

Two Teds

When the name Ted Williams comes up in baseball conversations there is only one Splendid Splinter. Probably the most natural swing ever seen Ted was an enigma of baseball greatness and newsprint controversy. Always seen as the bad boy of Boston by the press Ted did not disappoint with expletives and sarcastic quips.

If my memory serves me Ted hit 536 home runs during his career with the Sox. It was in response to his hitting prowess the first infield shift was devised that found all but the third baseman on the right field side of second base. Ted had more than his share of silver bats the most sacred being the 1941 .406 batting average that has stood ever since. Even the way it went down the last day of the season spoke of Ted's character, attitude and respect for the game—given the option of sitting the bench to secure it he played and raised it with multiple hits during the game.

How great the Splendid Splinter? Marine fighter pilot in WWII and Korea took years out of his career during which time who knows what records in average, hits, homers, slugging percentage, etc. would be recorded in Cooperstown today. And reconciliation—my last image of Ted was his riding in a golf cart around Fen Way Park, hands waving to that All Star crowd, tears running down his cheek, with all the players queuing up to shake his hand and wish him the best. Always a larger than life figure Ted went out the way he came in.

These preceding thoughts all rose up in me when I saw the name Ted Williams in USToday's Sports 3.0. But it wasn't about the Splendid Splinter. The current Ted Williams in the Sports page was a homeless man with the mellifluous voice. Let me quote: *Homeless man gets offers from Cavaliers, NFL Films—Talk about the power of social media. A YouTube video of Ted Williams, a homeless Columbus, Ohio, man with a golden radio voice, has gone viral over the last two days. He has erupted into an online video sensation and possibly into a sports announcer...The 53-year old Brooklyn, N.Y., native's agent...was fielding an avalanche of job offers and news and entertainment offers...He was to fly to New York, where he was booked on NBC's Today Show and ABC's Jimmy Kimmel Live...The video—which has drawn more than 5.4 million hits on YouTube—was filmed next to a Columbus freeway as Williams panhandled with a handwritten sign...*

In less than two months spring training will begin. Soon the race will be on toward another World Series. But right now there are many Teds hanging out under the bridges of freeways and living in the make shift shelters they have constructed out of whatever is around. All of a sudden one Ted hits the Jackpot and finds himself a celebrity. What about the others who look like vagrants or misfits or impaired vessels of humanity but are really live human beings facing the uncertainty of our times? What if Columbus Ted doesn't hit .406 in the fame lane? God's eyes are still on him. I'm sure there were times in the Splendid Splinter's life when someone had to step up to the plate and hit one out for him.

There are many teams in the race to help the homeless. One team in particular is involved in finding the Columbus and Marion Teds who are homeless and helping them into a better way. Please give them a call—**Heaven's Saints**, Ron Cotton, Vice President/Chaplain at 740-383-3546, cottonatmarion@frontier.com and James Phelps 740-223-1300