

Chuck Tanner

*Interview conducted by Mark Liptak in October 2005.
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The two are as closely linked in Chicago White Sox history as the Hall of Fame combo of Luis Aparicio and Nellie Fox. They are Roland Hemond and Chuck Tanner, the original “Sunshine Boys,” as dubbed by the Chicago media when they took over the operations of what was probably the worst franchise in Major League Baseball in all aspects in 1970.

We’ve already had the chance to speak with Roland and you can’t have one without the other, so this time around it’s Chuck Tanner’s turn.

Tanner is a baseball ‘lifer.’ Now 76, he still works as a baseball scout for the Cleveland Indians. He has been in baseball in various forms for more than 50 years. What we’ll be focusing on in this interview are his days as manager of the White Sox from the period of September 1970, when he was named to the post, until the offseason of 1975, when he turned down a surprising offer from new Sox manager Paul Richards and took over control of the Oakland A’s. In addition to those two teams, Chuck is best known for managing the Pittsburgh Pirates to the World Series crown in 1979. He finished his career managing the Atlanta Braves.

Tanner was only 41 when he started his managerial career and he used that youth to look at problems in new ways. Ever the optimist, always positive, Tanner took charge and changed the fortunes of the Sox franchise. In 1970 they won 56 games ... by the end of the 1971 season they had improved to 79 wins and drew more than 830,000 fans to Comiskey Park. Many, including Chuck himself, say Dick Allen saved the Sox franchise. That is probably true, but without Hemond and Tanner, Allen would never have come to Chicago in the first place.

One other ‘strange but truism’ about Chuck is that he is the only manager in the history of baseball to have four straight seasons where his teams stole at least 180 bases. His 1976 Oakland team stole an astounding 341 bases and his Pittsburgh teams from 1977 to 1979 stole between 180 and 260 bases — unheard-of numbers, then or now. I spoke with Chuck from his home in Pennsylvania where he had just returned from offseason management meetings in Cleveland. It was also during the period of the 2005 World Series matching the team that gave him his managerial start, the White Sox, against a Houston team managed by one of his former players in Oakland and Pittsburgh, Phil Garner.

ML: Chuck, most White Sox fans know that you became manager in mid-September 1970, but actually you played a part in one of the most memorable games in Sox history as a player. September 22, 1959, the Sox are in Cleveland, needing one win to take the pennant. You played in that game as an Indians outfielder. Tell me about it, the atmosphere and the memories.

(Author’s Note: Chuck played in the major leagues from 1955 through 1962 with the Braves, Cubs, Indians, and Angels.)

CT: “I remember a few things from that night. I remember Minnie Minoso was hit on the arm by Early Wynn. They wrapped his arm up very tightly. The next time up he smoked a drive to right center field and when he slid into third base he had his spikes high. Bubba Phillips was the Sox

third baseman and he wanted no part of those. Minnie just got up, dusted himself off, didn't say a word and just looked at Early."

"I came up to bat that night as a pinch hitter (in the 5th inning.) I worked the count to 3-2 and must have fouled off about a dozen pitches. I just kept slapping off everything Early threw. Finally he must have got tired of fooling around because then he threw me a knuckleball which darted and dropped every which way and I swung and missed it. That shows you the type of competitor Early was. In a big game he had enough confidence to throw that pitch on 3-2."
(Author's Note: The Sox won the game and the pennant that night 4-2.)

ML: As mentioned, you and Roland Hemond were hired at the same time by the White Sox to take over the operations of the club. How did that come about?

CT: "I was managing in Triple-A for the Angels at Hawaii. Dick Walsh was the Angels G.M. and one night he called me and asked if I were managing the team what would I do to change things? I said I'd bring up Jim Spencer and Ken Tatum and we'd be fine. Dick said O.K. I had always worked hard at developing the players under me to try to get them ready for the big leagues as opposed to just trying to win games so I'd advance in the farm system. It turns out that the Angels gave the job to Lefty Phillips even though Gene Autry wanted me to have it. Roland was the Angels' minor-league farm director and he was upset. He called me and said, 'You should have gotten the job. From now on, just win all you can win and don't worry about anything else.' I said O.K. and started on that track. We started out 18-18 that season ... we finished it 98-48, the best record in pro baseball anywhere."

