

Deaf outfielder deserves a place in the Hall of Fame

by [Daniel J. Vance MS, LPC, NCC](#) // October 10th, 2013



Each year, I make my best pitch for the induction of William Ellsworth “Dummy” Hoy into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. He definitely should be there. And what better time to make the pitch than right before the World Series?

Hoy was deaf and one of the best outfielders ever. The Ohio native began his professional baseball career in 1886 in Oshkosh, Wis.

He played for the Washington Nationals, Louisville Colonels, Chicago White Sox, and Cincinnati Reds from 1888-1902. In that era, deaf players often had the nickname “Dummy.” Hoy was the third deaf player in the Major League.

He was on the 1901 White Sox team capturing the first American League pennant, and has been inducted into the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame. He had 2,054 career hits, a .288 lifetime batting average, 1,004 walks, led both leagues in walks once, one league in steals, threw out three runners at home in one game, and had 600 career steals. He held the Major League record until 1920 for most games played by a centerfielder. Above all, he most likely was the reason umpires began using hand signals to indicate balls, strikes, and outs.

Recently I corresponded with Steve Sandy, who for more than two decades has led the charge for Hoy’s induction. Sandy was born deaf. In an email, he said, “I’ve been on this project since 1989 and haven’t given up yet on getting Dummy Hoy into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Dummy Hoy is a Deaf icon.” He has contacted sports reporters, done television interviews, and helped get the word out through letter writing, social media, lecturing and more. Sandy played a role in getting Hoy into the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame and is producer of a proposed two-hour feature film, which will be the fourth film about Hoy’s amazing life.

Besides playing baseball, Hoy supervised hundreds of deaf employees at a Goodyear manufacturing plant during World War I and became a company executive. He was the first athlete inducted into the American Athletic Association of the Deaf Hall of Fame. At age 99, he was honored to throw out the first pitch in Game 3 of the 1961 Yankees-Reds World Series.

Sandy has been putting together a petition in support of Hoy and so far has 3,000 signatures. His goal is 25,000. Visit his Facebook site at [Dummy Hoy: A Deaf Hero](#). Sandy urges readers to “make some noise” to help Hoy make the Hall.

Editor’s note: More on Hoy’s remarkable life and career can be found online. Hoy became deaf after a bout with meningitis at age three. In Hoy’s early years, the word “dumb” was used to describe someone who could not speak, rather than as a pejorative. Histories note that Hoy himself often corrected individuals who addressed him as William. He referred to himself as

“Dummy” which is ironic considering he was one of the most intelligent and physically gifted athletes of his day.

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