

### Herald & Review (Decatur, IL)

July 22, 2005

**Section:** Sports

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Fletcher's work for ex-Sox merits award  
Group lauds native's cause to clear Weaver

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Mount Zion's Dr. **David Fletcher** has thrown himself entirely into his quest to repeal "Black Sox" third baseman Buck Weaver's banishment from baseball. He's organized rallies, petitioned Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig for meetings and befriended Weaver's remaining family. "Rewriting baseball history is slow and tedious," Fletcher said.

It very well may be. But a little recognition can sometimes go along with it. Fletcher will receive the fifth annual **Hilda Award** in a ceremony Saturday in Pasadena, Calif.

The award is given by The Baseball Reliquary, which Fletcher describes as "kind of an alternative" to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. It is named for longtime Brooklyn Dodgers fan Hilda Chester, and is given "to a fan for his/her extraordinary passion for and dedication to baseball."

Rewriting history also takes a good bit of publicity, and Fletcher will use his speech as a chance to reiterate his arguments for why Weaver's banishment should end.

"It will give me a forum. I've got my wife and mother-in-law coming with me, as well as one of Buck's most prized possessions," Fletcher said. "It's a framed picture of him, Babe Ruth and Douglas Fairbanks. It's kind of my little channeling piece."

Fletcher's baseball interest has also expanded outside of Weaver's realm. His current project is spearheading a Chicago baseball museum. It's not to be considered a hall of fame. Instead, the museum will celebrate all things baseball in Chicago.

The primary goal right now is to raise money and find a suitable location. Fletcher has received plenty of feedback on what side of the city the museum should be on.

"It's not easy getting White Sox and Cubs fans to agree on something together," Fletcher said.

The museum will naturally feature exhibits on Chicago's Major League teams, but visitors can expect much more.

"We'll have exhibits on women's leagues, 16-inch softball, the Negro Leagues in Chicago, politics in Chicago baseball," Fletcher said. "We'll have stuff on the lights at Wrigley, construction of Comiskey II, now U.S. Cellular. It's my hobby."

And it's a hobby that will take a bit to become a reality.

"We've got a business plan, and we're in the process of selling naming rights (for different exhibits)," Fletcher said. "It doesn't happen overnight. If we're fortunate, we would open in mid-2006, but that's going to be stretching it because of money issues 2007 would be more realistic."

After all, museums and the lifting of 86-year-old banishments take time.

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