

Championing Doc Adams For The Baseball Hall Of Fame

Nov 15, 2021 Posted by [James C. Metzger \(www.JamesMetzger.net\)](http://www.JamesMetzger.net)

Marjorie Adams left us earlier this year. For most of her adult life, she tirelessly promoted the candidacy of her great-grandfather, Daniel Adams, for the Baseball Hall of Fame.

He was known as Doc, receiving the nickname following graduation from Harvard during 1838. He became Marjorie's consuming passion. She promoted him on a website, at conferences, at Society for American Baseball Research meetings and at vintage baseball festivals where fans play and celebrate the sport as it was known during the 19th century. She nicknamed herself Cranky for "cranks," a contemporary term for fans.

During 2014, Marjorie said that baseball, as the national pastime, must ensure the accuracy of its historical records. She wanted them to know that Doc was a baseball founding father.

According to John Thorn, the official baseball historian, the game's early history was a lie, or folklore, for a long time. Abner Doubleday mistakenly had been seen as the inventor of baseball for many years. Alexander Cartwright, who played a role in the development of the sport, was credited with some of the innovations for the game. These are documented on his plaque in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The innovations, however, actually were developed by Doc.

During the 1990s, an article by John in "Elysian Fields Quarterly," a baseball journal, helped Marjorie see her great-grandfather as an important "builder" of the game rather than just "Daniel, the baseball guy," as he was known throughout the country and within the Adams family.

Doc began his passion for baseball by playing for the pioneering New York Knickerbockers Base Ball Club during 1845. While on the team, he created the shortstop position (as a relay man from the outfield) and during 1857 he made his most critical contributions to a rulemaking congress. Doc chaired that group and he codified some of the basics of the modern game by setting the distance between bases at 90 feet, the length of a game at nine innings and the number of men on the field at nine.

Most of Doc's accomplishments remained unknown for decades to those inside the game. But, during 2015, John presented information about Doc to a member of the Pre-Integration Era Committee of the Hall of Fame. This committee votes for players, managers, referees and executives for the Hall of Fame. Doc was placed on the committee's ballot.

Doc fell two votes short when the committee gathered that year but the media created a buzz about his contributions to the game. Then, Marjorie located new documentary evidence of Doc's role in baseball history—three surviving pages of "Laws of Baseball" that he wrote and that provided a physical record of his rules at the 1857 convention. Those pages were sold at auction for \$ 3.26 million.

Doc continues to wait for his entry into the Hall of Fame. Many other fans have championed Marjorie's mission. On her behalf and for her great-grandfather, they will continue to lobby for Doc's proper recognition in Cooperstown.