

David Michael Miller

The Rise of Breese Stevens Field: Madison's ballpark and the team that made it home, the Centennial Edition

Host: Stu Levitan

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Stu Levitan Hello again, friends, and welcome to Madison Book Beat, your community radio home for Madison authors, topics, book events, and publishers. I'm this week's host, Stu Levitan.

We touched most of those bases this week with my guest, David Michael Miller, third-generation Madison native, with a direct family link to the subject of his book, The Rise of Breese Stevens Field, Madison's ballpark and the team that made it home, the Centennial Edition. You may know Breese Stevens Field today as a city, state, and national landmark at 917 East Mifflin Street, the place for professional soccer and ultimate frisbee, concerts, and community events. But once upon a time, it was the place for baseball, especially as the home field from 1926 to 1942 for the Madison Blues, five-time pennant winners in three different leagues in the 1930s, and for many other activities as well. Over its first hundred years, everything from marbles to the National Football League. It's the oldest city-owned and operated athletic field in Madison and the oldest extant masonry grandstand in Wisconsin. It bears the touch of the notable local architects Claude and Stark and the federal largesse of the New Deal and served as the backdrop to some of the most noted athletes of the 30s and 40s. It's a great Madison story which David Michael Miller tells with a verve and nerve befitting its sporty milieu, dozens of well-chosen photographs and some hard-won statistics.

Although this is David's first book, fans of the graphic arts, our longtime readers of Isthmus newspaper, will know him as Madison's premier illustrator of concert advertisements and posters for neighborhood festivals. He has also made some maps for a local history book or two. It is a pleasure to welcome to Madison BookBeat, David Michael Miller.

David Michael Miller Thanks for having me, Stu.

Well, I've been looking forward to this because I greatly appreciate the book. I enjoyed it tremendously. Congratulations on it. It's a job well done.

Thank you. Thank you. And hearing that from you is just about all I need to hear. So that's, I've done my job, I guess.

Well, we still have 51 minutes to go.

I mentioned your family connection. The book is dedicated to your grandfather, Clifford G. Atkinson, a caretaker of the field from 1938 to 1964. How much did that personal connection have to do with your writing this book?

Well, that's a good question. I can't say that I was really close to him. He was a pretty quiet guy, you know, and I was a little kid. When we'd go visit Grandpa Cliff, he kind of sat in

his, you know, rocker and he smoked his pipe and he wasn't too talkative. He didn't have all these tales about the field. But I knew he had worked there and I always wondered about it. But yeah, there was not any, he didn't tell any stories about Breese Stevens Field that I can recall.

But was he your connection even into looking into it as in general?

Yeah, I think so, because I was doing genealogy about the Atkinson family and sometimes he would be quoted in newspapers about field conditions and so on for some big high school game. And then going through those papers, I just realized what a big deal Breese Stevens was back then. It was, you know, banner headlines and all this team, the Madison Blues baseball team and all these things I never really knew about. And it was sort of a, you know, like I discovered some lost treasure or something, some lost story. But I mean, as far as Grandpa Cliff, he didn't really tell the stories. A lot of the Atkinsons worked at the field on and off. But I hear more about the field from my cousin Dean Freeman and some other folks rather than from Cliff.

As you were working on the book and researching it and finding out about things, were there things you wished you could have asked him?

Oh, definitely. Always, always. I mean, that's, I mean, that kind of goes with the territory about, you know, if you were, well, any genealogy, you would go, no, why didn't I ask my dad about this? Why didn't you know, I mean, and that's sort of the thing. I mean, I'm sure he has lots of stories. He was covered in the news on his retirement in 1964, and he did share some memories of seeing Jesse Owens, seeing Satchel Page, and so on. But he didn't go on into great detail. He just more or less said that, you know, he had seen them play and so on. You note that he invented a field marker in 1961. I don't suppose he was able to patent that. No, no. That's sort of like a little family legend of ours that he had made this just kind of out of necessity. And he was always a tinkerer, and he had done this. And well, it really worked. And I guess he built a version, and he gave one to the Camp Randall crew. And I thought they just thought it was great. They could paint red stripes all over the place. But, you know, he wasn't a big merchandiser. He was just doing this to make his own job easier. He wasn't out to make a lot of money. There was a local business that marketed it for a while. I don't know what the deal was with that. I believe that my grandpa was paid some royalties for it, but he didn't patent it. There were other line markers way going back, way to the 1930s and so on. But his was based sort of on, I don't know, sort of from a beer keg pressure. I don't know how he came up with that.

How Wisconsin.

As you were doing the research and finding out about Breese Stevens Field and the Madison Blues, how quickly did you realize that you couldn't write about the field without also writing about the Madison Blues baseball club?

Well, actually, I kind of started thinking about the baseball club first. I thought, oh, here's this great lost baseball team of Madison that no one knows anything about. And I was going

to find out what it is. And then when I started doing research and trying to contact some of the relatives of some of the players and so on, I realized that no one really knew what had really happened and there wasn't that much of a connection. But I thought, well, people are going to be more interested in Breese Stevens Field than this ball team that no one ever heard of before. But the thing is, that was the trick. How do you tell both stories at once? Because one led to the other. And you kind of have to break up your chronological order sometimes just to keep up with how the ball, the Madison Blues baseball team is doing.

And you couldn't write about either the ball team or the ball field without writing about the man who was the most important person in the existence of both, the legendary Joseph Leo Coughlin, the grammatically challenged columnist known as Roundy, the sage of Brittingham Park. Explain who Roundy was and what he did in general. And then we'll talk about what he did particularly for the Blues and Breese Stevens.

Well, in general, I mean, he did become this famous sports columnist from the 1920s until he had an incredible reputation that went beyond Wisconsin. He was great friends with all sorts of athletes. And he grew up in Madison as a poor kid and grew up in an Irish neighborhood, sort of the West Doty Street now. He went to St. Raphael's School. I guess according to him, and he liked to tell stories about himself, he said his education was halted in the sixth grade by the nuns who said, that's far enough. And that's when he got his job to go work on a butcher wagon or something like that. I don't doubt that things like that are true. But then he had a lot of different jobs. He had different, the most comical things happen on the job. But one thing that he really stuck with is that he loved sports and he had a real mind for sports. And he would go to the State Journal when it was located on South Carroll Street, where you could listen to the game results, baseball games come over the wire. And he just thought that was amazing. And that's when he just sort of decided he would become a sports writer. But he was such a character. Everyone knew who he was and everyone knew about these, what a goofball he was and these crazy things. And everyone really liked him. He was just this funny guy, real character.

