



ENJOY  
SABR 51  
HIGHLIGHTS!

# EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023 ◉ VOLUME 14 ◉ EDITION 4

**RICH HANSEN, CHAIR - RICHARD SMILEY, VICE CHAIR**  
**BILL PEARCH, SECRETARY - PETER YEE, TREASURER - JOHN RACANELLI, MEMBERSHIP**



*Above: Nancy Faust dazzled guests during SABR 51's welcome reception. (Left to right): Chris Kamka, Sean Kolodziej, Ralph Carhart, Nancy Faust, Andy Terrick, Bill Pearch and Jason Schwartz.*

## SABR 51: SHARING A PASSION FOR EVERYTHING BASEBALL

BY: BILL PEARCH

Imagine every possible way to love baseball: the game's rich history, legendary ballparks, baseball cards, Hall of Fame debates, analytics and more. That list woefully undersells the range of activities on display at Chicago's iconic Palmer House Hilton during SABR 51, the Society for American Baseball Research's 51st annual convention.

"It was an honor to celebrate good times at SABR 51," said Nancy Faust, legendary Chicago White Sox organist, who provided entertainment during the convention's welcome reception. "Fun and friendliness abounded among those sharing a passion for everything baseball – its past, present and future. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with old friends, and to discover new ones."

For five days earlier this month (July 5-9, 2023), Chicago was the hub of baseball discourse. Hundreds of baseball fans from around the world enjoyed a plethora of diverse player and historian panel discussions, insightful member research presentations, poster presentations, walking and bus tours, an inspiring awards luncheon with Jason Benetti and even a come-from-behind White Sox victory over the St. Louis Cardinals. Recordings for all sessions are available on SABR's website.

DAN EVANS  
DISCUSSES  
SABR 51!

"SABR 51 was an all-you-can-eat buffet of all things baseball, complete with amazing presentations, VIP guests, and a super cool Chicago backdrop," said Jason Schwartz, SABR Baseball

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 –

### WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 2/ A GOOD REPORT CARD FROM THE MANAGERS
- 3/ IT HAPPENED HERE ... UNFORTUNATELY!
- 4/ CHICAGO RANDOM TANDEM
- 5/ ZEMAN'S ZINGERS; SPORCLE QUIZ;  
PASTIME PASSAGE
- 6/ SCOREBOARD PUZZLER
- 7/ SABR'S DIGITAL LIBRARY
- 8/ HISTORY HUNTERS; UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENT
- 9/ TOP 10: MOST QUALITY STARTS IN A SEASON BY  
CHICAGO PITCHER (SINCE 1901); 2023  
NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE
- 10/ CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY ADDS RESEARCH  
RESOURCES; 2023 SABR JEFFERSON BURDICK  
AWARD ZOOM PRESENTATION
- 11/ ROOT ROOT ROOT FOR THE HOME TEAMS



BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?





*Top: Chicago White Sox second baseman Nellie Fox and first baseman Ted Kluszewski act for the camera in 1960.*

## A GOOD REPORT CARD FROM THE MANAGERS



BY: FRANCIS KINLAW

In the days before statistical analysis became the preferred method of evaluating athletic performance, sportswriters and fans often did not hesitate to express personal views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of major-league players. In 1960, Milton Richman of Sport magazine took a full-blown approach to such an exercise in the publication's July issue by comparing every regular position player in the American League to his peers, with rankings based upon opinions of the American League managers during that season: Casey Stengel (Yankees), Paul Richards (Orioles), Al Lopez (White Sox), Cookie Lavagetto (Washington Senators), Billy Jurges and/or Pinky Higgins (Red Sox), and Bob Elliott (Athletics). Joe Gordon and Jimmy Dykes, the subjects of a mid-season trade of managers by the Tigers and Indians, also participated. The qualities of each club's pitching staff and utility players were also ranked from best to worst, but by team rather than individually.

Fans in the Chicago area were naturally most interested in how those wearing White Sox uniforms were perceived by opposing American League skippers. (The White Sox had finished in second place in 1957 and 1958, had won the pennant in 1959, and were destined for a third-place finish in 1960.)

The results of the managerial survey relative to Chicago's South Side team and Richman's summaries of his findings were the following:

**First base** – Ted Kluszewski ranked third behind Vic Power of the Indians and Bill Skowron of the Yankees. "Still a threat with the bat at age 35. Isn't often fooled at the plate. Has good hands

but is painfully slow. Stops everything hit at him but doesn't cover much ground. Roy Sievers, obtained in a trade with the Senators, gives the White Sox good depth at first if Big Klu falters." (Sievers played first base in 114 games, while Kluszewski played the position in only 38 games.)

**Second base** – Nellie Fox was rated as the league's best second-sacker. "A player with only ordinary equipment who made himself outstanding. Fair range, average arm and sometimes awkward in the field, but there isn't a play he can't make. No power, but nevertheless a threat every time up. Left-handed pitching doesn't bother him. Outstanding hit-and-run man."

**Third base** – Gene Freese ranked fourth behind Frank Malzone of the Red Sox, Eddie Yost of the Tigers, and Harmon Killebrew of the Senators. "Has power and should improve hitting by playing regularly. Strong arm but erratic. Most of his errors come on throws. Has a chance to move up a couple of notches if he becomes more consistent."

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 –

### GET PUBLISHED!

Let SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter help publish your baseball research. We are looking for new articles to share in the Chapter's newsletter and our social media outlets.

Submit your articles to Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net) for inclusion in an upcoming edition.







