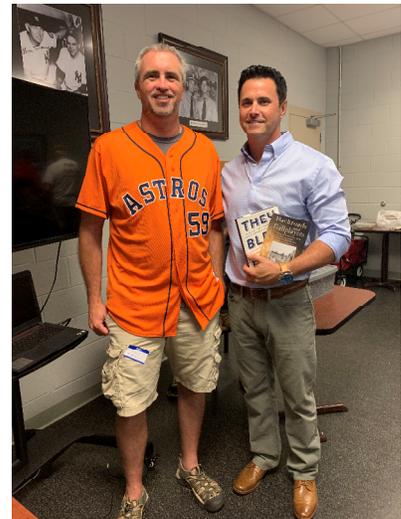




August 3, 2019
Little Rock, Arkansas

The Robinson-Kell SABR chapter met at Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock at 12:00 p.m. There were 22 members and guests present.

The guest speaker was former left-handed major league pitcher Allen McDill, who appeared from 1997 to 2001 with Kansas City, Detroit, and Boston. He appeared in 38 games (all in relief) without recording a win, loss, or save – tied for fourth most all-time appearances without a decision. McDill began by recounting how he was from Lake Village, Arkansas, but moved to Texarkana where he began playing before moving to Hot Springs when he was around Little League age. He attended Lake Hamilton High School and then spent one semester at Texarkana Junior College, playing under current Arkansas Razorback coach Dave Van Horn. After finishing the year at Garland County Community College in Hot Springs, McDill transferred to Arkansas Tech University, where he says he grew bigger and began to throw harder, which prompted the ATU coach to move him to the mound, although McDill preferred to be an everyday player. In his first year at ATU, McDill finished second in the country with a 1.08 ERA and began attracting attention from Mets scout Larry Chase, who said the McDill was the best hitter that he ever scouted. Following his second season, McDill was surprised to receive an invitation by a Tigers scout to play in the prestigious Cade Cod summer league.



In the 1992 draft McDill was taken in the 20th round by the New York Mets and used his \$10,000 signing bonus to buy a 4WD, extended-cab pickup. After making it to AA Binghamton with the Mets, he was dealt to the Royals and ended up in Wichita, where his career took off when he was moved to the bullpen which allowed him to pitch more often. McDill recalled because of his small stature that he was often not recognized as a ballplayer and that when meeting Royals legend George Brett at spring training, that Brett jokingly asked, “You’re a player?” and then told him “see you later, McFly”, a nickname that Brett used for him from then on. He told how Brett pranked him by asking him about his hitting skills and

told him to close his eyes and take the “hitting test”, which ended up with McDill inadvertently squeezing a handful of Brett’s used chewing tobacco.

Called up the Royals, he made his debut on May 15, 1992, against the Tigers. McDill recalled being nervous and unable to hear as he took the mound and got weak in the knees when he turned around and saw his picture on the centerfield scoreboard. But after a leadoff walk, he got a double play and another ground ball to end the inning. The following spring training, despite pitching well, he was let go by the Royals and was picked up by the Rangers who assigned him to AAA Oklahoma City, where he saved a team record 21 games. He found out later that a Japanese team had wanted to sign him but the Rangers would not release him. Following the season, he signed with the Tigers and made it to the final day of spring training before the Tigers changed their mind and decided to start the season with veteran Jim Poole in their bullpen instead. After six weeks he was called up and appeared in 13 games with Detroit. When the Tigers decided to send him back down, he decided not to report and at the end of the season he was a free agent and signed by the Cardinals. He was assigned to the Memphis Redbirds in their first year at AutoZone Park and said that was the best team that he ever played on, including those in the majors.

In 2001 he went to spring training with Boston and called up in late August. He told of how they played in New York on September 10 in a game that ended well after midnight. After a late flight to Tampa, they were stranded there for four days after the attack on New York City. They were finally able to take a 36-hour Amtrak train ride to Baltimore where they got a police motorcycle escort and eventually secured a flight back to Boston. In the off-season, the Red Sox were sold and he became a free agent. Signing with the Phillies, McDill had a good spring training but was released. He ended up in AAA with Baltimore but admitted that he had lost the edge and desire to play at the major league level.