And how he got in the newspaper was actually kind of interesting. Well, first of all, in 1918, sort of the same time he started writing his first columns for the Capital Times. But he had owned a billiard parlor. Well, not owned, but he ran a billiard parlor on the 200 block of State Street, Roundy's Place that someone sort of set up for him. And then he would just sort of hold court and talk about all this prognostications. That was the other thing about him is that he was uncanny in his ability to pick game winners. So people would come, and he would sometimes give odds and so on, and people would come to hear him. He's just such a character. The business manager from the Daily Cardinal used to come to his little bull sessions that he would have, and he would start writing some of his predictions in the Daily Cardinal. I guess Roundy was really thrilled with that when that happened. At that time, the Cardinal got printed on the presses of the Capital Times, which was then located in the 100 block of King Street. At that time, the Capital Times was brand new. Bill Levieux had just started it at the end of 1917 and into 1918, and he had seen what a commotion that Roundy was making with these picks, and he offered him a job to write a column for \$5 a

week, which was incredible that he would do that, especially that the paper was just starting out.

The thing is, Evjue doesn't mention Roundy at all in his own autobiography, which is kind of strange, but I think it really might have helped the Capital Times take off, aside from their political coverage, that here was the best sports writer in town, this character everyone knew. He was writing about how there should be a baseball team, how there should be a stadium for Madison, for the high schools. So he really became this voice, and he also was able to sort of needle the local gentry, you might say, or the Association of Commerce or so on, that they weren't doing enough to provide money for a baseball team that Madison could call its own, and they weren't providing anything. It was a shame. Madison, so proud of the Capitol and its university, it didn't have its own municipal field. But Roundy was the guy who really got things started. He threw his own fundraiser right off the square. He hired the Eagle Band, a marching band, to play. And he tapped the right people to come, and pretty soon they were all writing \$100 checks to start the Madison Blues baseball team in 1923.

Thank you for that. You called Roundy Madison's best sports writer. I'd say it was its most popular sports writer, because to say that Roundy was grammatically challenged and syntax deficient gives credence to the fact that he may have ended his formal education in the sixth grade.

Right, right.

He would have driven a modern copy editor out of their mind.

Right, yeah, and that's why I made no attempt to try to clean up his copy, because it's just, you just got to let it sit as is. But yeah, you're right. I guess you wouldn't call him the best sports writer, but yeah, the most popular. He was beloved, and then, of course, he did all sorts of charity work with the Empty Stocking Clubs, and he was always raising money for children with disabilities and so on, and he did this to the end of his life. So in a way, he was sort of like a local saint. Of course, there's many legends about him and a lot of stories and so on that I can't really confirm, and I didn't want to get into, but that's someone else's book.

And like every good character and newspaper reporter, he had a catchphrase, "what more could be fairer?"

Yeah, and that's just such a, I don't know, when I first heard that, "what more could be fairer?" It just seems so natural for Madison in so many ways. That could be the city motto in certain different ways, sort of a pat on the back. What could be more fairer than this wonderful university and all these things? But also, meaning it literally, like, okay, well, what more could be fairer? Sort of the both sides, so I thought it would fit Madison so perfectly, but the city doesn't need a motto, but it just seemed to fit.

So safe to say that without Roundy, there's no Madison Blues, and without Madison Blues, there may or may not have been a Breese Stevens?

No, I mean, something must have happened, because part of the other thing that was happening at the same time was there was the need for a second high school. I mean, there was just Madison Central was Madison's only school, and of course there was Edgewood and other schools, but not necessarily part of the Board of Education. But East was going to open, and that would mean there would be two Madison high schools without any place to play. And that was what really stuck in people's craw, was the fact that all the high school games would be away games. They couldn't watch their kids unless they had to take a long trip, you know? And that just seemed unconscionable to a lot of people, like Roundy and others.

There was another man who was even more important to the continued existence of the Blues, and that was the fiery player-manager and eventual owner Edwin "Eddie" Lenihan, the skipper. You say that he saved the club during the Depression, made the Blues a success on the diamond and the ledger. What did it take for him to do that?

Tenacity. I mean, just be able to pick the things that he did. He was kind of a cranky guy, but he loved the game. He never makes any pronouncement about this mission he's doing or whatever. He was just pretty kind of a stereotypical hard-nosed baseball manager, foul-mouthed Irish temper, all this stuff. He was known to take swings at umpires. He was known to heckle the opposite opponent at the plate. Not a good sportsmanship guy, but I mean, apparently he was driven enough to do this.

And also at the time he had started, you know, was signed up as the manager in 1923, he had just gotten married. And so when they were settling down and they were just thinking, well, you know, he's going to stick with this, you know, maybe that was part of it too, that he was going to stay here and raise a family and not be, you know, going from town to town like he did for the previous 10 years, going in, you know, to the Dakotas and, you know, Midwestern leagues and just traveling all the time. And I think maybe he just wanted to be in one place and work as hard at it to make the Blues a success.

Well, you say that Madison should name something for him the way it has for Dynie Mansfield and Dwayne Bowman and Jimmy Demetral. What were some of the things that he had to do to keep the Blues alive for those 17 years that he was involved in them?

Well, he was a playing manager, so he also played first base, but he was also a guy who like started the whole roster and they had to find that. And then they were not part of a league in the beginning. They were independent, so they had to find all the other teams that, you know, might want to play them. He had to have all the right connections. And I think this is what he had from his previous 10 years of being in, you know, in Moline, Illinois and all these other, you know, baseball towns throughout the Midwest is that he made a lot of connections to say people like Abe Saperstein, who booked Negro League teams and so on. I think he was well connected by the time he was settling down in Madison to bring, you know, different types of teams to town.

