



To my fellow Dodgertown West members and teammates,

My Dad, Schuyler ("Sky") Haskell, passed away a week ago Sunday afternoon (3/09). He was 85, so he had a good long life. It was not a surprise, as his health has been in decline. Earlier in the day, we Havanans battled against Brooklyn in a terrific game at ELAC. Afterwards, I went down to see him at home in Newport Beach as I have almost always been doing for two or three years - after DTW baseball on Sunday morning. My sister, Sarah, was there and two first cousins. Sarah's birthday was the day before.

That Sunday was the first day of Pacific Daylight Time; it was extraordinarily warm for early March, and there was a gorgeous sunset that evening. We were lucky that it was a Sunday and we were there as usual, rather than uptown working and getting the dreaded phone call mid-week. Big Sky, as we called him, passed away at 4:30 pm. My middle son Schuyler, my Dad's grandson namesake, was born at 4:30 pm. If there was a day for Dad to leave us to be with his two younger and older brothers, this was the day.

Big Sky liked baseball (but he loved golf), probably because he got such a kick out of observing me love the game from the get-go. He took me to my first Dodger game at the Coliseum against the Reds. I think they lost, but of course that was okay. Climbing the Coliseum stairway to heaven, to suddenly behold the vast green expanse of the Coliseum floor and the perfectly cut diamond tucked into the southwest corner was the awe-inspiring thrill of a lifetime for an eight year old baseball nut. My second game with Dad was also against the Reds, facing a youngster named Sandy Koufax who was as wild as a wild horse, but could throw the ball through, or curve it around, a brick wall – take your pick. He got out of trouble in the 1st inning, but proceeded to walk a couple, then get shelled in the 2nd, culminating in a humbling if not humiliating grand-slam. Walter strode slowly to the mound and quietly and gently took the ball from Sandy's glove.

Sandy was already my hero for life. I have always (still?) been selfishly frustrated with the fact that I went through all those early games of grief when he really wasn't very good, before he broke through. I was the one who paid the dues, did all the heavy lifting (really??) – listening with agony and elation to every ball and strike of every game that Sandy pitched during those lean precursor years. Then, beginning in '61-'62, and in full throttle by '63, everyone jumped on the bandwagon. Not fair.

Big Sky came to a lot of our games and sat in the stands, although he always had a hard time sitting still anywhere for very long. He really enjoyed watching all of us, although sometimes it was hard to get his nose out of the day newspaper's crossword puzzle. I could only sigh when I was lucky enough to get a hit and he completely missed it, focused on what has five letters across with a second letter "N" meaning a contemptuous expression ("SNEER").

I know that some of you may have had a chance on occasion to say hello or chat a bit with Big Sky, certainly he did with the gals in the stands (he was remarkably charming with those of the female persuasion). His second to last game was at Downey with Evan and me, which is the final photo below. His last game was last year at Commerce. He was driven to Zindell and assisted by his caregiver; he wore an old favorite cashmere sweater with a hole (or three) in it, and his pajama bottoms and slippers – propped high up in the stands behind the 3rd base line. I went up and hung out with him as I always would when I saw that "X" on the inning's defensive line-up sheet by my name. He had to leave early that day, as he tired.

Wow. Love you, Dad.
Cobo