McDill recounted several funny moments from his time in the big leagues including the story of Manny Ramirez getting a soft drink from a machine at the hotel. Seeing the word “dime” on the slot while inputting coins in the slot, Manny believed that to be “de-may”, which is Spanish for “tell me”, so he kept yelling “Coca Cola” at the machine. The next day, his teammates filled his locker with cokes. McDill also told how the parking attendants at Fenway, despite parking the BMWs, Mercedes, and Range Rovers of the other players, would fight over the chance to park his 1998 pickup. Once, after returning from a road trip one of the attendants had tearfully apologized to McDill for putting a dent in the truck and having it repaired

before he returned. Just two years ago, one of McDill’s high school buddies took his family to Fenway and mentioned to a vendor outside that he had a friend who was a former Red Sox player. When told the name, the vendor replied, “Left-handed pitcher. He drove a red Z71 truck.” He also told a prank where the rookies were told to paint the statue of a horse in Chicago’s Grant Park. The next day “police” showed up the clubhouse waving a videotape of incident. After finally confessing, the culprits realized they had been set up. McDill also told of the time when his locker was cleaned out

and after a game he was forced to walk to the bus and ride to the hotel wearing a yellow sundress, white high heel shoes, a wig and carrying a purse. One of his fondest memories was being invited by Tim Wakefield to add his signature to the inside of the Fenway scoreboard inside the Green Monster.

During the question-and-answer session, he touched on a variety of topics. He told of being called in to face slugger Jim Thome and getting him out except for one opposite field home run. He recalled playing in Australia for the Melbourne Monarchs in 1995 and throwing a seven-inning no-hitter, only the second or third in the league's history. He also played for the Arecibo Lobos in the Puerto Rico league in 1995-96 and was the All-Star game MVP for a perfect inning in which he struck out the side. He told that after they won the Puerto Rican League championship the town threw them a wild parade which included the celebrants firing shots in the air. McDill commented that steroid use was blatantly obvious in the majors when some players would return the next season looking like "superheros". He said that in the minors you pitched to your strengths but in the majors there was a game plan on how to pitch the hitters and that somewhere at home he has scouting reports for the great Yankee teams of the late 90s. He said that the mental part of the game is the biggest part and that being a late-bloomer helped him make the majors because being at the bottom of the list gave him a "I'll show you" attitude. He noted that it was important to him to give back and that he never turned down a team charity event or an autograph request from kids. He currently lives in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, where he operates a sports training academy and coaches youth baseball.

Jim Yeager kicked off the presentations with another installment of his series of Backroads and Ballplayers. This one focused on the accomplishments of Arkansas ballplayers in the year 1934. He began by pointing out how they figured prominently in the 1934 MVP voting and All-Star teams, also noting that Dizzy Dean led the majors with 30 wins (the last National Leaguer to do so) and that Schoolboy Rowe finished second in the AL with 24 wins (third overall in the majors).

Other notable major league Arkansans achievements by Arkansans in 1934 included those by:

- Arky Vaughn, who Hit .333 in 1934 and led National League in OBP for the Pirates
- Lon Warneke who won 22 games for the Cubs
- Travis Jackson, who hit 16 homers and drove in 101 runs for the Giants
- Willis Hudlin, who won 15 games for the Indians
- Bill Dickey, hit .322 for the Yankees



- Odell “Bad News” Hale, who hit .301 and drove in 101 runs for the Indians
- Orville Amburst, who in his third and final MLB game was the winning pitcher in Babe Ruth’s game with the Yankees.



