

## ***Emotional Tribute Leaves '72 White Sox in Want of More***

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The 1972 White Sox had a rare team unity about it, and the more times have changed over the years, the more they have remained the same, it seems.

So moved were team members by the Chicago Baseball Museum-sponsored tribute at U.S. Cellular Field on Monday night, they unanimously agreed not to allow 40 more years to pass before they did it again.

“You got it,” Rich (Goose) Gossage declared.

“Deal,” Dick Allen agreed.

More than 300 enthusiastic fans packed the Stadium Club for the event, which was part of the Chicago Baseball Museum's season-long tribute to Allen and The Team That Saved Our Sox.

“It was an well-deserved pat on the back to a significant team that did so much for baseball in the Chicago area,” said Dr. David Fletcher, museum president. “Our organization was honored and privileged to get this group together again.”

Former players Hank Allen, Tom Bradley, Carlos May, Bill Melton and Ed Spiezio, player personnel director Roland Hemond and organist Nancy Faust also were in attendance.

Gossage and Allen drew loud responses in particular.

Gossage recounted his days as a Colorado kid who had never experienced life in the big city before. Alone and practically broke, the 19-year-old spent his first night in the major leagues in Armor Square Park across from White Sox Park.

“When you do something for the first time, you never forget who you did it with and where you did it,” Gossage said. “I was fortunate to be surrounded by so many good people here early in my career.”

A seven-minute tribute to the team showed rare footage of Allen's two inside-the-park home runs off Twins pitcher Bert Blyleven on July 31 in Minneapolis.

Allen also recounted another personal achievement that season – the so-called Chili Dog Home Run off New York Yankees reliever Sparky Lyle that decided the second game of a June 4 doubleheader.

Still, Allen said, “Our success went beyond a few individuals. On the field, we were a team of nine that believed it had no limitations. It's great to see so many of my former teammates after all these years. I am humbled to be part of this.”



**Roland Hemond receives his 1972 Executive of the Year Award from Paul Ladewski nearly 40 years later.**

At the pre-event cocktail party, Melton and Hemond paid tribute to the late Chuck Tanner, who was selected Manager of the Year that season. His belief and enthusiasm rubbed off on a predominately young team that came out of nowhere to contend until the final days of the season.

“Chuck taught us optimism,” Melton said. “He had no bad days, and neither did our team. That kind of positive attitude played a huge role in our success.”

The White Sox finished with the third-best record in the major leagues, but because there were no expanded playoffs at the time, they did not receive a post-season invitation.

As executive director Paul Ladewski said at the start of the program, they were one of the rare teams whose impact went far beyond its won-loss record.

“The 1972 White Sox gave us hope, and that will forever be their legacy,” Ladewski said. “They gave us hope that the American League franchise had survived a very turbulent time and Chicago would remain a viable, two-team city. They gave us hope that, if given a reason to get excited, the White Sox had a fan base that would respond in a big way.”

After emcee Richard Roeper entertained the crowd and read a passage from his book *Sox in the City*, sidekick Mark Liptak provided a blow-by-blow account of the momentous campaign.

Liptak explained how the team did indeed save the Sox that year. As he pointed out, their success paved the way for a lucrative radio-television package, which substantially increased the visibility of the product and left a teetering franchise on far more stable financial ground in the years to come.

The most emotional moment came shortly after Hemond was asked about the whereabouts of his 1972 Executive of the Year Award. He acquired a Most Valuable Player in Allen and a 21-game winner in Stan Bahnsen prior to the season, moves that led to a 12-game improvement from the previous year.

“I don't recall that I ever got one,” Hemond replied.

Hemond went on to say that the experience was enough of a reward for him.

At that point, Ladewski stepped in to present Hemond with a plaque in recognition of outstanding achievement that season. The surprise gesture overwhelmed him.

“Wow!” Hemond said. “I didn't expect this. Just as the 1972 season was a memorable one for our organization, this is a special moment for me.”

The celebration was so special that The Team That Saved Our Sox made a pact to do it again soon.

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