"We had gone to Tucson to play the White Sox Triple-A team and while we were there Glenn Miller, the Sox Farm Director, came over and said that Stu Holcomb, the Sox Vice President, wanted to see me. So I met with him, we talked, and he offered me the job. I said I wanted a three-year deal and he said the Sox would give me two years at \$40,000 a season. Naturally, I took it."

"Then Roland came out and I said, 'What are you doing here?' That's when I found out that he had already been hired to run the G.M. side."

ML: It doesn't happen often that an organization makes what in essence is a 'package deal.' How did you know Roland and why did you two baseball men mesh like you did?

CT: "When I was with Milwaukee, Roland worked in the front office. I knew him and we'd talk baseball a lot. One year I tore out my Achilles tendon when I was playing with the Angels and got sent to Hawaii to get ready for the next season. I hit about .320 that year on one leg. While I was there, Fred Haney of the Angels and Mr. Autry came out to see the team and we talked. Mr. Autry asked how I was doing and I explained that the leg was still bothering me and I didn't know if I could get it back in shape. I said I regretted that I didn't have enough service time to get my pension. Mr. Autry told Fred to make sure that I was brought up to the Angels to get enough time to qualify for it. So I went up and when I got enough time in got sent back down. That's when I started thinking about managing."

"That offseason Fred called and offered me the job of managing the Angels' Quad Cities (Iowa) team. That's where it all started. Since Roland was by then the Farm Director we'd work together at every stop ... El Paso, Seattle, back to El Paso, and then Hawaii."

ML: Chuck, you knew the score going in. The White Sox may have been the worst organization in Major League Baseball from 1968 through 1970. They had few fans, actually played some

'home' games in Milwaukee, Comiskey Park was falling apart ... it was a disaster. Why did you take the job? What, if anything, did you see that was positive about the move?

CT: "I was positive ... that's what was positive about the move. Me being in Chicago was a positive. I don't mean that to sound arrogant but I had confidence in myself. I had managed in the minor leagues for eight years or so. I knew I could turn it around."

ML: One, I think, very important overlooked detail in the hiring of both of you was the fact that you had a chance to see what you were getting into. You and Roland came on board with a few weeks left in the 1970 season. (*Author's Note: Tanner went 3-13 in 16 games for the 1970 White Sox.*) How big of a factor was that for you and him heading into the offseason and the winter meetings?

CT: "It gave me a chance to see what I had to work with. The first time I met the club I said, 'Gentlemen, the pitching rotation is the same for the rest of the season. The only time you'll see me is when I change pitchers. For the rest of the year, do whatever you want ... if you want to hit and run, fine; steal, great; bunt, that's OK. It's up to you.' Then I sat in the dugout with a notebook and watched. I saw who wanted to try to get a man over to third base with less than two out as opposed to the guys who were playing for themselves. Then, at the end of the year, I knew who I wanted to keep on the team."

ML: Heading into those meetings, Chuck, was there any type of philosophy that you and Roland wanted? Maybe a particular style of play or a particular type of player?

(*Author's Note: The White Sox were furious players at those Winter Meetings, acquiring a number of guys, including Mike Andrews, Luis Alvarado, Tom Bradley, Jay Johnstone, and Tom Egan.*)

CT: "We were just trying to improve the club. I wanted to build around pitching and defense. Roland and I also tried to get a few good players for everyone we gave up. We traded some guys who were still good players like Ken Berry and Luis Aparicio but we got back a *few* guys each time, who were better than what we had. Mike Andrews wasn't an All-Star second baseman but he was better than what we had the year before. He made our team better. As far as philosophy I was going to win or lose my way. I wasn't going to lose and get fired, doing it somebody else's way."