## IT HAPPENED HERE ... UNFORTUNATELY!



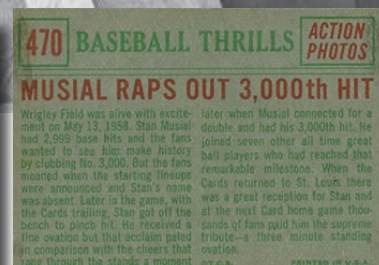
BY: JASON SCHWARTZ

Writing for the [SABR Baseball Cards](#) blog, Emil Rothe chapter membership lead and McFarland Award winner John Racanelli recently [profiled](#) a baseball card set highlighting the top ten moments in Wrigley Field history. In this series, I'll flip the script and offer a baseball card set "lowlighting" the bottom ten moments in the history of our local ballparks.

### Wrigley Field: May 13, 1958

Despite finishing a characteristic 33 games out of first place the season before, hopes were high among the Cubbie faithful in 1958 thanks to a 13-8 start that found the club deadlocked atop the standings with the World Champion Milwaukee Braves. Adding to the optimism was a six-game stretch against the St. Louis Cardinals whose dreadful (but pi-like) 3-14 record had the Red Birds squarely in the National League basement. Unfortunately, the games didn't quite go as planned with our hometown heroes dropping the first five, two in walk-off fashion. Thus it was that the Cubs and Cards began play on May 13 with only three games separating the two clubs in the standings and the Cubs now closer to first place than last.

Fortunately, winning tends to cure all baseball ills, and the Cubs had to like their chances, leading 3-1 in the sixth inning with Cards superstar Stan Musial not expected the play. The real story, of course, was that Stan the Man was sitting on 2,999 hits and the off day would provide him the chance to attain the



milestone in front of his hometown fans. Of course, when does life go according to plan? Recognizing a high-leverage situation and his best hitter available, manager Fred Hutchinson pressed Musial into action, and the rest was—as they say—history! The Cards went on to win 5-3, and Stan the Man even got a "Baseball Thrills" card for his trouble.

### Comiskey Park: April 16, 1940

As overheard at SABR 51, a popular baseball riddle asks how a team can get no-hit but have every player's batting average stay the same. The answer is of course to be no-hit on Opening Day! Mathematically, this answer is not quite right as the players would not yet have batting averages before the game. Still, print the legend!

At any rate, this baseball riddle is exactly what played out at Comiskey Park on April 16, 1940. Though the White Sox would draw five walks and even load the bases in the second inning, none of the ten Pale Hose batters managed a single hit off Bob Feller. Newark Eagles ace Leon Day would match Feller's feat six years later against the Philadelphia Stars, but Day's no-no was evidently not recognized by Topps when they issued a "Turn Back the Clock" card for Feller in 2020. 🕒







*Above: On Friday, August 25, 2023, SABR Chicago chapter member John Racanelli was the keynote speaker at the Hack Wilson historical marker dedication in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania.*

## GOOD REPORT CARD (CONT.)

**Shortstop** – Luis Aparicio was at the top of the list. “Best fielding shortstop by far. Extraordinary speed, great arm and great hands. Leaves nothing to be desired on double plays. Gets the jump on the bases and is almost impossible to throw out. Fair hitter, but proper use of speed could get him on base more than he does. Keeps improving each year, though, and may soon reach his full potential as a hitter.”

**Left field** – Minnie Minoso ranked second behind Tito Francona of the Indians. “Has slowed down, but is still considered a dependable .300 hitter and 100 percent hustler. Drives in close to 100 runs every year. Better than average in the field. Goes a long way to catch the ball. Won’t give an inch at the plate.”

**Center field** – Jim Landis ranked third behind Mickey Mantle of the Yankees and Al Kaline of the Tigers. “Top defensive center fielder in the league. A strong .270 hitter who apparently hasn’t reached his full potential. Fine baserunner, exceptional speed, and an adequate arm.”

**Right field** – Al Smith ranked third behind Harvey Kuenn of Cleveland and Rocky Colavito of the Tigers. “A good base-runner who gets on base a lot, one way or another. Good arm and a better-than-average fielder. Inconsistent hitter, but dangerous in the clutch. Difficult man to pitch to because he crowds the plate.”

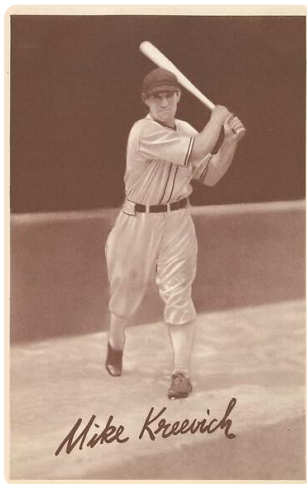
**Catcher** – Sherm Lollar was considered by managers to be the league’s best backstop (placing ahead of Yogi Berra of the Yankees). “Good, smart hitter with plenty of power. Pulls well and often hits right-handers even better than left-handers. Best handler of pitchers in the league and may become a manager. His only drawback is no speed.”

**Pitching staff** – Ranked second behind an Orioles staff that featured Milt Pappas, Jerry Walker, Jack Fisher, Chuck Estrada, Hoyt Wilhelm, Hal Brown, Arnie Portocarrero, and Gordon Jones. “Exceptionally well-balanced staff, unlike Baltimore’s which may be top-heavy with right-handers. Dick Donovan has the best slider in the league and the managers tossed out his 9-10 mark of 1959 as just an off-year record. Donovan and Early Wynn ranked in the American League’s top rung. Bob Shaw was only a shade behind due to a tendency to tire in late innings. Billy Pierce is rated well, too. Herb Score could be the difference if he can ever regain his early form. Gerry Staley and Turk Lown both keep the ball low and are two of the league’s best relievers.”