And he had connections to the local leagues and so on. And also, I mean, he sometimes relied, you know, he just confessed in the beginning that he was waiting for some civic

organization to sort of take things over for him. And that kind of happened in a way with like the, it was first it was the Madison Athletic Association that was behind it, and then it changed to the nonprofit Madison Baseball Association, sort of a fan booster operation that would funnel money to the club. So that had to be kept going. But, you know, they always had to have booster days and so on. And they always seemed to be pleading empty pockets and that they had to, you know, certain years they were given an ultimatum by one of the league presidents. They had to get a certain amount of people at the game, the home game against Racine, or they would lose their league berth to Burlington, Wisconsin. Felt that the teams in the league at that time felt that Madison wasn't drawing enough, didn't have enough fan support. So that was something he had to deal with once they stopped becoming an independent team, that he had to deal with the leagues and all the things that they wanted to do.

And then also traveling to all those cities. Yeah, you've got a map of all the places they played. They did get around. Yeah, yeah. And it's kind of amazing. I don't really have any details about how they did that. I assume they took trains, but who knows?

We're talking with David Michael Miller. His book, The Rise of Breese Stevens Field, Madison's Ballpark and the Team That Made It Home, the centennial edition. Very good marketing ploy, David, called the centennial edition.

Well, you know, I planned this to, you know, when I first decided to write this book, I thought I'm going to get this done before the anniversary. And then I'm going to, you know, it'll be the 100th anniversary. Someone will have to pay attention. And it worked out great. I met my own deadline and everything developed just right. And I'm very happy with how things have unfolded.

Well, you should be. You mentioned Abe Saperstein and the extent to which the Madison Blues played a lot of black clubs. You know, some of the black superstars that played in Madison, Satchel Paige, the all-time homerun king, Josh Gibson, and Kansas City Monarchs played here. 31% of the home games in 1936 were against black teams. Was that due to DEI or dollars and cents?

I would think it's more dollars and cents. I tried to examine exactly what the racial issues actually were. What was the appeal of these teams? How were they promoted? What did the players think of playing for all these white people all the time? And I'm sure they got their share of catcalls and everything. But the thing is, the teams drew fans. Those were big games. And sometimes when they needed a booster game to make money, they would call up the Chicago Giants to come up. At the time, Madison was like two-thirds of 1% black in 1923. And you can imagine a lot of white people maybe had never seen a black person before. And this was sort of like, I don't know, I don't want to call it a sideshow, but a curiosity. It's sort of like, well, this is something new. And then they would always hear what great athletes they were. It seems like people like Roundy, the sportswriters, always pointed out that these weren't clowning athletes. These were professional athletes. And often, they proved it on the field. And teams like the Chicago Union Giants and the Monarchs and so on, they regularly would beat the best white teams in Wisconsin.

The Monarchs also showed the way of the future in 1931, coming here with their own traveling floodlights, which preceded by a year the Breese Stevens introducing and installing what turned out to be the first permanent floodlights in a stadium in Wisconsin. So the Monarchs were on the cutting edge of the new technology.

Yeah, and that's really amazing. I didn't look into their own story on how they came up with that idea to do it. They had all these trucks, which were basically generators on wheels. And yeah, there's a picture of one of them in the book. But they did it, and it was amazing. It was a hit. And it showed that it could be done. And that was a pivotal thing for Breese, because it was the first stadium in Wisconsin to have lights installed. And it really just changed everything for not only the field, but for the Madison Blues and also for the local schools.

Because the night games became so popular, they were attractions unto themselves. It also meant that it opened up the Blues schedule that they could actually play more of the barnstorming teams, more of the Negro League teams and so on. Because they could play any time at night. I mean, any day of the week at night, rather than be stuck during the day, which usually meant Saturday, Sunday afternoons. But also, the other thing about the lights is they were on the verge of the schools at the time. West had just opened and East and Central, they were on the verge of closing down their scholastic sports programs in the beginning of the Depression. But when they could do this, they could actually earn money at the gate, and they would get a third of the gate for their athletic events. And it kept those things alive during the Depression. So it's another situation of everybody wins out of this arrangement. And the city of Madison, it was a wonderful thing. And Breese proved itself to be the valuable city community center that it ended up being.

So Breese loses its ivy, but gets lights. Wrigley has ivy, but waits decades and decades before it gets lights.

Yeah, yeah, that is kind of funny, though. I did read a story that actually my grandfather, Cliff, actually got ivy to grow in the late 70s in Breese Stevens Field. But I couldn't confirm that. That was reported actually by reporter Mike Ivey in the Mass Press Connection.

So, well, if it was in the Press Connection, I will vouch for it.

Yeah.

So going back to the Blues, they had so many iterations over their 20 seasons. They were independent. Two stints in the Wisconsin-Illinois League, two stints in the Wisconsin State League, the Tri-State League, finally as the Class B farm club for the Chicago Cubs in the Illinois-Indiana-Iowa League. When you call up a mental image of, in your mind, of the Madison Blues, what era do you see?

Well, it wouldn't be, no, it would be the earlier days, I think. I mean, I can see it, I would say, in the 20s or maybe the early 30s, not when they were a farm team for the Brewers or the Cubs, because despite that happening, those were kind of lean years for the, you know, they weren't really making a lot of money then, and the fans really weren't interested in that faster ball. They, you know, with all these unfamiliar players from towns, you know,

hundreds of miles away, it was, I'd say in the 1930s, early 1930s, when they first start hitting their stride and they develop their lineup, and it was a lot of people that I write little profiles on, like Red Smith and some of their pitchers and Dinny Mansfield and so on, who stayed and built up the team and were popular and everyone knew them so well that fans kept coming back.

They weren't, the sports writers of the time were pushing that it's not real baseball, it's junk, it's not organized baseball, but when everyone was wanting them to be like a farm team for the Brewers or the Cubs, and when they finally achieved that, well, people, the fans really weren't all that interested. The team seemed unfamiliar and even Roundy even said it at the time, even like when they were first talking about the Blues becoming a farm team for the Cubs, he even said something like, well, he's kind of against it, that he was really a state league man, and he said it was better fitted to our baseball minds, these, you know, smaller, you know, it's not, you know, organized ball with, you know, really fast pitching and all that. But he was like saying it's more, you know, more of a local thing that people will cherish and it'll draw more fans if it's not, you know, such a serious, you know, endeavor, you know, which is kind of an interesting tack to take.