ML: Chuck, was the team mind-set the biggest challenge facing you when you showed up in Sarasota in February 1971? I mean, you had guys like Wilbur Wood telling me in his interview that things were so bad with the Sox the only games he ever wanted to pitch in was the ones where he could get a save since he said if the game was tied, everyone on the club knew the Sox were going to lose it.

CT: "The first thing I did was to work hard in spring training. We went through seven infield stations for 20 minutes each time with five minutes break between them. We worked on fundamentals then, things like the run down, the pick off move, things like that. *Then* we'd take batting practice. Batting practice was always the last thing that we did during the day."

"The other thing and this was part of my philosophy was that I told the guys that we'd take the best 25 players north every year, the guys who gave us the best chance to win. You look at the number of kids that came up when I was managing ... Bucky Dent, George Orta, Brian Downing, Terry Forster, Goose Gossage. People were always telling me, "you'll ruin those kids, they aren't ready." I'd say "I want the best 25 guys, I'll manage them, and I'll get them ready."

“The other thing that turned it around took place pretty early in the 1971 season. We weren’t doing well; we were having a hard time catching the ball in the outfield. Mike Hershberger was back in Triple-A because he pulled a hamstring and I said I wanted him called back up to the Sox. I got a call from Roland the next day saying that there was a meeting going on at Comiskey Park and that a number of Sox people didn’t want him to return. I said, “I’ll be right over.” So I got to the park and went to the meeting. A number of Sox people were there, the Farm Director, the Assistant Farm Director, scouts. Basically they said Hershberger had a bad attitude, he didn’t want to play, a lot of stuff.”

“So I said, and this was the greatest thing I ever did with the Sox, that 'you know there’s a reason Don Gutteridge isn’t here as manager anymore. It’s because *he listened to all of you!*’ I said, 'If Hershberger isn’t brought back up, you’ll be looking for a new manager tonight.' I threatened to resign. Mike helped turn it around. He hit a home run to win a game; he threw out a guy at the plate to win a game. He settled down the outfield and we started to win. (*Author’s Note: In 74 games that season Hershberger hit .260, with two home runs, nine doubles, 15 RBIs, and 30 walks in 177 at-bats.*) The point was I was going to win or lose the way I wanted to, not the way someone else wanted me to.”

ML: I’ve interviewed a number of your former players, Chuck, including guys like Chet Lemon, Mike Andrews, Ed Herrmann, and Wilbur Wood, to name a few. To a man every one of them talked about the fact that they enjoyed playing for you and commented on your optimistic outlook no matter how bad things got. Where did that come from?

CT: “I grew up that way. My mother and father had that type of attitude and I remember them telling me that whatever you do, have fun with it or else there’s no sense in doing it in the first place. That attitude stayed with me regardless of what I played growing up, baseball, football, basketball or track.”

ML: I’ve also always heard the phrase ‘a player’s manager’ used with you. What is ‘a player’s manager?’

CT: “To me it means a few things. If the players keep trying no matter how bad things are, that I won’t leave them or turn on them. A ‘player’s manager’ has the ability to communicate, to let each player know where they stand. It also means that I would pick the spots to play them where they would have the very best chance to succeed both for themselves and for the good of the team.”

ML: Chuck just so the readers don’t get the wrong impression you could be very, very tough when you needed to be.

Ed Herrmann talked about the time he screwed up and had to play a visit to your office. He said he remembers that to this day. That the sound of your voice came through your office and everyone heard it in the locker room. What did you always demand of your players? And was part of the reason you were known as ‘a player’s manager’ was the fact that when you had to discipline them or criticize them it was always in the clubhouse, never to the media?

CT: “I didn’t demand a lot of things ... basically that they just gave me the best effort they had. That’s all. I wanted my players to hustle, to break up the double play, to know how to get a good lead off first base and then on a hit to be able to get to third base. The media in Chicago would ask me, ‘what are your rules?’ I’d say, 'I’ve got 25 of them, one for each player.' They’d be

shocked and say 'how can you do that?' I'd say 'I can do it because I'll be the strongest guy in that locker room. The players will do what I ask or they won't be with me.'