**The bench** – Ranked first ahead of the Yankees. “Versatile and fortified at practically every position. Especially strong in the infield with Billy Goodman, Sammy Esposito and Earl Torgeson, and behind the plate with Dick Brown and Camilo Carreon. Harry Simpson, Jim McAnany, and Jim Rivera provide good outfield protection. Roy Sievers should be a big help. Discount last season and he’s one of the American League’s top sluggers.”

These ratings by position were obviously favorable when viewed cumulatively, with three individual players at the top of their position’s list, one as second-best, three as third-best, and one coming in fourth. The managers’ rankings of the pitching staff as a close second to the Orioles and of Chisox utility players as the league’s best group served to make the overall results even more impressive. If the ratings of Chicago’s players had been

# RANDOM TANDEM

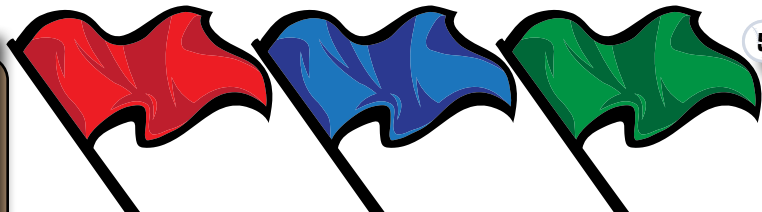


The most recent season in which the White Sox had three different players leg out double-digit triples was in 1937 – Mike Kreevich (16), Dixie Walker (16), and Rip Radcliff (10).

The most recent season in which the Cubs had three different players leg out double-digit triples was in 1937 – Billy Herman (11), Augie Galan (10), and Billy Jurges (10).

**Have a sweet Chicago Random Tandem?  
Send it to [johnbracanelli@gmail.com](mailto:johnbracanelli@gmail.com)!**





# ZEMAN'S ZINGERS



BY: DAVE ZEMAN

The 2023 MLB regular season is coming to a close. Any postseason predictions? Fans of *Jeopardy!* will be familiar with before and after categories. For these questions, two answers are combined to make one correct response. Ready to play ball? Here's the pitch!

1. Noted bison supplier / 18th Dodger to be named NL Rookie of the Year
2. Cookie king / 19th-century flamethrower
3. Won 16 games as a rookie in 2012 / "Wrecking Ball" singer
4. 6-time 200-hit batter / NFL player turned *Brooklyn 99* actor
5. Most recent Cub with a complete game no-hitter / boxing referee and judge

## MAY-JUNE 2023: HOW DID YOU DO?

1. The 1923 Cincinnati Reds were the most recent National League team to feature three 20-game winners. Who were these pitchers? **Dolf Luque won 27 games, Pete Donohue 21 and Eppa Rixey notched 20 victories.**
2. Name the two Boston infielders who had unassisted triple plays in 1923. **First baseman George Burns of the Red Sox on September 14 and shortstop Ernie Padgett October 6 for the Braves.**
3. The New York Yankees won their first world championship in 1923. What hurler earned the victory in the 6th and deciding Fall Classic contest that year? **Herb Pennock won his second game of the series.**
4. Yankee Stadium opened April 18, 1923, with Bob Shawkey beating the Boston Red Sox. What pitcher, who would toss a no-hitter that year, took the loss? **Howard Ehmke, who no-hit the Philadelphia Athletics September 7.**
5. What New York Giants pitcher went 38-for-89, batting .427 in 1923? **Jack Bentley**



*Above: Just a couple of dozen SABR members eager to open assorted packs of baseball cards to wind down a successful annual convention.*

## SABR 51 (CONT.)

Cards Research Committee co-chair. "The highlight for me was simply spending time with people I'd either never met before or only knew online. Just an amazing turnout of baseball fans talking baseball and doing baseball things 24/7. The only thing missing was sleep!"

Both Faust and Schwartz knocked it out of the park. Some of the game's most dynamic thinkers and personalities like Mike Veeck, Ozzie Guillén, Maybelle Blair and Louis Moore shared captivating stories about cutting-edge promotions, the current state of baseball, the AAGPBL, and Chicago's Black Baseball legacy. But the moments I'll cherish most involve trading tales with fellow baseball fans while wandering the hallways or opening packs of baseball cards after hours.

My personal SABR 51 experience commenced with back-to-back tours by Chicago Cubs Team Historian Ed Hartig and SABR's Director of Editorial Content Jacob Pomrenke. Hartig provided a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of Wrigley Field as he discussed the historic park's humble beginnings, its evolution throughout the decades and its recent reimagination. Pomrenke led a unique two-mile walking tour of downtown Chicago highlighting many of its most significant baseball sites including notable Black Sox scandal locations.

Prior to her session highlighting the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, SABR Board Director and CEO of Rockford, Illinois' International Women's Baseball Center Dr. Kat Williams, introduced me to 96-year-old Maybelle Blair. I enjoyed hearing a few personal stories from the former member of the 1948 Peoria Redwings squad and current social media star. Her passion for baseball continues to radiate.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 —

## PASTIME PASSAGES

"Things were so bad in Chicago last summer that by the fifth inning we were selling hot dogs to go."

