



La Russa joins Gossage as Boudreau award winner at Pitch And Hit Club banquet Jan. 27

By George Castle, CBM Historian

Autograph seekers will keep busy with the Hall of Fame-calibre lineup of the 67th annual Pitch And Hit Club's Awards Banquet at 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27, at the Carlisle, 435 E. Butterfield Road, in the Chicago west suburb of Lombard.

Tickets are \$75 if purchased from a Pitch and Hit Club member. Otherwise, tickets are \$100, available from Bridget Veenema at BVentura@aol.com.

All-time manager Tony La Russa will join Hall of Famer Rich "Goose" Gossage as headliners of the longest-running off-season baseball banquet in the Chicago area.

La Russa is a surefire Cooperstown inductee in the near future. Gossage was enshrined in 2008. The Goose is appearing in connection with the Chicago Baseball Museum .

Both La Russa and Gossage will receive the Lou Boudreau Hall of Fame Award for career greatness along with their Chicago baseball connections. Gossage also will serve as keynote speaker.



Tony La Russa
Photo credit: [Keith Allison](#)

Both La Russa's 33-year managing career and Gossage's status as one of the best closers ever started with the White Sox. A one-game Cub as a player in 1973, La Russa (5,097 games managed with 2,728 wins and three World Series titles) began his dugout journey at age 34 at old Comiskey Park for the final two months of the 1979 season. Gossage, who also pitched for the Cubs in 1988, was called up as a 20-year-old on the South Side in 1972 before going on to save 310 out of the 1,002 games in which he appeared over 22 seasons.

For a \$6,000 donation, a special "Platinum Package" enables banquet attendees to have La Russa sit at their table. It includes six tickets at the table or a \$600 value, a photo with La Russa, a signed item from the great manager for all six attendees, a signed book from La Russa and a visit with him before the dinner.

A \$3,000 tax-deductible contribution also would be made to ARF, La Russa's charity, at www.arf.net. As part of the package, \$3,000 goes to the Pitch and Hit Club to donate to its foundations, such as the Scouts foundation. A full-page ad congratulating La Russa on his Boudreau award on behalf of the attendees will be featured in the dinner program booklet.

In addition to La Russa and Gossage, the Pitch and Hit Club dinner will have a series of additional award winners.

Receiving the Jerome Holtzman Award, chosen by the Chicago Baseball Museum's board, will be Paul Dickson, author of "Bill Veeck": Baseball's Greatest Maverick." The Holtzman honoree is selected for his contributions to Chicago baseball. Sox legend Minnie Minoso won the award in 2012.



Paul Dickson

Also honored will be Washington Nationals general manager Mike Rizzo, architect of the team with the most wins – 98 – in the regular season in 2012. The Nats did not have an above-.500 season since 2003, when they played as the Expos in Montreal. Rolling Meadows-raised Rizzo is a second-generation baseball talent evaluator, following in the footsteps of father Phil Rizzo, a longtime scout.

A voice familiar to Chicagoans on both sides of town will receive the Major-League Sportscaster of the Year Award. Milo Hamilton, radio partner to Bob Elson with the White Sox from 1962-65 and a Cubs TV-radio voice from 1980-84, will be honored for a baseball play-by-play career that concluded in 2012 after 28 seasons with the Houston Astros.

A local-boy-made-good, getting a World Series ring in the process, is Lincolnwood native George Kontos. An alum of Niles West High School, San Francisco Giants' reliever Kontos will receive the Chicago Area Major Leaguer of the Year Award.

Other current and former big leaguers are expected to appear at the Pitch and Hit Club's event, Chicago's longest-continuous off-season baseball awards banquet. The dinner puts a cap on the hot-stove league and serves as the gateway to the start of spring training.

Emceeding the banquet is longtime Chicago broadcast personality Tom Shaer, who also hosted the Chicago Baseball Museum's mid-September event on the Veeck family's contributions to baseball at the Chicago History Museum.