



Pat Brickhouse (right) with former president Gerald Ford (center) and Jack Brickhouse. Pat will sing in the seventh inning on her late husband's bobblehead day at Wrigley Field.

Bobblehead honors Brickhouse — 'Hey, Hey', it's about time!

By Dr. David Fletcher, CBM President

As a Chicago baseball historian, I am delighted that the Cubs finally took steps to more fully honor Jack Brickhouse.

On Friday, July 25, as part of the celebration of Wrigley Field's centennial year, the Cubs commemorated Jack with a bobblehead that even included an audio clip of his iconic call of Ernie Banks 500th home run on May 12, 1970.

We hope that this is the first of many steps by the team to honor the person who really helped create Cubs nation during 35 seasons as the team's TV play-by-play voice.

The Chicago Baseball Museum is proud to announce our partnership with Pat Brickhouse, Jack's widow, to help honor his special connection with the Cubs.

In conjunction with the bobblehead day that saluted Jack's connection to Wrigley Field and special bond with millions of Cubs fans, the CBM is launching a website that is the creative start of an actual Brickhouse exhibit in our future bricks-and-mortar-museum. It will feature some never-before-seen artifacts and pictures from Pat's private collec-



The "Hey Hey" on the foul pole should be complemented by another permanent recognition of Jack Brickhouse at Wrigley Field.

tion, along with one of the largest libraries in existence of Jack's baseball, football and basketball on-air calls, some of which are featured on this site.

It is fitting that Pat Brickhouse threw out the first pitch on the bobblehead day and sang in the seventh-inning stretch, for her late husband's name is synonymous with the Cubs and Wrigley Field. The CBM web page is a great way to honor his nearly 60-year association with the team.

[Listen to Pat Brickhouse recount her husband's career on WGN Radio's morning show. >>](#)

Jack's record total of more than 5,000 telecasts of Chicago Cubs games, the majority at Wrigley Field, will never be broken. His iconic "Hey Hey" home-run call has adorned the foul poles at Wrigley Field since 1999, somewhat of a consolation prize when WGN successor Harry Caray was honored with the first statue ever erected at the ballpark.

It is an appropriate coincidence the Cubs' salute took place on the same day the National Baseball Hall of Fame began its annual induction weekend, since Brickhouse was honored by the Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award for "major contributions to baseball" in Cooperstown 31 years ago, in 1983.

Jack a 'latchkey' parent after school

For many Chicago-area baby boomers, the legendary Brickhouse functioned as a surrogate "latchkey" parent after school during his long tenure in the broadcast booth.

Generations of kids, like me, would race home after school to catch the last few innings of a Cubs broadcast with Jack acting as the team's chief cheerleader. He also performed the same role on the more limited number of White Sox televised weekday games, working for a team he loved as much as the Cubs.

I tell younger fans who were not around for Jack's broadcasts that he was a forerunner of Hawk Harrelson. Brickhouse was the original "homer." Like Hawk, he had his own

catch-phrases that endeared him to his fans, including myself: “Any old kind of a run will do...,” “It’s pretty well hit...way back, back, back, BACK - HEY HEY!” and “Attaboy, Ernie!”

Brickhouse was the first voice ever heard on WGN when it signed on as Chicago’s second TV station in 1948. He performed in so many roles beyond baseball for “good ol’ Channel 9” and sister station WGN Radio.

While he last worked a game in 1981 and died in 1998, his persona lives on in 2014. Many present-day baseball fans may not know when they watch this year’s Budweiser “Always There” commercial, aired frequently on baseball telecasts, that Jack is one of the featured voices.

In conjunction with its major broadcast partners, Major League Baseball is pushing its historic connection with Budweiser. This 30-second commercial spotlights eternal baseball memories that include Jack’s famous NBC-TV call of “The Catch” by Willie Mays during Game 1 of the 1954 World Series on Sept. 29, 1954 (the day before I was actually born in Cleveland) at the Polo Grounds. Jack’s voice booms out in an excited fashion: “*There’s a long drive waaay back in center field...waaay baaack, baaack, it is...caaaaught by Wil-lie Mays!*” In the elongated call, Brickhouse suggests Mays’ all-time Web Gem must have appeared as an “optical illusion” to viewers.

The spectacular over-the-shoulder catch against Vic Wertz of Cleveland in the venerable oval stadium at Coogan’s Bluff in New York remains one the most famous moments in baseball history. Too bad Brickhouse never got to broadcast even a mundane play during a Cubs World Series game. But Pat Brickhouse is at least collecting some modest royalties from Budweiser on the use of Jack’s trademark voice.

Good timing in move to Chicago area

Like Jack, I grew up in Peoria. I moved to Glen Ellyn, in the Chicago western suburbs, in late 1966, where I went to high school at Glenbard West and later to medical school at Rush on the near West side. The move changed my baseball fan’s life.

I had been a baseball-starved 13-year-old used to only getting the Saturday national “Game of the Week,” shuffled among the three networks as the only regular video diamond fare available in Peoria, well outside the range of WGN-TV’s Prudential Building transmitter. When we moved to Glen Ellyn, I got hooked on Brickhouse, who in 1967 was in his final season as announcer for both the Cubs and Sox.