Notable accomplishments in the minor leagues included:

- George Harper, who hit .318 in 1934 as a 42-year-old for El Dorado
- Smead Jolley, who hit .360 in 171 games in the Pacific Coast League
- Carey Selph, who hit .323 as player/manager at Houston in 1934
- Harry Kelley, who won 19 games in Memphis and four more in Atlanta
- “Jittery Joe” Berry, who won 21 games in Joplin before becoming successful MLB relief pitcher in the 1940s
- George Dickey, who as an 18-year-old hit .297 for Norfolk in the Piedmont League before being promoted to the Red Sox in 1935
- Jimmy Zinn, who as a 39-year-old veteran won 14 games in 320 innings in PCL
- Clyde Spearman, who hit .342 in 1934 as a 21-year-old for New York Black Yankees



Jim concluded his presentation with a discussion of the 1934 World Series between the Cardinals and Tigers, noting that after Dizzy and Paul Dean combined for 49 regular-season wins they each won two games in the World Series and that Schoolboy Rowe won one.



Steve Dittmore followed with *Six Days in Los Angeles, June 1968: Drysdale’s streak, RFK’s assassination, and the best draft in MLB history*.

Beginning with June 2, when Robert F. Kennedy reportedly visited the Dodger clubhouse, Dittmore chronicled the events of



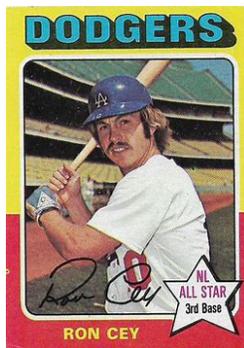
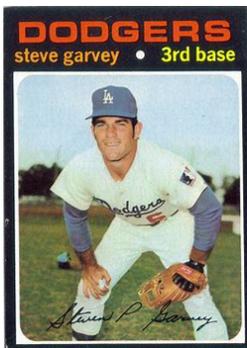
the next week. The following day, June 3, the LA Times reported that the expansion Montreal Expos had asked for permission to speak to longtime Dodger executive Fresno Thompson about becoming their first general manager. The following morning, Thompson left for New York for the upcoming MLB draft and was later in the afternoon named the Dodgers new general manager to replace Buzz Bavasi who was leaving for the expansion San Diego Padres. That night, Drysdale

beat the Pirates 5-0 while running his consecutive scoreless inning streak to a National League record 54 innings. Four miles west of Dodger Stadium, Kennedy gave a speech at the Ambassador Hotel following his victory in the California Democratic primary in which he acknowledged Drysdale's feat and joke "I hope we has as good fortune in our campaign". Shortly after midnight, Kennedy was shot by Sirhan Sirhan. Dodgers pitcher Mudcat Grant later said he was on his way to the Ambassador Hotel when he heard of the shooting and returned to Dodger Stadium parking lot and listened to the news on the radio.

The following night, June 5, the Dodgers beat the Pirates 2-1 in front of a crowd of 14,660, compared to 30,442 the day before when Drysdale was pitching. On June 6, Kennedy dies from his wounds as the MLB draft begins in New York and includes the four expansion clubs, Montreal, San Diego, Kansas City and Seattle. The draft continues on Friday, June 7. Although it was not projected to be a good draft, the Dodgers two-day haul includes Bobby Valentine (fifth overall), Joe Ferguson, Tom Paciorek, Doyle Alexander, Steve Garvey, Ron Cey, and Sandy Vance. In the January secondary phase, they would add Davey Lopes and Geoff Zahn.



On Saturday, June 8, Kennedy is laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. After struggling with the decision, Commissioner William Eckert finally decrees that the MLB games will go on following the funeral, except for the games in New York and Washington D.C. That night with 50,060 on hand, Drysdale ran his streak to 58 2/3 innings before the Phillies plate a run against him.

