

## ***Ex-White Sox Skowron Was Chicago Original***

*By Paul Ladewski*

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Bill (Moose) Skowron spent the brunt his career in a New York Yankees uniform, but the Chicago native never left his hometown in many respects.

On Friday, Skowron passed away because of lung cancer at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights. He was 81 years old.

An eight-time All-Star first baseman, Skowron was a consistent run-producer and dangerous clutch hitter. In 14 seasons in the major leagues, he compiled a .282 batting average and 211 home runs. The latter figure was somewhat deceptive because his ability to hit to all fields did not translate well at Yankee Stadium, which favored power hitters who pulled the ball consistently. Fifty-nine percent of his homers took place on the road.

In two full seasons and parts of two others with the White Sox later in his career, Skowron had a .269 batting average and 28 homers.

“We all have lost a dear, dear friend today,” White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf said in a prepared statement. “While Moose may have become a star in New York with the Yankees, he was a Chicagoan through and through. I certainly will miss his priceless stories about Casey Stengel, Roger Maris, Hank Bauer and of course his good friend Mickey Mantle. My guess is that right now Mickey, Roger, Hank and Moose are enjoying a good laugh together.”

Skowron was a multi-sports star at Weber High School before he attended Purdue University on a football scholarship. He received his nickname at an early age because his closely-cropped haircut was similar to that of Benito Mussolini, who was Italy prime minister at the time. In 1950, he signed with the Yankees as an amateur free agent.

Amid the likes of Mantle, Maris and Yogi Berra, Skowron was overshadowed for much of his Yankees career. He spent nine seasons in New York, a span in which the Yankees captured four World Series championships.

In November, 1962, Skowron was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers in return for pitcher Stan Williams. Skowron and the Dodgers swept his former team in the World Series less than one year later. He hit .385 in the series.

Skowron returned home in July, 1964, when in the midst of a three-team pennant race, the White Sox acquired him and pitcher Carl Bouldin from the Washington Senators in exchange for first baseman Joe Cunningham and pitcher Frank Kreutzer. He retired three years later.

In 1980, Skowron was inducted into the National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame.

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