— Ken Brett, about the 1976 Chicago White Sox

Do you have a favorite baseball-related quote? Send it to John Racanelli via email at johnbracanelli@gmail.com.



**CLICK HERE TO PLAY**  
**CAN YOU NAME THE ALL-TIME**  
**LEADERS OF THESE CATEGORIES**  
**FROM THE TEAMS IN MLB?**



*Above: (Left to right): Sean Kolodziej, Andy Brown, Bill Peach and Jason Schwartz.*

*Left: Dr. Kat Williams, Bill Peach and Maybelle Blair.*

## SABR 51 (CONT.)

Each research presentation I attended provided unique insights. Sports Reference's Product Director Adam Darowski discussed the impact of recognizing the Negro Leagues as Major Leagues two years following the launch. SABR members Michael Hauptert and John Bauer examined Adrian "Cap" Anson's inglorious departure from baseball, and the maneuvering that allowed the White Sox to move from old Comiskey Park to what is today's Guaranteed Rate Field.

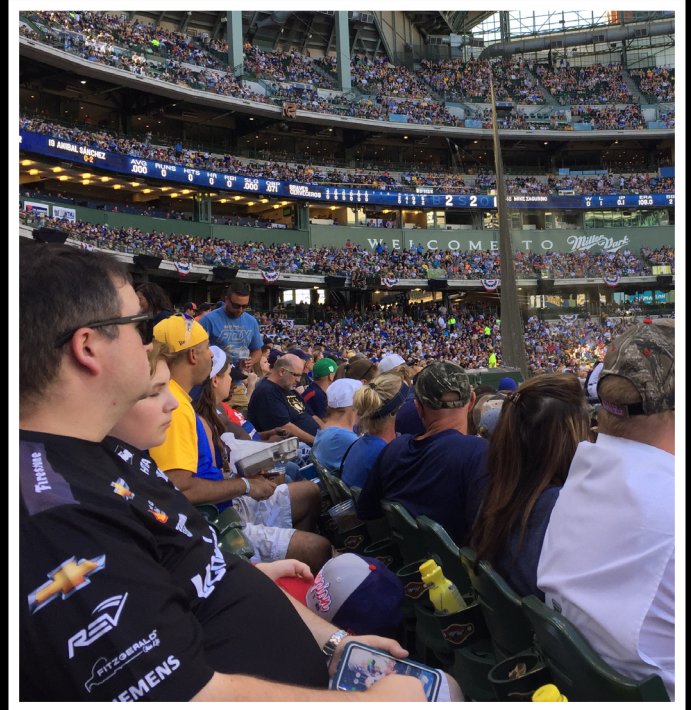
One of my favorite moments occurred during Friday night's White Sox game. Several friends and I spent a few innings visiting with award-winning British artist Andy Brown. While documenting that evening's game on canvas, he shared stories about spanning the globe to paint various ballparks and individuals who play the game.

But the essence of SABR 51 was about reconnecting with long-time friends and establishing new connections. I'm still in awe of the impromptu baseball discussion I had with Dick Kramer, Sean Kolodziej, Dan Evans, Bill James, Scott Bush and Jason Schwartz. How often do you get an opportunity like that? Between stops on the Chicago walking tour, I enjoyed swapping smalltown baseball stories with Bob Broeg chapter (SABR St. Louis) member Tom Best. Best beamed about his Monmouth, Illinois baseball research and he developed his poster presentation. He even shared next steps about publishing his findings in an upcoming book.

John Racanelli, Sean Kolodziej and I were delighted to see our research included in *The National Pastime: Heart of the Midwest*, SABR's convention-focused publication wonderfully edited by Publication Editor Cecilia Tan. We shared details we uncovered while researching and writing our stories about [Hack Wilson's off-field entanglements](#), [Ernest Hemingway catching](#)

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 –

## SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



The 2023 postseason is rapidly approaching! Let's test your scoreboard identification skills. From the clues in this photo, can you successfully guess the exact date of the game? You may need to zoom in. Some of the clues might be deceiving. Good luck.

Our May–June 2023 issue had one correct guess. The photo provided by Richard Smiley featured Wrigley Field on May 15, 1934. Congratulations to:

Ed Hartig

Do you have a scoreboard photo that will have your fellow chapter members scratching their heads? Send it to Bill Peach at [wcpsearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpsearch@comcast.net). Note that photos are not limited to Chicago ballparks.

## GET PUBLISHED!

Let SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter help publish your baseball research. We are looking for new articles to share in the Chapter's newsletter and our social media

outlets. Submit your articles to Bill Peach, newsletter editor, via email at [wcpsearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpsearch@comcast.net) for inclusion in an upcoming edition.







# SABR'S DIGITAL LIBRARY

## THE STARS SHONE ON PHILADELPHIA: THE 1934 NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

In 1934, Ed Bolden's Philadelphia Stars joined the new Negro National League II (NNL2), which had been founded one year earlier. After fending off their intrastate-rivals, the Pittsburgh Crawfords, the Stars claimed the NNL2's second-half championship and faced the first-half champions for the title. They defeated the Chicago American Giants to claim the NNL2 crown.

Over two dozen SABR members researched the Stars' history for this book, which includes biographies of as many of the team's players as possible, even those who participated in only a single game. The 1934 Stars featured future Hall of Famers Raleigh "Biz" Mackey and Jud Wilson; stalwarts like Phil Cockrell, Webster McDonald, and Chaney White; shooting star Stewart "Slim" Jones; and temporary fill-ins like Frederick Coleman and Clifford "Whip" Irons.