"As far as criticizing the guys, that's right. I'd keep it in the clubhouse. You'd never hear me going to the press and ripping one of my players. One time I fined a guy, it was either \$5,000 or \$10,000 for something they did and to this day the media never heard about it. When I'd fine a guy, they'd pay it and that was the end of it. I'd tell the players if something happens and it gets out to the press it won't be because of me, you must have told them yourselves."

ML: Wilbur Wood said that one of the things he admired about you was that you always seemed to spend more time with guys who were struggling or guys who were having some issues at the time. Mike Andrews told me about the time in the locker room you were walked through and just noticed that the late Pat Kelly appeared to be really down like something was wrong. Mike said you went over to Pat, physically picked him up, backed him up into his locker and said, 'Pat, smile!' Kelly broke into a grim, the players started laughing, and everyone especially Pat felt a lot better. Did you have a sixth sense about when a player needed some help?

CT: "(loud laughing) That incident with Pat really happened. Yeah, I tried to keep my eye on everyone, but I especially tried to talk to the guys that I felt had a problem or were struggling with something. I tried to know my players; my goal was to say something every day to everyone on the team. If it was in batting practice I'd ask about their family or how they were feeling, anything that I could. Bucky Dent one time told me that he was worried that because he was struggling we were going to send him back down to the minor leagues. I said, 'Bucky, you are a Major League shortstop, you aren't going back to the minors.' He started to play better after we talked."

ML: Fate intervened in spring training 1971 forcing a decision that had an important impact on the White Sox. In the final exhibition game, Joe Horlen tore up his knee sliding into second base. The result: you moved Wilbur Wood into the starting rotation. What was the rationale for making that move? I mean that was a bold decision, making a top relief pitcher into a starter.

(Author's Note: Wood would go on to have four straight seasons or 20 or more wins and make the All-Star team three times.)

CT: "I didn't think it was that big of a gamble and I'll tell you why. A gentleman named Fred Schaefer, who was a scout for the Sox, lived near me. He saw Wilbur when he was pitching in the Pirates minor-league system as a starter. Fred said that Wilbur could be a starter and that he was pretty good at it in the minors. That always stuck with me. When Joe got hurt I asked Johnny Sain, our pitching coach, about it and he said to do it.

"What's funny is that after we made Wilbur a starter I was in the Bard's Room at Comiskey Park and I'm hearing Harry Caray and all the Chicago writers talking about how this isn't going to work, how it'll ruin Wilbur, and all that shit. A few months later I'm back up there having a beer and these same guys are talking about how great of a move it was."(laughing)

ML: Wilbur Wood told me in his interview that at first he was against the move but for the good of the club decided to give it a try. Do you remember anything about what you said to convince him?

CT: "He was against it at first but I asked him, 'Wilbur, do you want to make a lot of money?' He said, 'Sure, that's why you play the game.' So I said, 'You can make a lot of money doing

this, I want to pitch you every three or four days, I'm going to pitch the shit out of you.' That's how he decided to try it."

ML: The 1971 White Sox had one of the biggest turnarounds in the history of baseball, going from 56 wins in 1970 to 79 in 1971. When you look back at your career, Chuck, I know you take a great deal of satisfaction in that both from a personal as well as a professional standpoint, don't you?

CT: "Do I ever. John Allyn, who was the Sox owner, came up to me one day, he was always very good to me, and he said, 'You just saved this franchise.' I know I didn't, but it was nice of him to say that."

"I also remember a time when we weren't playing well and the media just really started to get on this. I was talking with John and he said, 'I'm gonna stop that shit right now.' He asked me, '*Which do you want, a 10- or a 20-year contract?*' He was serious. I looked at him and said, 'No, you don't have to do that, John. I can deal with this.' But he insisted on trying to put a stop to it, so he called his secretary and told her to draw up the papers extending my contract. It was extended three years. Mr. Allyn was always good to me and I think he appreciated loyalty and ability from the people who worked for him."