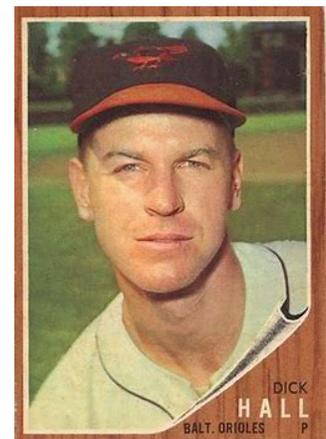


The Dodger draft class would end up in Ogden where, led by Paciorek (.386), Buckner (.344), Garvey (.338) and Vance (14-3, 2.52) and under the guidance of future Dodger manager Tommy LaSorda, they would go 39-25. All would make the major leagues, although Vance would retire early due to arm problems. Zahn, Paciorek, Ferguson, and Buckner, would be involved in various trades which would bring Burt Hooten, Dusty Baker, Reggie Smith, and Rick Monday to the Dodgers. Combined with Garvey, Cey, and Lopes, these acquisitions would form the nucleus of Dodgers teams which would win the NL pennant in 1977 and 1978 and the World Series in 1981.

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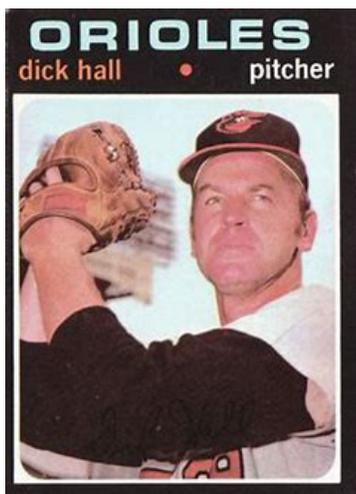
The next presentation was *Dick Hall: A Fine Baseball Career* by Tom Van Hying. He noted how Dick Hall was born in St. Louis but lived in both New York and New Jersey before moving to Baltimore when he was 16



and began playing summer baseball for the first time. A three-sport athlete in high school, Hall attended college at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, where he earned 11 letters in five sports: baseball, football, basketball, track & field, soccer. He still owns many school records, including the long jump mark of 23'-3".

Thanks to a connection with Branch Rickey, Sr., who had a daughter with a Swarthmore degree, Hall had a Pittsburgh tryout in September 1951 and stayed at Rickey's home of prior to the 1951 fall semester. Branch Rickey Jr., Pittsburgh's farm system director, later offered Hall a four-year \$16,000 bonus (\$4,000/year) plus \$5,000 annual salaries for 1952 and 1953, the MLB minimum.

Originally an outfielder, Hall hit .138 (11-for-80) with 17 strikeouts in 26 games in the 1952 season with the Pirates but in the winter of 1953-54 in Mexico led the league with 20 home runs. His most productive year as a position player was in 1954 with Pittsburgh when he was 74 for 310 (.239). His journey to the outfield to the mound began in a December 1954 series in Mexico when Hall was summoned from the outfield to replace injured Procopio Herrera on the mound. Howie Haak, Pittsburgh's best Caribbean scout, was at this game, and saw Hall throw six scoreless innings. The following season Hall was 6-6 in 15 games with the Pirates while pitching 94.1 innings. After going 0-7 for the Pirates in 1956, Hall appeared in just eight games in 1957 before missing the entire 1958 season with hepatitis. After going 18-5 with a 1.87 ERA for 1959 Salt Lake City Bees, Hall was call-up by Pittsburgh for two games in September. In December 1969 he was traded to the Kansas City A's and missed the Pirates 1960 World Series title. After just one season with the A's Hall was traded to Baltimore where he would have his greatest success, including a stretch in 1963 from July 24 to August 17 where he retired 28 consecutive batters and stretch in 1963 and 1964 against the New York Yankees in which he made 12 relief appearances and 4-1 with a 0.82 ERA in 22



innings. From 1961 thru 1966 with Baltimore, Hall compiled a 44-27 record in 599.2 innings with just 100 walks and a WHIP of 0.994. Unfortunately, Hall developed tendinitis in his elbow and missed Baltimore's victory in the 1966 World Series.