**Contributors:** Rebecca T. Alpert, Richard Bogovich, Frederick C. Bush, Alan Cohen, Joseph Gerard, Darren Gibson, Margaret M. Gripshover, Michael Hauptert, Leslie Heaphy, Paul Hofmann, Jay Hurd, Bill Johnson, Thomas Kern, Bob LeMoine, Len Levin, Bill Nowlin, Will Osgood, James Overmyer, Richard J. Puerzer, Chris Rainey, Carl Riechers, Courtney Michelle Smith, Jeb Stewart, Mike Whiteman, and Dave Wilkie.

## WILLIE MAYS: FIVE TOOLS

Willie Mays thrilled baseball fans for more than two decades. He could do it all—in the outfield, at bat, and on the bases. *Five Tools* tells the story of arguably the greatest baseball player in the game's history, through more than 20 insightful essays and recaps of over 30 of the most significant games in his career. Some essays explore Mays' time in the Negro Leagues and minor leagues, while others examine the the relationship of Mays to his managers, the press, and his mentoring of Bobby and Barry Bonds.

The National League Rookie of the Year in 1951 with the New York Giants, Mays made his big-league debut just four years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's shameful color line. He brought with him a dynamic blend of power and speed. Just a few years into his amazing career, he left with his teammates for San Francisco.

Mays batted .301 lifetime and belted 660 home runs. He hit more than 50 homers in two seasons and led the National League in stolen bases four times. Mays also won 12 Gold Gloves for his fielding excellence in center field. The "Say Hey Kid" earned a spot on a record 24 All-Star teams. Incredibly, he won just two MVP awards.

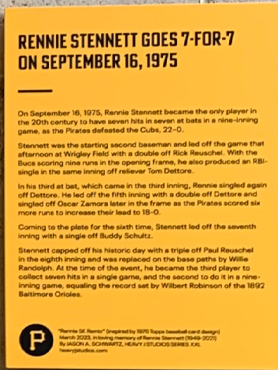
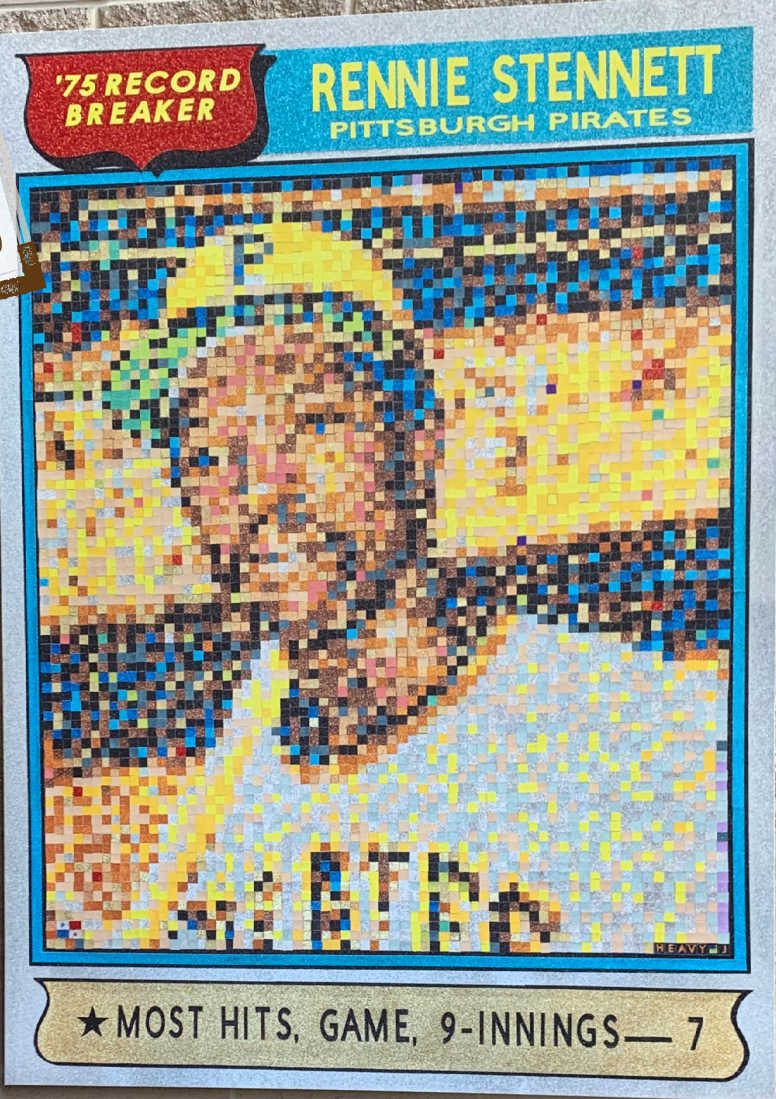
A collaborative effort of 51 SABR members, this book celebrates a player who was known by some as "Wondrous Willie."