ML: On December 2, 1971, the White Sox made a deal that according to many, including you, saved the franchise. The Sox got Dick Allen from the Dodgers for Tommy John and Steve Huntz. How much input did you have in the deal because in many respects it was a gamble.

CT: "Roland Hemond and I talked about anything that we were going to do. He came up to me and said, 'I think we can get Dick Allen in a deal, what do you think?' I said, 'Shit, I'd take him in a second, he's a good person and a great player, do the deal.' And we did. Really, it wasn't a gamble at all."

ML: Roland Hemond told me that one important reason he made the trade was because of your relationship with Dick and more importantly Dick's mother. How did you know the Allen family?

CT: "I knew Dick and his family from when he and his younger brothers were little kids. I played ball against his older brother who was a great athlete. The Allen family only lived about 20 minutes from where I lived. I had known Dick for years."

ML: Chuck, I've read and I'd like to know if this is true, that Dick was so dissatisfied with baseball, having been traded three times in three years despite great seasons with the Cardinals and Dodgers, that he wasn't sure if he even wanted to play anymore. I've heard he showed up in Sarasota and watched from beyond the center field fence for a few days, then discussed things with his mom and that it was his mom who said because of their relationship with you for a number of years, that Dick owed you the benefit of the doubt and he reported.

CT: "I never knew that Dick showed up and was watching us. I got along well with his family and maybe that helped, but the biggest reason that I thought we worked well together was because I respected him and his ability. One example was that when we were demonstrating how to get a proper lead off first base, I'd say to Dick, 'You show 'em how to take the right lead' and he did. Dick was a natural leader ... he knew exactly how to get the right lead, he never made a mistake on the bases, he played almost every game and had the greatest individual year I ever saw out of any player I ever managed. And all of the young guys that we had on the team respected him and watched every move he made, kids like Dent and Downing and Gossage.

(Author's Note: Allen would finish the 1972 season almost winning the Triple Crown. He led the league with 37 home runs, 113 RBIs, a .603 slugging percentage and 99 walks. He led the Sox with a .308 batting average, drove in 19 game-winning runs, stole 19 bases, scored 90 runs, and was only .0005 points shy of leading all A.L. first basemen in fielding. He was the leading vote-getter for the All-Star team and was awarded the league's M.V.P. Award that November.)

ML: 1972 was an amazing season what with Dick playing at an M.V.P. pace, Wilbur Wood was a legit Cy Young candidate, and you had very good players in guys like Carlos May, Stan Bahnsen, Tom Bradley, Terry Forster and a young Goose Gossage. At what point did you say to yourself, 'You know, we can win this thing even though no one expects us to'?

CT: "When we came out of spring training I thought we were going to be good because we had three top pitchers in Wilbur, Stan Bahnsen, and Tom Bradley. Johnny Sain and I told them the same thing we told Wilbur: 'We're going to pitch the shit out of you and you can make a lot of money because you can win a lot of games.' Stan thought it over and said O.K. although he also said, 'You know I could also lose 20 games!'" (laughing)

(Author's Note: Bahnsen would lose 20 games in 1973 even though he had a better ERA than in 1972 when he went 21-16. Wood would go 24-17 in 1972 and Bradley 15-14.)

ML: If Bill Melton doesn't have a herniated disc and go on the DL in June, do the Sox win the division?

CT: "Damn right we win it, we were right there and that's not saying anything bad about Ed Spiezio, who did a fine job for us."

ML: Dick did some unbelievable things. He hit two inside-the-park home runs in the same game (July 31 at Minnesota), bashed a ball into the center-field bleachers right below the scoreboard (August 23), but to me the game that epitomized what the 1972 White Sox were about took place in the second game of a doubleheader versus the Yankees on June 4. It was the last of the ninth inning, the Sox trailed 4-2, they had two men on base, when you called on Allen to pinch-hit. He drilled the third pitch from Sparky Lyle into the left-center field seats for a White Sox winner. I was sitting in right field and the crowd reaction was incredible. The fans refused to leave the park and I thought I read a comment from you saying that the inside of the Sox locker room was shaking because of the crowd. Take us into the locker room after that hit.

