the Cardinals and Moon could not reach an agreement for the 1951 season, he did not report back to Omaha, instead he began work on his Master's degree and Texas A&M and coached the freshman baseball team. He also met his wife Bettye during this time.
- In August he reached an agreement with the Cardinals and reported to Omaha. After completing his Master's degree in June 1952, the Cardinals prodded him to make baseball his top priority.
- For the 1953 season, Moon was promoted to Triple-A Rochester and then played for Pastora de Occidente in the Venezuela League. His team won the Caribbean World Series, which caused him to miss the Cardinals rookie camp in Deland, Florida.
- Moon reported to the regular spring training camp in St. Petersburg. This angered manager Eddie Stanky but Moon explained that Stanky had missed seeing him at Deland. Stanky liked his spirit and allowed him to stay.
- Moon's timing was perfect as the Cardinals were under new owner Gussie Busch who wanted to build a winner quickly and were looking to unload 38-year-old Enos Slaughter, who was one of Moon's idols as a kid.
- Slaughter was traded two days before the 1954 season began. Before the trade was announced, Moon was unsure he would make the team and was pondering returning to Arkansas for a career as a teacher and a coach rather than playing in the minor leagues.
- During the annual downtown parade to start the season, Cardinal fans were upset at the trade of the popular Slaughter and heckled and booed Moon.
- The first major league game that Moon saw was the first one he played in. In his first major league at-bat, as Moon heard chants from the stands of "We want Eno" he homered on a 2-0 pitch from Paul Minner of the Cubs. The shot bounced off the roof of the right field pavilion and landed on Grand Avenue. Years later, Moon described it as his biggest thrill in baseball.
- Moon hit .304 with 12 home runs and 76 RBI for the season and beat out Hank Arron and Ernie Banks for the National League Rookie of the Year Award.
- After three more productive seasons, Moon slumped in 1958 and was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers. He rebounded to hit .302 with 19 homers and became a fan favorite by hitting "Moon Shots" over the left field screen at the LA Coliseum and helped lead the Dodgers to the 1959 World Series title.





Door prizes were given away with Fred Worth and Mark Randall winning books and Charles Gattin taking home a baseball board game

Dr. Bob Reising, who spoke about his book *Chasing Moonlight* at a Robinson-Kell meeting in August 2011, finished up the presentations, noting that the group was transitioning from “Moon to Moonlight”. He gave a brief follow-up on his work with various projects dealing with Moonlight Graham, including an upcoming documentary entitled *The Real Moonlight Graham: A Life Well Lived*.

Before dismissing, Mike Dugan quickly plugged Don Duren’s book on Arkansas native Lon Warneke and passed out what he called “The Very Unofficial Counter-Fred List” – a list of all current and former major league players LIVING in Arkansas.