**Contributors:** Jake Bell, Luis A. Blandón Jr., Kurt Blumenau, Richard Bogovich, Thomas J. Brown Jr., John J. Burbridge Jr., Frederick C. Bush, Alan Cohen, Richard Cuicchi, Dan Fields, James Forr, Brian M. Frank, John Fredland, Robert F. Garratt, Craig Garretson, Gordon J. Gattie, Steven M. Glassman, Duke Goldman, Chip Greene, Lou Hernández, Paul Hofmann, Jason Horowitz, Mike Huber, Douglas Jordan, David Kaiser, Brent Kallestad, Dave Lande, Kevin Larkin, Bob LeMoine, Len Levin, Chad Moody, Rob Neyer, Bill Nowlin, Tim Odzer, Tim Otto, Richard J. Puerzer, Stephen V. Rice, Carl Riechers, Howard Rosenberg, John T. Saccoman, Mark Simon, Glen Sparks, Creg Stephenson, Mark S. Sternman, Jeb Stewart, Stew Thornley, Tom Thress, Theo Tobel, Bob Webster, Daniel Winkler, and Gregory H. Wolf.

### LET'S TALK SABR BOOKS!

Calling all baseball writers, bloggers and podcasters. I'd love to discuss the latest books in SABR's Digital Library with you. Contact Bill Pearch via email at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net).





# RENNIE STENNETT ART PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

**UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENT!**

**SAVE THE DATE!  
CHAPTER LUNCH**



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

**520 W. TAYLOR ST. / CHICAGO, IL 60607  
11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.**

*Above: On September 16, 1975, Pittsburgh Pirates second basemen Rennie Stennett set a modern baseball record with seven hits in a nine-inning, 22-0, trouncing of the Chicago Cubs at Wrigley Field. (The only other player to accomplish the feat was Wilbert Robinson on June 10, 1892, as a member of the NL Baltimore Orioles.)*

*SABR Chicago member, Jason Schwartz, commemorated the accomplishment with a jumbo 1976 Topps Record Breaker baseball card in his signature artistic style, now on permanent display at Pittsburgh's PNC Park.*

*Located at PNC Park, 115 Federal St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (40.44714972, -80.00705044) [SABR Baseball Map Site ID: 2495]*

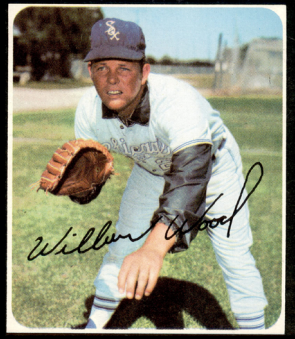
If you are interested in joining SABR's Landmarks Committee and assisting with the project, contact John Racanelli.

Do you go out of your way to visit old ballparks, historical markers, statues or gravesites? We would love to hear about it! Send us your experiences and photos to [johnbracanelli@gmail.com](mailto:johnbracanelli@gmail.com)!



# GOOD REPORT CARD (CONT.)

**WHITE SOX**  
wilbur wood • pitcher



converted into numbers with the best player at each position receiving a "1" and the worst an "8," the average for the eight White Sox regulars would have been 2.25 and the average attained by a combination of the pitching staff and reserves would have been 1.50.

It can be claimed, of course, that every fielding position is not of equal importance and that some roles should be assigned a greater weight than others. If differing weights are given, the positions receiving "extra credit" might very well be those in the middle of the diamond (catcher, second base, shortstop, and center field) and on the pitching mound. The ratings for White Sox players were high in each of these categories.

Before concluding this review of the managerial survey, another interesting comparison can be made. To what degree did the managers' evaluations match the American League's starting line-ups in the two All-Star games that were played in the same month as the publication of the Sport article? (The first of these games was played in Kansas City's Municipal Stadium on July 11th, and the second two days later in Yankee Stadium in New York.) The starting lineups were chosen in a poll of players, managers, and coaches, with no one allowed to vote for a player from his own franchise. After votes were counted, All-Star managers Walter Alston of the Dodgers and Al Lopez of the White Sox selected players to complete their respective rosters and chose their starting pitchers.

The American League team's starting nine was identical in both All-Star games but, with the exception of Minnie Minoso patrolling left field, no Pale Hose player appeared in the first inning of either game. The junior circuit's starting infielders were Bill Skowron at first base, Pete Runnels at second, Ron Hansen at shortstop, and Frank Malzone at the hot corner. Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris joined Minoso in the outfield. Yogi Berra was the catcher for Bill Monbouquette in the first game and for Whitey Ford in the second.

Despite having only one man on the field as the games began, the White Sox organization was well-represented in the American League's dugout as Aparicio, Fox, Lollar, Smith, Staley, and Wynn watched from the bench or bullpen.

Fox and Aparicio entered the first game in its sixth inning, while Lollar and Smith were used as pinch hitters. Staley and Wynn did not play in Kansas City.

Two days later in the Bronx, Fox entered the game in the fifth frame and Lollar relieved Berra behind the plate in the sixth. Smith appeared as a pinch hitter. Wynn and Staley pitched two innings each. Aparicio did not play.

Although neither the managerial survey conducted by Richman nor the results of voting by a larger pool of baseball professionals can be considered definitive, both indicate a consensus among those most qualified to make informed judgements that the White Sox roster included several top-notch players in 1960. And, finally, it should be noted that all four Chicago position players ranked by the managers as the best or second-best at their positions (Fox, Aparicio, Lollar, and Minoso) received the honor of representing their league in the All-Star competition.