CT: "Dick was our leader and I remember that day very well. Mike Andrews told me what he said to Lyle as he was crossing the infield coming in to pitch. Mike and he were roommates with the Red Sox. Mike said to Sparky, 'You're in deep shit now.'

(Author's Note: Mike was on first base after he got a single to left center in the 9th inning and when I spoke with him he confirmed that was what he said to Lyle.)

"After the game, after the home run, the fans were so loud, so excited, that you could feel the locker room shake from the vibrations. I've never seen that before in my life. When I was in the locker room I looked at Dick and got chills, I still do thinking about it. He was at his locker undressing and to him it was just another day. He did some amazing things."

"People don't know how good of a leader Dick was. We decided to send down Jorge Orta for a few weeks that season, because we needed help in another area. Jorge was young, spoke very little English and was devastated because he thought he wasn't going to be brought back up. He was crying, saying in broken English, "but I have no money. What will I do?" Dick walked over

to him, gave him \$1,500 right there and consoled him. The other players were stunned just watching it. That's what Dick Allen was all about."

ML: Later in the season, a terrific four-game series was played in Oakland with first place on the line. That was the series where you had a 19-inning game, a pair of shutouts, and a pair of two-hitters.

(Author's Note: It may have been the best series in the entire decade! The series began on a Thursday night with a game that wound up being suspended due to curfew tied at three. It was picked up on Friday and would go 19 innings before the Sox lost 5-3 on a two run home run from Joe Rudi. In the regularly scheduled game Cub castoff Dave Lemonds would out duel "Catfish" Hunter as he and Cy Acosta combined to hold the A's to two hits and win 1-0. Wilbur Wood then repeated the feat on Sunday with a two-hitter winning 2-1 in 11 innings putting the Sox in first place. The Sunday game then saw Vida Blue shut out the Sox 3-0 for a split.)

Does a manager manage any differently in a big series as opposed to just a regular set of game? I mean for example in this series at Oakland the Sox had cut an 8½ game lead down to nothing.

CT: "No, I always managed the same way regardless of what was at stake. I tried to get everyone on the team involved because the bottom line was that if all of them couldn't get the job done, we weren't going to win it anyway. You have to be able to count on everyone on your club ... first man to the last man."

ML: The Sox would end 1972 only 5½ games behind the A's. In 1973 Melton was back. The Sox were favored and roared out of the gate building up a 4½ game lead by late May. But there were some major issues going on behind the scenes regarding you, Roland, and then-Vice President Stu Holcomb over player contracts. When a Sox player couldn't or wouldn't agree to terms, Holcomb ordered Hemond to release him. *(Author's Note: The Sox lost players like Ed Spiezio, Mike Andrews, Rick Reichardt and Jay Johnstone in this way.)* What was your reaction to all of this? According to Roland, it got to the point where after Holcomb ordered him to release Stan Bahnsen he went to owner John Allyn and basically offered to resign.

CT: "Hell, I knew it in the spring that this stuff was going to go on. I told John Allyn the same thing when I talked with him. As a manager all you can do is the best you can. I don't know, maybe the Sox had money troubles at that time, I don't know if they had the money to pay these guys. It hurt us because we didn't have anybody left after the injuries. One other thing about this. I remember Jay Johnstone just looking shocked about it all ... 'How could they just release me?' "

ML: In September 1974 Allen 'retired' from the Sox in mid-September. For what I understand it was pretty emotional in the clubhouse when he spoke with the team. Did you know that Dick was planning on leaving? Did you try to talk him out of it?

CT: "No, I'd never try to talk a player out of something like that and no, I didn't know ahead of time he was leaving. He just came into my office with his spikes tied together and hung over his shoulder like you used to do as a kid and said, 'Lefty, that's it, I'm done.' I told him that I appreciated how hard he played for me and that I thought he had the greatest year anyone that I managed ever had. I knew he was really hurting. Dick had a very bad shoulder, he was coming off that broken leg *(Author's Note: suffered in June 1973 in Anaheim)* and he was tired. He was just tired of dealing with things like the media. There were a number of games where he shouldn't even have been playing but he was out there anyway."

