

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2020

Jane Forbes Clark
Chair of the Board
Major League Baseball Hall of Fame
25 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Dear Chairwoman Clark,

We write today to urge the Golden Era Committee to consider nominating and inducting Curt Flood into the Baseball Hall of Fame when the Committee meets this December. Mr. Flood was a two-time World Series Champion, three time All Star, and seven-time consecutive Golden Glove Award winner, but his greatest contribution to professional baseball happened off the field. Mr. Flood's courageous actions made Major League Baseball (MLB) what it is today by paving the way for free agency. There would be no more fitting time to enshrine Mr. Flood into the Hall of Fame than during the 50th anniversary of his courageous court challenge to the reserve system, which helped transform professional sports.

After playing 12 seasons with the St. Louis Cardinals as a standout center fielder, Flood was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies in 1969. Mr. Flood refused to be traded, becoming the first player in MLB history to reject a trade. At the time, players were still bound to a team for life by the so-called "reserve clause." Simply put, a player was a team's property. Mr. Flood demanded the Baseball Commissioner declare him a free agent in a letter dated Christmas Eve 1969. He wrote: "After twelve years in the major leagues, I do not feel I am a piece of property to be bought and sold irrespective of my wishes. I believe that any system which produces that result violates my basic rights as a citizen and is inconsistent with the laws of the United States and of the several States."

Commissioner Kuhn denied Mr. Flood's request, so he filed a lawsuit against the MLB. The case (Flood v. Kuhn) reached the Supreme Court in 1972. In a 5-3 ruling, the Court sided with the MLB and against Mr. Flood. Mr. Flood paid a huge price both professionally and personally for this decision and was effectively black balled from the MLB after seven consecutive Golden Glove seasons. He sacrificed his career so that future players would be afforded more rights and better compensation during their careers.

Thanks to Mr. Flood's courageous act to not accept a trade and to the efforts of Major League Baseball Players Association Executive Director Marvin Miller, the reserve clause ended in December 1975. Mr. Flood and Mr. Miller are directly responsible for the current free agency system that MLB players enjoy today. While Mr. Miller was deservingly inducted into the MLB Hall of Fame for his work on behalf of players and the League recently, Mr. Flood still lacks the same recognition.

The effects of Mr. Flood's actions are still felt today. Current MLB superstar Gerrit Cole praised Mr. Flood during a press conference in December 2019 where Cole was celebrating his new \$324 million dollar contract with the Yankees: "I want everybody to know, because challenging the reserve clause was one of the first stepping stones to ultimately the system we have today, which I believe brings out the most competitive, you know, genuine competitiveness, that we have in baseball."

In 1998, Congress unanimously passed the Curt Flood Act, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. The law overrode part of the 1922 Supreme Court ruling that exempted baseball from antitrust laws that applied to all other sports.

Mr. Flood's candidacy is supported by prominent current and former MLB players, seasoned sports writers, and baseball fans around the country. This is why we strongly urge the Golden Era Committee to recognize his unprecedented courage and lasting effect on professional baseball by inducting Curt Flood into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



DAVID TRONE
Member of Congress



WM. LACY CLAY
Member of Congress



ANN WAGNER
Member of Congress



ROY BLUNT
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator

~~NY 13~~ Hal Rogers

Joe Lewis NY 13

~~NY-18~~

~~NY 13~~

John CA-20

Agnes Frankfurter

Lucie Gray MN-02

Frank Taylor

Bill Paswell

Rashida L 13

Mike Braun

Bill Long MD-7

Ann McFane Foster

Doug Stanton

Tom O'Halloran

Quail Green

~~NS-2~~

Val Demery

John King

Tammy Scott Co. 13th Baker Lee-13th Co

Suey E Platt

Mylene Waters

Iddie Bernia Johnson

~~Al Langer~~

Kenneth Dudge

Al Langer

Bonnie Watson Colema

James E Lyburn

Tom A Spruill MS02

Greg Burtch NC-01

Samuel D. Bishop

Alcee H. Hastings FL-20

James D. ...

~~Gregory ...~~

Shirley Jackson Lee TX-18

Frank Johnson IA-04

~~Scott~~

Scott IL-06

Alm MD-04

Anthony Brucini NY-22

C. Peal TX-32

M. V. TX-23

Dannott FL-9

Spencer DeBun WA-01

Michael Lee

Ami B. CA-07

Debbie Wynn NY-23

Wendy Fisher TX-07

W. J. G.

Quarles PA-07

Don S. Shuler FL-27

Lucy McPart GA-06

Katherine Clark MA-05

Tom M. NT-07

Josh Aader CA-10

Joseph D. Morelle NY-25

Podney Paris IL-13

Edmund NC-3

Clm Fun TN-3

Earl L Bally Carter OH 01

Scott Mc AL-06

Judy Free Va-10

Wan Bally NC9

Harold Qui NY-04

Mike Quigley IL-05

John CA-52

Don Jolly (MO-03)

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Conn Lamb

Brian Foy

Steve Blot Rochester

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Mike Dyer

John R + King

Joe Neuse CO-2

Robert Wms Disi
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William Rimmer D 3004

Juhri Waliski MW-2

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Lane Gordon TX 5

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~~Lee~~ 04-15

Dennis VA-05

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J. Hogden MW-01

PA-14

Ed S. York FL-3

W. W. L. TX-18

Mark Green MD TN 7

NY-24

Robert J. Wilton VA-01

Andrew G. B. GA-3

PA S & MW-8

Kirby

Frederickson F2-24