



A multi-media celebration of Chicago's own Double Duty Radcliffe

Who is one of the best players to settle in Chicago at 17, live here in the off-season amid a 32-year playing career and serve as a beloved elder statesman/raconteur almost all the way to his death at age 103?

If you're looking at big-league records, you're searching in the wrong place. Not that Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe wasn't worthy of inclusion among the blizzard of numbers. He was. His timing simply was off by about 20 years.

Double Duty, or "Duty" as we'll call him here, was Chicago's own Negro League superstar. A great catcher, he justifiably earned his nickname by also using his 1-A talent in a doubleheader. He'd catch childhood buddy Satchel Paige in the first game of a doubleheader, then match Paige's shutout by taking the mound in the second game and also blanking the opponents.

Those who knew him and talked to teammates and foes insist Duty would have been a star big-leaguer behind the plate and a very competent starting pitcher had the color line not been firmly entrenched in the prime of his career.

You might as well also call him Triple Duty. He also managed for large portions of his career, coming home to guide the Chicago American Giants in the 1940s. Duty also earned the distinction of managing uncommon integrated semi-pro teams in North Dakota in the mid-1930s.

Starting in his 90s, Duty earned perhaps his greatest renown as a storyteller and promoter for the Negro League and his own career. He became an honored centenarian on his 100th birthday in 2002. Duty was a familiar sight at U.S. Cellular Field, throwing out the first pitch on his birthday, hobnobbing with all the top White Sox players and keenly watching the game that had framed his life. The Sox did not forget him after his death in 2005, naming an annual high-school all-star game at The Cell the Double Duty Classic.

In connection with the DD Classic and as a permanent way to honor Duty, the Chicago Baseball Museum is presenting this special tribute to the great man. The museum also helped set up a special Duty exhibit at the DuSable Museum near The Cell.

We've talked with family members and Negro League historians to take the measure of his life. We recount his long career with his own words. Photographs that show not only the ballplayer, but also the colorful personality during and after his career are presented. And Duty's own taped recollections are featured on WGN-TV's 1992-vintage "Chicago American Giants" special, hosted by actor Morgan Freeman. The program is linked here.

So enjoy the comprehensive look at the kind of player and character that we'll scarcely see again. It's your "Duty."

Visit the 'Double Duty' microsite at:

<http://chicagobaseballmuseum.org/CBM-Double-Duty-Ted-Radcliffe.php>

Visit the White Sox' Double Duty Classic page at:

http://chicago.whitesox.mlb.com/cws/charities/double_duty_classic.jsp