[Hear John Drury narrate Brickhouse’s excited calls of a ninth-inning Cubs comeback against Gaylord Perry and the Giants on July 22, 1967. >>](#)

I was now able to watch both major leagues, see a baseball game on TV virtually every day and make frequent trips to both Wrigley Field and Comiskey Park.

The experience of watching Brickhouse handle White Sox broadcasts lasted just one season because the team jumped from WGN to UHF upstart WFLD in 1968. That disastrous move almost caused Chicago to lose its charter franchise of the American

League. Close to a majority of TV sets were not yet equipped to receive UHF channels in 1968, while reception could still be spotty on even those sets that did have a UHF tuner. I still remember fiddling with the square-and-bow tie odd-looking UHF antenna on my black-and-white Zenith TV, trying to tune in the ghostly images of Sox baseball in 1968.

One of Jack's final Sox broadcasts was the disastrous doubleheader loss in Kansas City on Sept. 27, 1967. The date was forever known as "Black Wednesday" and it helped cost the team a good shot at the American League pennant. Jack would not have a chance to reprise his only Chicago baseball pennant call, the Sox 1959 clincher in Cleveland. His timing had also been bad when the Cubs won their last NL pennant in 1945; he broadcast the sixth-place Sox on WJJD Radio, filling in during Bob Elson's military service in World War II.

Though he no longer was the White Sox announcer, Brickhouse's loyalty to the team would remain for the rest of his life. Jack played a behind-the-scenes role in saving the Sox franchise for Chicago in the fall of 1975. He helped Bill Veeck get additional investors to buy the team and prevent a move to Seattle.

I lived and died with the 1969 Cubs. Building upon the revival of the previous two seasons, the team zoomed to an 11-1 start and a first-place lead they held all summer, forever becoming the most beloved team for fans of that era.

[Watch the tape of "Cubs Fever," which aired originally during the All-Star break at 9:30 p.m. July 21, 1969 on WGN-TV. >>](#)

I saw probably 25 games that year at Wrigley Field, including the Aug. 19 Ken Holtzman no-hitter against the Braves. Brickhouse's call of Willie Smith's pinch-hit walk-off 11th-inning home run on Opening Day still gives me chills.

But Sept. 1969, the start of my sophomore year at Glenbard West High School, was a very cruel month for a 15 year-old baseball fan. Like so many others my age, I was looking forward to my first Chicago World Series.

'Oh, no!' hurts whether it's '69 or '98

The Cubs collapsed and I remember one game in particular on Thursday, Sept. 11, at Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia. Cubs starter Dick Selma threw a surprise pickoff attempt in the direction of third baseman Ron Santo, who was nowhere near the bag or the ball. Selma's error aided a Phillies rally. Jack's wailing "Oh no...." call after the errant throw would only be a precursor to WGN analyst Santo's similarly-worded radio reaction to Brant Brown's dropped ninth-inning, game-losing fly ball on Sept. 23, 1998 at Milwaukee's County Stadium.

It was the first (but certainly not the last) time I cried about a baseball game because I knew then that the Cubs, two games out after the 4-3 loss to the Phillies, would not catch the surging Mets. Not even Jack's sunny optimism would help my tears. Later I found solace in Jack's written comment about the 1969 Cubs in his 1986 book *Thanks for Listening*:



The Cubs' hot start in the spring of 1969 certainly helped Jack Brickhouse make even more covers of TV magazines. Brickhouse had regularly written for the afternoon Chicago's American, the tabloid Chicago Today's predecessor broadsheet newspaper.

“But let’s face it: the Cubs were a ragtag team in the stretch, wandering aimlessly, with assorted regulars physically exhausted as the result of failure to get a day off here and there when their lead was exhausting.”

As an occupational medicine expert, I know that the 1969 Cubs day-game schedule at Wrigley Field put them at a competitive disadvantage with the other 11 teams in the National League, due to the physiological effects of shift-work syndrome. The constant shift from the all-day schedule at Wrigley Field to mainly night games on the road and back to the 9-to-5 grind at home wore down the team over the long season. The situation was exacerbated when manager Leo Durocher refused to give his starters an occasional day off. He often allowed Randy Hundley, who showed the most wear and tear, to catch doubleheaders.

I finally met Jack on April 25, 1976 at Dodger Stadium during the nation’s bicentennial celebration. That was the Sunday afternoon when the Cubs’ Rick Monday (and current Dodgers broadcaster) saved the American flag from being burned by two protestors in center field. I told Jack that I grew up in Peoria, as he did. Our meeting was brief, but the memories he created for me as a baseball fan have lasted a lifetime.

Rain delays made entertaining

To me, one of Jack's special gifts was his informal "Rain Delay Theater," for which he was rumored to be in line for an Emmy Award. His special skills of recruiting guests to fill in air-time in the broadcast booth during rain delays was legendary and most entertaining. Today's broadcasters go off the air and stations switch to sitcoms or old canned baseball shows. What happened to the magic of getting beat writers, like Jerome Holtzman or Edgar Munzel, to give some inside scoop to the current state of the Cubs?

