

# Usher recalls 50 years of Red Wing baseball

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Anthony Ciravola had an ulterior motive for becoming an usher at Rochester Red Wing baseball games.

"I like sports so much, I used to do it just to get into the games," he said.

Fifty years later, Ciravola — better known as "Chubby" to regular fans at Silver Stadium, 500 Norton St. — is still at it. And, at the age of 76, he still considers his line of duty to be more pleasure than work.

"It gives me something to do; otherwise I'd be home watching TV," he explained.

His presence at Silver Stadium — known until the early 1970s as Red Wing Stadium — has produced one of organized baseball's lengthiest spans of continued service with one club. In fact, Ciravola reported that he's never missed more than two weeks of games during his entire 50-year tenure.

"(Older) people point at me, and say, 'See that man? He was here when my grandfather used to take me to the games.' I say, 'Thanks a lot,'" Ciravola joked.

His list of all-time favorite Red Wing ballplayers includes Rip Collins, George "Specs" Toporcer, Ray Pepper, Stan Musial, Eddie Murray and Craig Worthington.

Ciravola said his top team was probably the 1971 Wings. Managed by current General Manager Joe Altobelli, that squad won the Junior World Series championship as well as the International League pennant and Governor's Cup playoffs.

His most memorable game? "When (Rochester's) Tom Poholsky pitched an entire 22-inning game (on Aug. 13, 1950, won 3-2 by the Red Wings.) I stayed for the whole thing."

Born in Fredonia, N.Y., Ciravola moved to Rochester at the age of 12 and has lived in the city ever since. He worked for Gioia Macaroni after graduating from Jefferson High School. Ciravola spent also 30 years delivering milk for Sealtest Dairy Products before retiring in 1978.

Along the way, he has worked an estimated 5,000 sporting events. Ciravola also ushered for several years at the former Edgerton Park Sports Arena, including the 1951 game in which the Rochester Royals clinched the National Basketball Association championship.

"It was crazy," he said. When the Red Wings aren't in season, Ciravola stays busy as a ticket taker for Rochester Americans hockey games at the Community War Memorial. Since his retirement from Sealtest, Ciravola has become a familiar sight at high school events as well: he takes

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Anthony "Chubby" Ciravola is marking 50 years as an usher at Silver Stadium, 500 Norton St., where he has worked thousands of Rochester Red Wing baseball games.

tickets at Aquinas Institute, Bishop Kearney and Irondequoit.

A parishioner at Sacred Heart Cathedral along with Frances, his wife of 52 years, Ciravola has especially strong ties with Aquinas. For three decades he's been connected with the school, where he still volunteers as a lunchroom monitor.

"The kids are great. They make me feel young," said Ciravola. "They never forget you. Kids come back 20 years later and say, 'Chubs, do you remember me?'"

He was inducted into the AQ's athletic Hall of Fame in 1990, an honor he accepted quite humbly.

"When they first told me (about the award) I refused it," Ciravola recalled. "I said it isn't fair, because you've got those people who played sports and now some are lawyers and doctors. I didn't even go (to Aquinas)."

Although Ciravola admits that he can't keep up his active pace forever, he's not about to slow down.

"I enjoy it, as long as these legs hold up," he remarked. "Some days I get tired and I don't feel like going (to the games), but then I get there and forget all about it."

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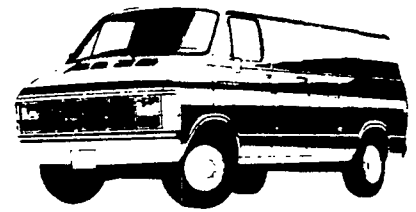
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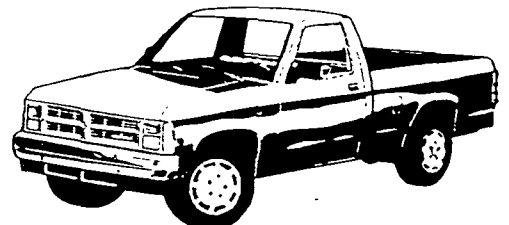


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