You mentioned Dynie Mansfield, Arthur Dinny Mansfield, short for dynamite, not in the Jerry Walker sense, but Jimmy Walker sense, but because apparently he had a hell of a knockout punch. One of the things I really, as I said, I like a lot, there's lots in this book I like. One of the things I like are those mini profiles, mainly of men I know a little bit about, but obviously not enough. I know what Mansfield did as a member of the school board and as the Badger baseball coach. I had no idea he had been signed by the New York Giants but left their minor league club to come back to the UW to get his master's degree. And apparently he was a big stud on the ball field as well.

Yeah, yeah. I mean, well, that's something. And he, at the time, and maybe it still goes on in its own way, you know, the dream of some of these minor league players, you know, make it to the bigs, you know, they get, you know, but yeah, New York Giants. But what happens is they never play on the team. They get sent to the farm team and, you know, they're kind of in limbo. And, you know, I think maybe he just didn't want to stick around for that and felt maybe it'd be better just to, you know, put down roots in Madison and, you know, get to become the backfield coach for the Badgers and settle down instead of, you know, going for the, you know, the big, you know, going for the bigs.

And other blues players, you know, did it too. And they ended up, you know, being only playing in like a couple of games or something. And they kind of, I don't know if they just gave up or whatever, but it's, I don't think it was appealing as they, you know, thought it would be. Like some of these players, you know, you get sent to a farm team up in, you know, Toronto or something, you know, away from their families. So, I mean, it's kind of, it gets kind of crazy. What a sacrifice it is to try to climb that ladder to the major leagues.

Now there were two players in the early 1940s who did become something of stars. When the Blues were a farm club for the Brewers in 1940, they had two pitchers who would make it to the bigs:

1. *Johnny Schmitz was a two-time all-star for the Cubs in the late 40s.*

2. *Dave Kelso won the opening game of the 51 World Series for the Giants against the Yankees.*

Was that about it for players with major impact beyond Madison?

Yeah, that's really about it. I couldn't, yeah, no big major leaguers that I could really find other than those two. Yeah, I mean, there's others who had made it, but just played, you know, just like I say, a few games where they played for like the St. Louis, you know, Bobby Kloser played for the St. Louis Browns. And some of them are playing, you know, they played for other teams like Red Smith played for the Green Bay Packers, which is pretty interesting.

So the Madison Muskies and Madison Mallards have produced more big league stars than the Madison Blues ever did.

Well, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Well, see, they started as organized baseball. I mean, when the Muskies started, you know, they were a farm team for the Oakland A's. And so they were already in it. That was the structure, you know, from the get-go. But yeah, I think it was just a different era, different leagues, a different ladder.

So let's go back to prehistory. The boys and young men of Madison have been playing baseball since around the Civil War era. What was the state of 20th century baseball in Madison right before the Blues and Breese Stevens?

Well, it was well, the team that before the Blues was the Madison Senators, which existed from 1907 to 1914. It was a Wisconsin State League. Originally in 1907, they were playing teams from like Wausau, Green Bay, even Freeport, Illinois. And that was what they called Class B ball back then, which was organized ball, which was supposed to be a faster style of baseball. And the Senators came along and they in two years, they became the champions of the league. But it wasn't the great thing that everybody had wanted. It wasn't the team that didn't really measure up. And the team sort of declined and they had money problems. And a lot of times I think the team, some of the teams, they ended up competing with the amateurs who were playing, you know, in parks like, you know, Tenney and Brittingham and Vilas Park on the smaller diamonds. That in a way, there was baseball happening all over the city and maybe people were being more of participants rather than, you know, observers.

You mentioned baseball being played all over the city. As one would expect, there is a map in the book of all the places baseball is played before Breese Stevens Field. As far as I can tell, in chronological order, starting in 1851:

1. *Madison High School*
2. *Driving Park*
3. *Camp Randall*
4. *Greenbush Park*
5. *Brittingham Park*

6. *Strauss Field*
7. *Lake Park*
8. *Vilas Park*
9. *Burr Jones Field*
10. *Tenney Park*
11. *League Park*
12. *Olin Park*
13. *French Battery*
14. *Kip Field in 1920.*

That's where the Madison Blues played their first three seasons, 1923 to 25. We have a great listenership on the east side. Where exactly was Kip Field in relation to the buildings on Atwood and Fair Oaks Avenue?

Well, it's where that second plant is on Fair Oaks. That faces Fair Oaks. It's that part that's, let's say you're going west on the bike path, that's on the right side. And also it's part of where Goodman is now, too. That area as well. So it was, I forget how many acres it was, but they just did it. They had a great baseball team and they wanted to compete with French Battery and Carbon, the battery-making team that they had there. They were located where Union Corners is. And they had their own diamond in their backyard and Kip wanted to compete and that's what they did. And they had some winning teams for a while, but it didn't last too long. I think they expanded their bowling or something else. I think it was kind of hard to maintain the field all the time. It got a little bit weedy.

So take us back to the Madison Blues' first opening day, May 5th, 1923. Seems like it was a pretty big deal. You had parades, politicians, and assorted poohbahs.

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, that's, you know, they knew this. They waited a long time for this day to come and everyone wanted to get on the bandwagon. Everything they did have a parade. They say it went up State Street and around the square. I don't know if the parade actually went all the way to Atwood Avenue and Fair Oaks, but it was a nice day. And the governor at the time, which was Governor Blaine, threw a pitch. And I believe that was Kittleson, the mayor Kittleson at the time. Do I have that right? You have that right. 1923? Yes.

But to supplement that, Governor Blaine's executive secretary was Michael Olbrich.

Oh, see, I didn't know that.