When I was older, I really began to appreciate how special Jack was and how much he meant to Chicago and baseball. Brickhouse was a low-key, but powerful, civil-rights advocate. WGN-TV pioneered having a black sportscaster join its ranks in 1964 with famed sportswriter Wendell Smith. It took the historian in me to realize that Smith, whose widow Wyonella currently lives in the same building as Mary Frances Veeck, was a very important historical figure. Her husband had roomed with and mentored Jackie Robinson when Jackie joined the Dodgers in 1947 and was a prominent character – played by actor Andre Holland -- in the movie, *42*, which came out in 2013. In 1994 Smith was honored with at the Hall of Fame with the J.G. Taylor Spink Award for "meritorious contributions to baseball writing."

Brickhouse was later instrumental in hiring Ernie Banks for television and radio work at WGN. Banks joined the Sunday night WGN-TV newscast as a sports anchor while still holding a spot on the Cubs roster at the tail end of his career. ("And in the fifth 'innin my fishin' buddy Billy Williams stepped up to the plate....").

Now, my connection to Jack is even stronger due to my close relationship with Pat, whom he married in 1980. Pat was an early supporter of the Chicago Baseball Museum project and has served as an advisor since its beginnings in early 2005. Jack's 1983 Hall of Fame induction speech helped inspire me to conceive of the CBM idea. He said:

"It has been my privilege to broadcast the exploits of both the Cubs and Sox. I have experienced the joy and heartbreak of both clubs... My dream of dreams is that I imagine the Cubs and White Sox playing in the World Series with the seventh game going into extra innings. And then it is finally suspended because of darkness...."

[Listen to Jack Brickhouse's Ford Frick Award acceptance speech and his description of the Hall of Fame atmosphere in 1983. >>](#)

CBM aids Brickhouse statue repairs

In 2009, I was very proud the CBM helped raise money for the repair of the Brickhouse statue on Michigan Avenue near Tribune Tower and across from the Wrigley Building. On Nov. 5 of that year, the statue was removed for repairs. A re-dedication ceremony was held on April 8, 2010.

"For millions of people like me, who grew up in Chicago and watched Jack on WGN-TV, we learned our ABCs in school," said Connie Kowal, then executive director of the

CBM. “But we learned our ABCs of baseball and our love of the game of baseball from Jack Brickhouse.

“Jack Brickhouse was a big part of Chicago and Chicago baseball history. Helping Pat Brickhouse in her efforts to get Jack’s statue repaired and back on Michigan Avenue is something that fits the mission and vision of the Chicago Baseball Museum and keeps legends of Chicago baseball history, like Jack Brickhouse, fresh in the minds of fans forever.”

Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts spoke after Kowal.

“I didn't grow up here, so a lot of this stuff is new,” he said. “But I have known for a long time what (Jack Brickhouse) has meant to Chicago, broadcasting for the Cubs and to the city,”

Ricketts was described thusly in the daily *Chicago Tribune* column by Fred Mitchell and David Kaplan column: “Ricketts appreciates Brickhouse legacy...Cubs chairman lauds legendary broadcaster at re-dedication of statue.”

Way for younger fans to learn about Jack

The upcoming bobblehead day will continue Jack’s rich legacy, remind fans like myself of their lasting connection to him and inform younger fans of his importance in the history of the Cubs franchise. The man’s identity with Wrigley is eternal, as will be the memories of the occasion. Best of all, those young fans will hear details of Jack’s contributions to the Cubs and memories created during years past at Wrigley Field, where he also served as longtime radio voice of the Chicago Bears, who played their home games there for decades.

We hope that the CBM’s special Brickhouse web page will contribute to the education of a new generation of fans who don’t know the story behind the origination of “Hey Hey” on the foul poles at Wrigley. Pat has told me how much Jack loved his long association with the Cubs, and how he would be proud to know that the Cubs will honor him during the centennial Wrigley Field celebration.

During Jack’s long tenure, Wrigley Field was not yet promoted as an antique throwback to yesteryear. Yet Jack managed to tout it as some kind of cross between Eden and Valhalla, the perfect place to enjoy the national pastime. He knew it was just entertain-



Pat and Jack Brickhouse during his retirement years.

ment, but he did a good job helping millions of people establish a strong bond with a team that has not won a world championship since 1908.

Let's hope that the Cubs do more for Jack in 2015 and beyond. Perhaps the bobble-head day will spur Ricketts, who, along with Pat Brickhouse grew up in Omaha, to do more to bring Jack "home" to Wrigley Field. At a minimum, the iconic announcer deserves his own statue at Clark and Addison for his impact on the Cubs - which dwarfs the contributions of Caray.

We certainly wished Ricketts could have experienced what hundreds of thousands of kids had with "Brick" providing a little break in the time between the final class bell and the start of homework. He would have understood Jack's impact even more.

The relationship between Jack Brickhouse and his after-school audience was very special for generations of baseball fans. It won't soon be forgotten.