

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROE SKIDMORE by RAY LUURS

On the way home from Kentucky to visit family and witness our grandson's graduation from 5th grade, my wife and I stopped in Decatur, Illinois to meet up with a co-worker of my wife's who happened to be home visiting his family. While that in itself isn't noteworthy, his father came along for dinner bringing his childhood friend, Roe Skidmore. Roe spent the next two hours telling the life values he learned in baseball. He grew up in Decatur as a local star and in 1966 he was drafted in the 47th round by the Atlanta Braves and started his career in Yakima hitting a robust .191.

If you think that was bad it was a blast compared to the start of his second year when he broke his ankle and was promptly released when he returned. While driving back to Decatur he called Eugene Thompson who was in charge of the Decatur Commodores who were affiliated with the San Francisco Giants (a class A Team in the Midwest League) to ask if they had an opening. Thompson told him they had a first baseman hitting a buck 50 and asked if he could play first base. Roe said he had always been a third baseman growing up but said he had played first base in the summer. After a few hours, Thompson called him back and said they would sign him as their new first baseman.

For the next two years, he played at Fans Field for the hometown Commodores hitting 41 Homer and driving in 156 runs. In 1968 was the year the Cubs drafted him making his dad a lifelong Cubs fan more happy than himself. The next 5 season he played for Tacoma Cubs always being behind someone but in 1969 he was called up because it was rumored it was Ernie Banks' last year but as Roe said Leo Durocher wasn't a fan of rookies and so Roe sat on the bench. Skidmore and Ernie played two more years. He was sent back to the minors to hone his skills and in 1970 he was called up again and actually got to play. In the September game the Cardinals were winning 9-2 Roe was sent up to pinch hit for Joe Decker in the 7th, hitting a single. Now to be anticlimactic, he could of said my hit started a rally for the Cubs to win but in reality, the next batter forced me out a second thus ending my Major League career.

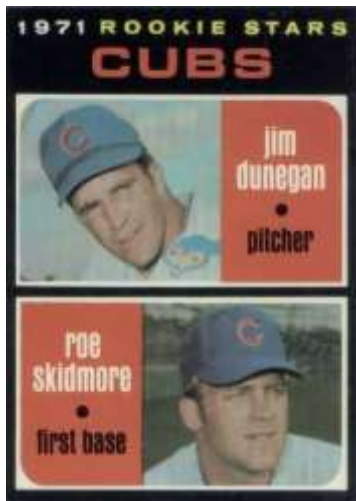
In 1971, he was traded to the White Sox but the White Sox made another trade with Philadelphia for Dick Allen and again he was sent down to keep him in a groove in case he was called up. In 1972 he was traded to Cincinnati and again he was sent to Indianapolis to be back up to Tony Perez in minors and again while in the Cardinals minor leagues he was purchased by Houston and backed up Bob Watson in Iowa and then on to Pawtucket ending his career in 1975. He then scouted for Philadelphia the next 10 year.

I asked him why there was no bitterness in never getting a chance to prove he could or couldn't instead of we are sending you down to be better or keep your bat in. His reply was quite simple, "I had my chances but never was good enough and I could of been the other half of my baseball card. Jim Dunegan was my roommate in some of the years when we were Cubs. He was a wild one and I roomed with his suitcase and usually only saw him at the ballpark. A friend of mine had called me to reminisce about our time in the minors and he asked about Jim. I said I lost touch and didn't know what he was doing. My friend told me after his career was over he and one of his buddies robbed a bank and got caught and spent time in prison".

Even at age 78, he still gets 10 to 12 calls a week for autographs or to talk to groups.

As we were getting up to leave, he reflected on all the things he accomplished. He started a local church which now has 600 members. He married and had a family and is now a grandpa. Although he was a major leaguer for just a day, he is admired for his time as a player as well as an upstanding and caring

He signed a 8x10 picture for me and the kids at our lunch. We all smiled when one of the boys said in disbelief – Is that really you? You should have seen the twinkle in his eye...



Roe Skidmore

American former baseball player

Overview

Stats

Stats

Career stats

Year	Team	GP	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	HR	SB
1970	Cubs	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Career		1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0