

Topeka baseball great Gil Carter passes away

While playing in minors, Carter hit home run calculated at 733 feet

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By The Capital-Journal

Gil Carter, whose signature moment as a baseball player was hitting what has been called the longest home run in the professional ranks, died Sunday night at his Topeka home.

Carter, who had been battling cancer was 83.

In July, Carter will be formally inducted into the Shawnee County Baseball Hall of Fame. A presentation of his plaque was made by members of the SCBHOF committee at Carter's home on April 24.

In addition, Carter was recently awarded the Pride of Kansas Award from the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame. That presentation had been scheduled for Wednesday at Bettis Family Sports Complex at Lake Shawnee. The SCBHOF induction ceremony is also scheduled at Bettis on July 13.

In a game for the Carlsbad Potashers, a Class D Sophomore League team on Aug. 11, 1959, Carter hit a home run that was variously reported to have sailed 700 to 733 feet by calculations based on aerial photography. Earlier in the game, Carter ended a no-hit bid by the opposing pitcher for the Odessa Dodgers. He then bashed his incredible home run in the ninth, far over the left-field fence.

The Potashers were part of the Chicago Cubs organization. Carter had been scouted and signed by legendary Buck O'Neil.

Carter went on to lead the Sophomore League that season with 34 home runs. In 1960, he was named to the Northern League All-Star team. Carter finished with a .264 batting average, with 72 homers and 266 RBIs, in 296 minor-league games.

After playing professionally, Carter moved to Wichita and played on the semi-pro circuit. He was a standout outfielder for the Wichita Rapid Transit Dreamliners, helping them to national semi-pro championships in 1962 and '63. He was named an All-American by the National Baseball Congress and was also named to the Wichita Eagle's dream team of all-time NBC greats.

Carter, who also participated in football, boxing and softball, returned to Topeka in 2000 after living in Wichita for 39 years. Throughout retirement, Carter was involved with Topeka youth, serving in that capacity for the Topeka YMCA.

He was a graduate of Topeka High School.

Services are pending.

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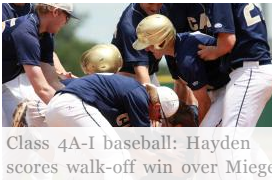
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