Traded to the Phillies in December 1966, Hall spent two years in Philadelphia was 14-8, including one start in which he pitched a complete game, but ended 1968 with a sore elbow. The Orioles gave Hall a look in spring training of 1969 and he was back with the team in time for their run to three straight World Series, including one title. Hall was 2-0 in ALCS games, including a win in the first ALCS game ever in 1969 but suffered a loss in Game 4 of the Orioles loss to the Miracle

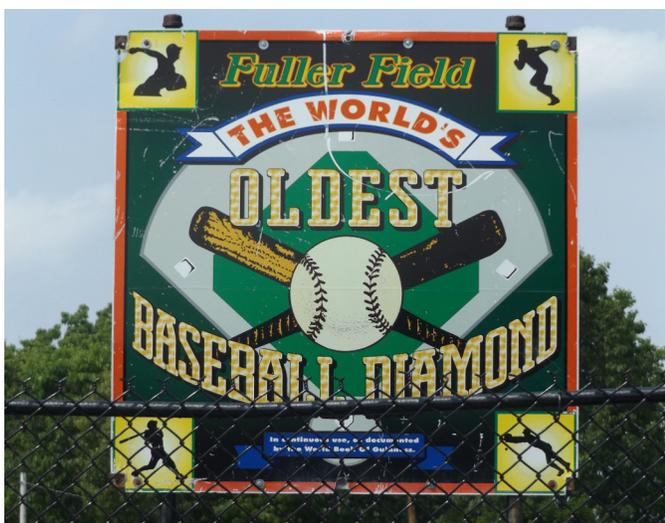
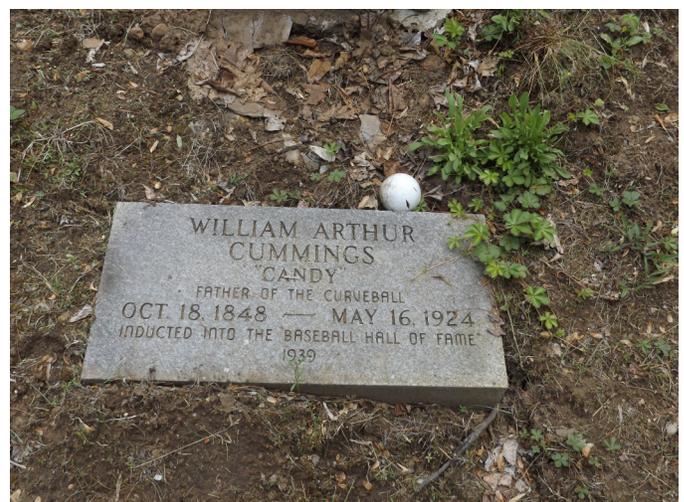
Mets in the 1969 World Series. In his final season in 1971, the 41-year-old Hall threw the only wild pitch of a career in which he faced 5,085 batters. The final home run Hall surrendered was to the all-time home run king Sadaharu Oh during the Orioles post-1971 World Series tour of Japan.

Fred Worth concluded the meeting with a recap of his latest grave-hunting adventure. This trip was thru Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Maine, covering 9,120 miles and over six weeks as he visited 953 baseball graves (and 24 non-baseball graves). Notable graves he visited included those of Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jackie Robinson, Mel Allen, Charlie Ebbets, Bart Giamatti, Harry Frazee, Eddie Waitkus, Clyde Sukeforth, Ralph Branca, Tony Conigliaro, Dom DiMaggio, Johnny Pesky, Dale Long, Walt Dropo, George Wright, Eddie Collins, King Kelly, Candy Cummings, Rabbit Maranville, Henry Chadwick, "Sliding" Billy Hamilton, and Bob "Death to Flying Things" Ferguson.



Non-baseball graves included: Presidents Franklin Pierce, Calvin Coolidge, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams, and P.T. Barnum, Noah Webster, and Lizzie Borden.

Along the way he also visited Fuller Baseball Field in Clinton, Massachusetts, which claims to be the world's oldest baseball diamond.





Following the meeting, 11 members enjoyed a nice night at the ballpark which included a pre-game midget wrestling match followed by a well-played 2-1 win by the Springfield Cardinals over the Arkansas Travelers.