Who obviously was involved at this time in aggregating the land for the park on the east side that bears his name, which originally was blocked because he wanted to name it after Robert M. LaFollette in the aftermath of World War I. But yeah, Olbrich worked for Blaine.

No, that's news to me. There's all sorts of things I find out about Michael Ulbrich I should have known about. All the stuff he had to do with the development of the arboretum. Oh, yeah. Totally clueless about. I just thought of him in strictly Olbrich Park terms.

Olbrich was an essential guy in the 20s. Died by suicide a month before the crash in 1929 because the litigation over sheep lands in Montana went bad. But no, Ulbrich was a critical guy.

So here's the question that I need the answer to. Was their uniform navy blue with white pinstripes because of the name or was the name the Madison Blues because the uniform was blue?

I think the name was because the uniform showed up blue. I don't know who picked them, but I think maybe, I don't know, I don't know who chose that. But yeah, if they didn't have a set name, I think they just decided, oh, we'll just be the Blues. I don't think they went through any sort of, like I say in the book, you know, Madison Radicals wasn't suggested.

Yeah, but I mean, the earlier team was Madison Senators. I mean, you could have had something that related, but maybe they knew that 30 years later, Elmore James would write a song called The Madison Blues.

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, that must have been it. That would be their theme song. I don't know, I think they were probably maybe so concentrating on what they were doing and getting the team together and raising the money and so on. They weren't going to spend a lot of time debating names and so on. So it'd be interesting to see what they might have come up with, but try to think of some local symbol of Madison at the time. I don't know what you could come up with. I mean, the Madison Lakers, I mean, I don't know.

Well, you know, the Mallards are named the Mallards because of a team in Quad Cities that Steve Schmidt liked. Yeah. That's why the Mallards were called, but it also makes sense for a team that is located by a body of water to be named after a duck, and that works, or named after a fish. I mean, yeah, I mean, you could name all sorts of things.

You pick any part of Madison's history, you could choose, oh, the Madison Deliberators. I mean, you could, yeah, choose your own symbol. Yeah.

But whatever they were called, was there a period in those early years where they were the best baseball team in Wisconsin?

Well, I think so. From what I can tell from the stats, that their second year in 1924, they went on just on a tear. I forget what it was, but they won like over 30 games with only three losses, and they were beating everybody. Everyone wanted to play them. They were new, and people were excited about the Madison Blues and wanted the Madison Blues to come to their athletic fields. And yeah, they had a great year that year. And there was the state league at the time that was going, but that was rather, I think it was just four teams, and I think it was Manitowoc that came in first as the result of, I forget what their record was, but they'd only played 10 games, and the Blues had played something like 77. And they were still ahead with a winning record. So yeah, you can check my data there. Yeah, they played, let's see now, in 1924, is that what we're looking at?

Yeah. In 1924, they played 77 games. They won 53. They had a winning percentage of 721.

Yeah, yeah. But I forget who it is, the Manitowoc team. They had a better record, but they'd only played, like I say, like 10 games.

Now as to these statistics, it looks to me like you actually went back and tallied 20 years of one loss records. And 40% of these games were away games. So that must have been quite a research endeavor for you to compile those statistics.

Yeah, well, it was, yeah, when I look back on it, it seems pretty sick almost. But I mean, the thing is, and this was brought out in the Isthmus story that Linda Falkenstein wrote, is that this happened. I started really getting serious about this book after COVID hit, and I had been laid off from Isthmus, and I was at home. And for the first time in my life, I had nothing to work on, no deadlines. I had all this time, and I was doing genealogy stuff, and then that's when I decided I'm going to write about Breese Stevens Field and write about the Madison Blues.

And yes, I was going to go through, and you know what this is like, going day by day through newspapers. I mean, I thought, well, I'll just do it. And that's the sort of thing you can almost do while you're watching something on TV if you're just looking up statistics or so on. But yeah, in a way, you might agree with this, there's really no other way to really get in there and really see what they're doing. You kind of have to see things in sequence and see instead of just dipping into the big headlines and so on, and to see the grind of what they're doing. And all the traveling and everything, it gives you a better understanding of what the team is like if you go to every game, so to speak.

That's why they call newspapers the first draft of history. Oh, yeah, well, that's accurate.

So let's talk about Breese Stevens now. Building a municipal ball field was not nearly as difficult for us as building a civic auditorium or a convention center, but it was not entirely easy. The city almost made the disastrous decision to build on the banks of the Yahara River on the site that's now the O'Keefe and Marquette schools.

How did the city eventually end up owning the entire block bordered by Mifflin, Patterson, Brearley, and East Washington Avenue, which the plat makers call Block 159?

Well, that's because of, well, of Breese Stevens. And he was, I mean, no one really knew who he was, you know, and people don't really know who he was, but he had been the mayor for one term in the 1880s. And then after that, he was a member of the University Board of Regents, where he was quite influential. And he had first come to Madison, I could tell the whole story, but he was a corporate lawyer, basically. And I think he did some legal work for somebody in Madison. And I think he just kind of by happenstance made a deal with this person he had legal work to be able to buy a few plots that this guy had for a dollar. I don't know why he, you know, because when I first read the first deal, he got all this land for a dollar. Okay, what else happened? You know, what's the other part of the deal? So I'm thinking Stevens must have done some legal work for him, and that was part of the deal.

And then I think, and I haven't seen letters or anything, he didn't really keep his correspondence, Breese Stevens. But I think at some point you think, well, you know, let's try to get all the lots of that block and, you know, see what we can do with it. But the thing is, I couldn't really find any correspondence or anything mentioning that, you know, they were working on putting that together or what he had in mind for that. I've never saw any writing from him that he was ever really interested in sports or anything like that. I think he was just being speculative. He probably, you know, he didn't really improve the land at all while he owned it. After he died, his family, someone must have tried to start filling the lot because it was basically a marsh at the time. And they had a hell of a time trying to fill it, you know, to make it become Breese Stevens later in the 20s. But, yeah, I don't know what Breese Stevens had intended for that. I think it was just purely a piece of property that maybe could be an Illinois Central train station someday or something like that. I think maybe just filling the property was just going to be too onerous that, you know, he never got around to doing it. And by that time, he was probably moved on to the University of Regents and really wasn't interested in being such a land speculator. I don't know.