ML: Dick Allen was a tremendous player but one who may have gotten an unfair rap. Craig Wright, who worked for the Rangers when Dick was coaching with that organization in the 1980s, did a lengthy piece for SABR's *Baseball Research Journal* in 1995. Both you and Roland are quoted extensively in the story. You said that Dick 'was the greatest player I ever managed and what he did in Chicago was amazing.' You also were very, very supportive of Dick in the story when it was brought to your attention that Bill James, the statistical guy, said he was a 'disruptive presence' on a team. Again, your reply was 'He's full of shit, and you be sure to tell him that.' What kind of person was Dick in relationship to his teammates? In Wright's story everyone that played with Allen said he was a great guy and a leader.

CT: "He was *the* leader of the team. He taught the kids how to play the game. They loved him, they listened to him. He was the best player I ever had and he should be in the Hall Of Fame."

"I can't say enough about the things he did for me and for the team. If ever I got back into managing, I was going to call Dick and ask him to be one of my coaches. He understood the game and the way it's supposed to be played."

ML: Chuck, was there any talk when Bill Veeck bought the club in December 1975 that you were going to stay on? Or was it a foregone conclusion that you were leaving?

CT: "They wanted me to stay. I got a call from Paul Richards and he said 'you're a better manager than I'll ever be, the only reason I'm doing this is because Bill is into the nostalgia thing, I'd like you to stay and be my third-base coach, it'll only be for a year. I'll get you more money. You can coach; you can be a Vice President of the club if you want to."

"I went to a meeting at Comiskey Park to talk about this. Bill said 'I'm not letting him go.' It was interesting but I said, 'I don't know.' I just didn't think it was right for me. Then I heard from Charlie Finley. His people said that Charlie said, 'If they don't hire him, I want to meet with him.' That's what happened and Charlie gave me a three-year contract."

ML: Even though you had success with Oakland and won a championship with Pittsburgh, how much did working in Chicago for five seasons prepare you for taking that next step to winning the World Series?

CT: "Every year you manage, you become better. I got my start in Chicago and I took the things I learned there to Oakland and then Pittsburgh."

ML: I know you are a scout now for the Indians, but I also know from talking to your former players how loyal of a man you are. How tough was it for you down the stretch when the Indians were fighting the Sox for the divisional title?

CT: "Well, you know, you have to be loyal to the people who were paying you. (laughing) I wanted Cleveland to get in the playoffs. But as far as the [2005] World Series, I can't lose. If the Sox win it, I'll be very happy for the fans and for Roland. If the Astros win it, one of my former players, Phil Garner, is their manager so I'll be happy for him."

ML: The Sox finally got back to the World Series this year; I know Roland was on the field in Anaheim when the Sox clinched the pennant. Have you spoken to Roland recently and if so, how is he enjoying all this?

CT: "I know he's enjoying it. Actually I haven't spoken with Roland for a while. He called me last week and left a message but we haven't been able to talk personally yet. Like I said I'm very happy for him."

ML: Sum it all up for me Chuck: the years with the Sox, the good times and the tough times.

CT: “I was fortunate to be in the greatest city in baseball. The fans took us under their wings. Mayor [Richard J.] Daley was a big Sox fan, he supported us a lot. I still remember going to those clinics we used to have on the weekends with my coaches, talking to the fans and meeting the parents.”

(Author’s Note: The clinics were sponsored by Olympic Savings & Loan Association and were held at different locations around Chicago. Tanner, his coaches, and players would come out in uniform and work with youngsters. In addition, Tanner and the players would come out to the White Sox Boy’s Camp in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to speak and work with the campers during the summer.)

“People say Chicago is a Cubs town. That’s garbage ... it’s a White Sox town, too.”