## TOP 10: MOST QUALITY STARTS IN A SEASON BY CHICAGO PITCHER (SINCE 1901)

RANK	PLAYER	GS / OS	YEAR	TEAM
1	WILBUR WOOD	42 / 37	1971	WHITE SOX
2	WILBUR WOOD	49 / 33	1972	WHITE SOX
3	CLAUDE HENDRIX	37 / 32	1914	CHI-FEDS
4	BILL HANDS	41 / 31	1969	CUBS
	GROVER ALEXANDER	40 / 31	1920	CUBS
	HIPPO VAUGHN	37 / 31	1919	CUBS
	JIM SCOTT	38 / 31	1913	WHITE SOX
	EDDIE CICOTTE	35 / 31	1917	WHITE SOX
9	FERGIE JENKINS	40 / 30	1968	CUBS
	GREG MADDUX	35 / 30	1992	CUBS
	LON WARNEKE	34 / 30	1933	CUBS

HAVE YOU COMPILED A TOP TEN LIST THAT THE CHAPTER WOULD FAWN OVER? SEND IT TO JOHN RACANELLI VIA EMAIL AT JOHNBRACANELLI@GMAIL.COM.

## 2023 NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Chicago's Emil Rothe Chapter is a bimonthly publication. We want to highlight your contributions. If you would like to submit content for a future issue, contact Newsletter Editor Bill Pearch at [wcpearch@comcast.net](mailto:wcpearch@comcast.net).

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2023**  
Published: October 13  
Content Deadline: September 29

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023**  
Published: November 5  
Content Deadline: October 16

SOME ARTWORK PROVIDED BY:



# CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY ADDS RESEARCH RESOURCES

★  
BY: MICHAEL MARSH

The Chicago Public Library recently added another resource that will help researchers of baseball history. The library has gained access to the pre-1986 archives of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and its two predecessor newspapers. The publications and the dates are: the *Daily Times* (1929-1947), the *Chicago Sun* (1941-1948), and the *Chicago Sun-Times* (1948-1985).

The CPL has long provided post-1985 articles for the *Sun-Times*. All of the archives can be found at the following link:

<https://www.chipublib.org/resources-types/newspaper/>.

Researchers now have access to the work of many notable sportswriters, including Warren Brown, Bill Gleason, Jack Griffin, Jerome Holtzman, and Wendell Smith.

In addition, the site provides archives for other newspapers. They include the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

Members with a CPL card can access the archives on the site. If you do not have a Chicago Public Library card and would like access, Michael Marsh would be happy to assist. You can contact him [via email](#).



## 2023 SABR JEFFERSON BURDICK AWARD - ZOOM MEETING

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 - 2 P.M. CENTRAL**

Brendan C. Boyd and Fred C. Harris, co-authors of *The Great American Baseball Card Flipping, Trading and Bubble Gum Book*, were selected as the winners of the 2023 Jefferson Burdick Award, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the baseball card hobby, by SABR's Baseball Cards Research Committee.

**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**



**Top:** (Left to right): Bill Peach, Dick Kramer, Sean Kolodziej, SABR Director Dan Evans, Bill James, and SABR CEO Scott Bush [Photo by Jason Schwartz]

**Below:** (Left to right): Jason Schwartz, John Racanelli and Chicago Cubs Team Historian Ed Hartig

## SABR 51 (CONT.)

[a White Sox game before shipping off to war](#), and [Col. Frank L. Smith and his Dwight, Illinois' baseball history](#).

"My first SABR convention was even better than I ever could have imagined," said John Racanelli, SABR Landmarks Committee co-chair. "I was able to immerse myself in baseball talk and wide-ranging research topics for nearly a week and loved every minute of it. If you love baseball, you should be a SABR member!"

"My expectations were high, and the convention exceeded them greatly," said Sean Kolodziej, SABR Chicago member. "I can't wait to go to next year's convention."





## ROOT ROOT ROOT FOR THE HOME TEAMS: A CHICAGO FAN'S ODYSSEY TO FIND THE MEANING OF LIFE THROUGH SPORTS

BY: TOM DOBREZ

You never forget your first game, especially when they forget you.

Six days after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and four days before my seventh birthday, the Chicago White Sox would open their 1968 season at home in Comiskey Park against the Cleveland Indians. The city was still simmering from the King murder and there was concern that a visit to the park on Chicago's Southside might prove dangerous. Fear was in the air.

In the post killing atmosphere, rioters had taken to the streets on Chicago's West Side in the Lawndale and Austin neighborhoods. As city blocks burned, firefighters struggled to reach the structures to extinguish them. Rioters greeted them with bottles, rocks and occasional sniper fire. It would also be the opening day of the National Guard's presence in the city that summer. Over 6,000 troops were called in to restore calm. By Monday, April 8th, twelve people died, random gunfire wounded a firefighter, and 170 buildings burnt.

None of this seemed to bother my dad, who was coming into his own. He was entering the prime of his life. John Francis Dobrez II was a first-generation American. Born during the Great

Depression to immigrant parents from Croatia, he spent much of his youth moving houses and working late hours. As his father struggled to stay employed, the family shifted homes frequently around Chicago's Midway Airport. However, on this Opening Day of the major league baseball season, he found himself at home.

My dad had overcome his feeble beginnings and minimal education to become a man in full. The industrial chemical manufacturing business he started celebrated the first decade of success. He moved his growing family into a custom-built home in Flossmoor, Illinois. A community that would lead me to my future wife, Edie, and remain my hometown five plus decades later. My dad would die in the house I now live in. On this April day, hope did spring eternal for him and his family.

My dad invited three of his brothers and their children to join my two older brothers and me for a day at the ballpark. The plan called for a dozen cousins and uncles to meet at my Uncle Dick's farm-style house in the Chicago south suburb of Oak Lawn. We arrived thirty minutes before we would need to depart to Comiskey Park or as we pronounced it, 'CoMINski' for the first pitch. We parked in the driveway along the side of the house in front of the detached garage.