Well, it was a pretty good speculation. He buys the entire – he puts the entire block together for \$401, and his widow sells it for \$35,500. You know, that's a pretty good return on investment.

Yeah, yeah.

And he was a corporate lawyer who, as mayor – let's not let this go on – as mayor . Prevents for four years the city electrifying its utilities because he's on the board of the gas and coke company.

Yeah, yeah. He was on a lot of boards, and he was part of the people who were trying to create a waterway from Green Bay to the Mississippi River through the Fox River Improvement Company. He was on a lot of – he was an attorney for the Illinois Central. So those were the kind of circles he traveled in.

I do point out in the book that the State Journal had said at the time that he didn't want to become mayor, that he was going to refuse it if people tried to nominate him. But he did get nominated, and he didn't refuse the office. But it made it sound – they made him sound like he was just too busy and he'd be out of town all the time doing legal work for all these corporations, and he wouldn't be able to attend to Madison's needs. There's also a strain of the Prohibition Party in there supporting him, thinking he might maybe enforce one of the liquor laws someday. Yeah, that was John Olin and John Bascom, the great Prohibitionists. Yeah, the great prohibitionists.

Once the city buys the land, starts developing it, construction and governance did not go entirely smoothly, but at least it had a great grandstand designed by Claude N. Stark. How did that come about?

Well, again, I don't know how they got chosen. I was trying to find those documents, but they're great. Claude N. Stark did tons of buildings and libraries through the Midwest and so on, and dozens of buildings in the Madison area. I don't know how they were chosen.

To talk about something that it's really not the ideal place to have an athletic field. It's really not big enough for Major League Baseball, or it certainly was outgrown. So they were sort of compromised, and they were also on a budget too. They didn't have enough money to build a wall around it, and they just can't have enough money to have the old baseball grandstand along Patterson there, and then the old concrete bleachers that were not joined. It was just the stretch that was sort of down during a few, you know, located where a 50-yard line would be along Mifflin Street. Obviously, money was an issue. They didn't get to build this big grand stadium all at once. But, I mean, what they did build is, I feel, really distinctive. I'm glad that they were able to restore it and keep it in shape.

And, of course, later during the Depression, that's when the New Deal money came in, and they were able to hire people to build the stone walls around it, which kind of just finished it. You can't imagine that place without the walls now.

A beautiful limestone wall along East Washington, part of the \$1.1 million Dane County work plan of the Civil Works Administration. Now, even though this replaces this old wire and canvas fence, there were some people and institutions, and I'm looking at you, Capital Times, who wanted the city to go slow on its construction. I mean, it's mind-boggling to think that some people did not enthusiastically support that beautiful limestone wall quarried from the local Hoyt Park quarry.

Yeah, yeah, I think it did seem amazing that there was all this money suddenly just pouring into Madison for all these projects. And how could you not take advantage of it in that sort of, you know, environment? But, I mean, there's always naysayers. There's always people saying, you know, oh, not with my money, you know, you're not doing that, and Mr. Potters and so on. So people who lived close by there who didn't, you know, had their own ideas of what the field should be like.

So we have opening day at Breese Stevens, again, May 5th, 1926. The Blues joined the Class D Wisconsin-Illinois League. They take on the Beloit Ferries. It's another opening day loss. It sets the pattern for several years of losing seasons. Was it tough for the Blues to hang on in the late 20s, early 30s?

Well, in the late 20s, it was bad. And the irony was, is after they left Kip Field and started at Breeze, the team just kept doing worse in their record every year and worse financially. And they had some, you know, horrible debacles, fundraising debacles. They tried to have a Mardi Gras circus that was going to raise all this money for the team, but it turned out to be people were ejected to the gambling wheels that were in the tent. And they were going to have local dancers do some dances, and that was questionable. And they had all sorts of struggles to try and raise money. And I think at the end, the 20s, everybody was just kind of tired. And they had hired, the city had actually hired a business manager for the team a few years earlier to sort of whip it into financial shape. But that didn't really work.

They did have some, you know, try some new successful things. They brought, you know, a major league team. They brought the White Sox to town. That was quite a coup. But as far as the team went, they still kept doing worse, and they weren't making very much money.

And they really didn't turn things around until they erected the lights in 1931. And then became a dynasty.

Yeah. And also, I mean, there was some also question about who actually owned the team, the Blues, at the end of the 20s. You know, was it partially owned by the city? Was it the Madison Baseball Association fan club who owned it? And I think it just kind of fell into Eddie Lenahan, the manager Eddie Lenahan's hand. He was the most educated individual. He was doing everything. He was booking all the games and hiring all the players. And I think he just happened to, by default, end up with it in his hands. And he decided, well, to sort of keep my job, I'm going to have to raise the money for the guarantee to join the league and do all that stuff and just keep the team alive. And he kept it alive long enough for the lights to come along.

And that's when the team really took off. The team wins five pennants in seven years in three different leagues in the mid to late 30s. And then rejoins the Three Eye League in 1942 for one season as an actual farm club of the Chicago Cubs, thanks to Bill Veck Jr. But then after that league closes in 1942, the city recreation department starts an industrial league, which does even better.

Right. Yeah. And that's just kind of like what Roundy had said. You know, I mean, people want, you know, local players, you know, their friends. They want to go see their friends play. And they knew all those players. And Eddie Lenahan was, you know, on Badger Sporting Goods. And so is, you know, here's the coach of the UW team, Donnie Mansfield. He's, you know, he's on one of the teams. And so is Dwayne Bowman. And people loved it. And they had crowds, you know, in the thousands for these, you know, amateurs. It was a huge deal. And, you know, again, Madison was a much smaller community at that time. But, yeah, people really got behind it.

As far as the, you were talking about the Blues becoming a farm team for the Cubs. First off, they were owned by the farm team for the American Association Brewers in 1940. And that's when the old lineup of the Blues, they kind of had to say goodbye. And all of a sudden they had all these new players that were picked by the Madison, I mean, the Milwaukee Brewers Association. And, yeah, it didn't take off. The fans didn't really turn out for the new team, even if it did have this connection with Brewers. And that was kind of the same story when it became a team for the Cubs. And, see, there was another connection. The Brewers were funneling players to the Cubs because of Bill Veck. It's kind of a very kind of intricate relationship going on. But it worked for a little while. But, like I say, the fans didn't really turn out for it. And in 1942, the 3i League said, you know, we're not going to have baseball this year. And that was kind of the end of the Blues right there. But, like I say, nature abhors a vacuum. And pretty soon baseball came back more popular than ever.

I mentioned at the outset the verve with which you write. And there's an ongoing—you have a snappy use of idiom and colloquialisms, especially some dated colloquialisms.

Oh, yeah. Vintage, vintage. Apparently this is one of the effects of reading so many sports columns from the 20s and 30s. Well, you know, I love that stuff. I love that stuff and all those expressions. Like, oh, he threw one right over the pan. And he, you know, yeah. And

I loved all those expressions. And even in, like, the wrestling world, all those cliches I would say about boxers, you know, like they would refer to them as cauliflower farmers. You know, I think that's hilarious. I'm not the biggest sports fan in the world, but I love all the culture around it, you know, from uniforms to personalities to all the other things that people latch on to is a wonderful thing.

Well, you mentioned wrestlers. And speaking of mat men, sports, of course, celebrates heroes, and there are a lot of very large personalities in the book, including one beloved athletic and civic figure whose records and philanthropy remain, but whose personal reputation I think takes a bit of a hit here. That is the man we came to know as Jimmy Demetral, the Greek immigrant who won the world's middleweight wrestling championship at Breese Stevens in 1928, who also had a secret life as Nicholas Xiarchos. Before you talk about his secret life, relate some of the exploits he displayed in the ring.

Well, his first match was in 1921 and he had a reputation as being this really fierce fighter. I mean he was a middleweight and he was kind of short, but as time went on he just got to be more and more popular. After his first match in Madison, he decided he wanted to live. He even said from the ring that he was going to move to Madison. I don't know if that match was in a pavilion that used to be in Olin Park, but it got torn down about 1930 or so, but that's where the matches were held and maybe he saw the skyline from the Olin Park and fell in love with Madison.

He was also training with the UW team and here's a Greek immigrant who'd come to America in 1912. Here he comes to Madison; it's so beautiful and people are so friendly at the university, and yeah, I can see why he would stay. But yeah, he had his own career. He traveled around; he pretty much worked the Midwest and Chicago and so on, and eventually he did win some world titles in certain boxing organizations.

He was so beloved in Madison. He was just this character though, and the local, it's sort of like with Roundy too, this character that he was involved in children's charities and was always holding benefits to raise money for kids with disabilities and so on. But he was just such a character that sports writers couldn't help but he made great copy and they would emulate his accent. He just almost sounded like a cartoon character or this funny guy or something.

See, I grew up in Monona and would always hear about Jimmy Demetral and this person, and you hear about Demetral Park and so on and what a character he was. And yeah, he was great. He was also during World War II, he moved into the Park Hotel and he became their bouncer, which was a great job to have if you're a wrestler and you want to stay in one place. He had the power to just take any troublemaker and pick them up and lift them up over his head. And yeah, I'm sure that solved a lot of fights.

As a wrestler, he would take on all comers, occasionally even including a bear or two.

Yeah, yeah, that was the thing. And we can get into the question of, okay, how much of this is fakery? I mean, in the beginning when you read about Jimmy, he sounds like he's a pretty square dealer and Brownie says, oh, he's square and there's no fakery here. But the

more I've read into his history, you can tell that it's getting kind of absurd and they're having these dramatic fights erupt where people storm the stage and then of course the inevitable chair gets thrown by someone. So by the 1930s, it was pretty much a circus.

Then he did wrestle a bear at the Orpheum Theater and he put the bear on his back and he got \$50 for doing that. A couple of years later, he wrestled the same bear who had gotten 100 pounds heavier and well, now the award was \$100. Jimmy did it again at Breese Stevens. This was where the match with the bear was and he put the bear on his back for the required three seconds. But again, it had been cited that Jimmy Demetral and that bear had been swimming together that morning off of Olin Beach. So I think there might have been some arrangement there or some sort of wink or something that there may have been some fakery in there. I don't know.

And Jimmy Demetral, as you point out, I think to inform a lot of people, was not really all he represented himself to be. He did have a secret life. He invented brotherhood, which did not exist, and denied fatherhood, which did.

Yes, yes. It's something I sort of discovered on my own.

There's this fellow, William Demetral. Jimmy Demetral, he weaved all these myths about himself, and he would say, oh, he was the brother of his older brother, William Demetral, who first came to America in 1900 as a wrestler from Greece, the Greek demon. He had a huge following and reputation. And he more or less took Jimmy, or Nicholas Zarikos, under his wing and asked him to pose as his younger brother so they could be on wrestling cards together. And that was the story that Jimmy always said, that he was William Demetral's brother. But I kept reading stories, and it's like, wait a minute, these guys really don't sound too connected. They didn't really sound like brothers when they would be talking together.

And I finally contacted a guy. He's a descendant of the wrestler William Demetral. He had put up a Facebook site about him. And I just put it to him. It's like, oh, so is William Demetral and Jimmy Demetral related? And he goes, no, no, that's not real. William Demetral was Jimmy's trainer, and Jimmy adopted the name. But he put me in touch with someone who was a descendant of Jimmy Demetral who told me the whole backstory. And the writer had written a story in a Greek cultural journal about how he was really Nicholas Zarikos. And that he, I mean, the shocking thing was, especially for me growing up hearing what a wonderful man he was, that he had left his pregnant wife and child and his son behind to go to America. And after he got to America, he had forgotten or he had just abandoned them and didn't contact them.

And I found out more and more about this relationship that, well, yeah, that did happen. And he did tell a lot of myths about himself. But what was probably in reality is what I learned is that Jimmy was largely illiterate in the Greek language. And he didn't have a lot of money. The streets of America weren't paved with gold. And I guess he was sending money home to his family, but it ended up going to his brother-in-law. And he didn't tell anybody about the letters or the money arriving, supposedly. This is all sort of family lore.