As the others began arriving, I slipped away to check out what cool stuff my cousins might have in their garage. I became engrossed in the treasures hidden in this solitary space. Something occupied my restless mind as I hung out, alone in the garage. For how long, I am uncertain. What I am certain of, it was far too long.

When I emerged from the garage, I noticed a strange scene. The driveway, teeming with cars a moment ago, was now down to one red coupe, my aunt's car. The rest of the driveway was empty. My family's woody station wagon and my uncle's cars were

## 12 ROOT ROOT ROOT (CONT.)

gone. I felt bewildered. Five decades later, I can still recall the place's stillness and the emptiness. Perplexed, I took cautious steps toward the house. I hadn't put the clues together yet.

I walked up the white wooden staircase that led to the back door, the family entrance of the house, and slowly eased my head first into the kitchen. In a room, where moments ago, there was a cacophony of cousins and uncles, now there was starkness. Nothing, no one. I heard a noise in the next room and took cautionary steps into the house's emptiness. I poked my head into the living room and made eye contact with a person sitting calmly there. The woman ejected from her seat and lurch towards me. It was my Aunt Ruth. Her eyes grew from their loving softness to raging irises the size of Wile E. Coyote's as he braced himself from the blow of a 1000-pound anvil. She grabbed my arms and looked me in the face with care, concern, and probably some inner rage. "What are you doing here?"

I didn't know. I'm sure my face relayed as much to her. Then, it sank in. They had left me behind.

Meanwhile, as relayed later that night, the three cars of uncles and cousins arrived at 35th and Shields. My dad, a sergeant in the First Calvary Division that fought in Korea, summoned his military discipline and directed all the family members present to form a line to get their tickets. He handed each one their cherished voucher — an opening day pass to see our beloved White Sox. As the last of the clan received his ticket, my dad turned in disbelief and confusion. He had one too many tickets. The circumstances demanded a roll call. As each family member counted off, the mistake became apparent. The youngest of the bunch was missing, causing panic only a loving parent knows.

As the alarm set in, my dad looked for a pay phone. There was none nearby. Park security told him the only phone was inside the ballpark. He instructed everyone to enter the game. Once inside, he called Aunt Ruth from a pay phone. She eased his pain as she assured him I was fine. My clan stayed and watched the game, probably feeling a mixture of excessive guilt and relief.

Back in the suburbs, I was being treated by Aunt Ruth as if I was the first in line for the throne. Having realized the magnitude of the situation, she shifted into service mode. She did everything she could to divert my attention away from the painful reality of being abandoned. Soon, the house smelled of vanilla and chocolate. The smell of childhood — Nestle Toll House cookies. We watched the game together on a 12-inch black-and-white TV.

That day, I forged a kinship with my aunt that has lasted for over 50 years. As I write this on her 88th birthday, April 13, I reflect on the kindness she bestowed upon me. She filled the day with compassion and grace. She had planned a day off to enjoy her quietness without the chaos that usually surrounded her. Suddenly, a seven-year-old moseys into her den, his face filled with anxiety, and her response is to console and feed the young boy. Her reaction speaks of the sacrifices of motherhood. In that moment, I understood compassion.

The White Sox lost that opening day game in 1968 in front of a mere 7,756 brave souls, eleven of which shared my last name. They didn't win their first game until 15 days later, starting the season off at 0-10. They used three managers to lead them to ninth place. The city of Chicago also continued to descend into despair in the summer of 1968. Even more upheaval followed the King riots at the infamous 1968 Democratic National Convention.

When National Guardsmen returned in larger numbers to quell over 10,000 protestors. So began my rocky relationship with Chicago professional sports.

On that opening day, my loving aunt helped me overcome being left behind. For the rest of my life, the closeness of family and friends would temper the waves of disappointment that come with rooting for the home team. Year after

year, watching my teams crushed my soul. However, being with friends or family provided soothing relief. That day, Aunt Ruth helped me see the sunshine of the day through the love she shone on me. I would need to cling to that comfort many times through six decades of following Chicago sports. While I couldn't always rely on the teams to provide unbridled joy, being with friends and family was often the elixir that kept me emotionally afloat.

This memoir is primarily the story of the opening days and big games I didn't miss. On the surface, these are the stories of being in the stands for some of Chicago's greatest sports moments. Three years later, my dad more than made up for his opening day blunder by taking me to the first of my Chicago Championship moments. Starting a good fortune streak that makes up the structure of this story. At everyone of those crowning games, there was someone by my side, enjoying the moment. It's the emotional story of memories shared with people I know intimately and the thousands, if not millions, I have never met but with whom I share the bond of following team sports in a big-league city.

Sports are the lifeblood coursing through the veins of its citizens that make a modern-day city come alive. A tale of emotions that make up the fabric of a town connected by its games. Sports capture much of what makes us human. Resiliency in the face of utter defeat is a key capacity of any fan. In Chicago, it seems to be a badge of honor.

As fans, we grow together. The mutual agony and ecstasy unite us. The games are occasionally poetry and often vulgar. It's our team there, the home team. It becomes our lives. Like in many cities across the world, fans identify with our teams. Here, we are Da Fans.

Together, we wrestle with the heartache of our team's seasons and the moral ambiguity of having sport stars as heroes. Whether it's as a distraction from the world's bigger uncontrollable events or a means to celebrate a special moment, being at the game is a chance to nourish your soul while you learn a bit about your world, family, and yourself. This book is what it felt like to be there. It's also what it means to be rooted in a family and in a place. ♡