So I think correspondence fell down to zero. And all of a sudden Jimmy has this opportunity to be this wrestler and become this other person. And then he stopped talking about his background or anything. He only said that he was William Demetral's brother. He didn't have any other stories of anything going on.

He told a story about coming to America that he had talked his way through Ellis Island with some pitiful story. And he always knew how to make these stories very interesting for local sports writers who would have to— They were just irresistible. But the thing is he traveled to America with his mother, who was pregnant with his sister. And apparently they were going to go join up with Jimmy's father, who was in Michigan. But Jimmy didn't mention any of that in any of his histories or his father or any of those things.

And he eventually became a wrestler because he was doing manual labor in Michigan. And he worked in some motor works plant where someone— He was supposed to help this guy lift the cylinder blocks up on a machine. And someone saw him lift up the blocks by himself, and they said, Hey, you should wrestle somebody that also works here who moonlighted as a professional wrestler. And yeah, they set it up, and he lost his first match, but there was a rematch and he actually won, and I don't know the circumstances of that, but he apparently, in Jimmy's telling of the story, he relished the idea he had 702 \$1 bills. And back then that was worth like over \$10,000. So that was his story of his rise and how he became a wrestler. But it's obviously much more complicated than that.

It's great that two of the most prominent personalities of that era, Roundy and Jimmy, both had entirely unverifiable life stories.

Well, right. Also, they had very poor education. And I mean, it's, you know, they seem like unlikely people to succeed, but, you know, they broke through. And yeah, they did have a lot of similarities. And they, you know, lifelong dedication to children's charities. It's, yeah, that's amazing.

It would be great to eavesdrop on a conversation between the two.

Yeah. Yeah, that would be funny. Yeah, Roundy with his hard of hearing and Jimmy with his accent. And we could get some other people in there too. But yeah, that would be something.

So let's bring it up closer to today. The first historic preservation issue I remember was in 1980 when the city budgeted \$60,000 for Parks Commissioner Dan Stape to tear down that historic grandstand. And as you write, we have preservation planner Kitty Rankin and the Landmarks Commission to thank for stopping him.

Yes, yes, absolutely. And the folks, there's a, you know, a couple of other alders on there that spoke up about, I think it was Pam Wreszki. Yeah, I think her last name was. She was a 2nd District alder and her district reached from Bresee to Demetral Field. And she didn't know she had voted for the destruction of the field. And this was November 80. I guess that's when the budget got paid. And of course, November 80, a lot of other political stuff going on with the election of this Hollywood actor for president and some other things

going on. So yeah, I can see how something like that would get overlooked. But she's the one who was like saying, well, did anyone talk to Kitty Rankin? You know, she put it to the parks guys and said, you know, what about that? And that's kind of where it started.

And they were kind of seeing, because the parks people, I think they were just sick of working on Breese Stevens Field and repairing things. And it was a declining, you know, thing. And they really couldn't hold the baseball games there anymore. And the high schools found better football fields to play on. Mansfield Stadium opened, I think, in 1967 or 69. Anyway, yeah, there were other places to play. And yeah, the Breese Stevens Field fell into decline. And the parks people were kind of seeing, you know, what's the use of this place? And they were going to make it a soccer facility. But they had plans where they think, well, we want to knock down the grandstand because the roof is unsafe. And they just kind of wanted to start over, I think, instead of trying to keep this old relic going with its, you know, failing bathrooms. And they couldn't sell food there anywhere. And I guess actually the water stopped running there for a while.

There's a bit in the book about how, oh, this Native American school wanted to hold a commemoration for recognition of Native American veterans that would be on Veterans Day at Breese Stevens Field. And they asked if they could hold the event there. And the parks department said, well, if you can hold your event without any running water or bathrooms, it's for you to use. You know, it's like, yeah, a lot of veterans from World War II, I'm sure they're not getting any water or bathrooms. So, yeah, it was pretty sad. And the irony of it is the thing that brought Breese back is that finally getting rid of the field and installing artificial turf. That's the thing that's revived it when they did it in 2014. And it's kind of, you know, I always think, you know what, my grandfather would think about that, you know, trying to get, you know, re-sodding every year and putting so much work into it. But I mean, yeah, obviously it's, like I say, you know, once the artificial turf went down, it's like a rec room with new carpeting. I mean, that's what did it all.

And now thanks to primarily the Madison Mallards and Vern Stenman and Big Top Entertainment, it's a spectacularly successful venue for all sorts of things.

Well, right. And from what I heard from the general manager there, Tristan Straub, I mean, they were saying that they have so many events going on there that they average just about one per day almost, which is astonishing to me. And they've got the Forward Club with a full bar, you know, I mean, that's kind of amazing thing too, but they have those bodegas, they got the concerts, you know, there's the Madison Ford soccer, there's the Mazomatic disc sports, and there are other teams that play there. I guess Edgewood still plays football there. Someone told me East played football there recently. I don't believe that actually. But so, I mean, things are still going on there and they have live comedy in the Forward Club and other events going on, watch parties for, you know, international soccer events. So it is thriving from everything I understand. And, you know, gee whiz, they even built a parking ramp two blocks away. So, you know, that solved the ancient problem of no parking.

Now, see, the one thing they should have done, they should have named the bar the Trophy Room.

Oh, yeah, well, I don't know. See, who am I to say, you know? I mean, the name of the team is Forward, you know? I would call it the Roundy Room, the Roundy Room. Was there an operating illegal bar there during Prohibition? Well, that's rumored. That's rumored. I tried to look into that, and there's nothing that really says it. But I can see how something like that could be easily done. But, yeah, it would take a deep dive into someone who had done a lot of research about Madison during Prohibition. Do you know anybody who had done that, Stuart?

We can look into that, David. We can look into that.

So finally, other than perhaps watching your grandfather, Cliff, line those fields, what are some events that you most would have liked to witness at Breese Stevens?

Well, I mean, well, I guess those teams win the Monarchs played. I mean, just the historic, well, the night, their first night game with the Monarch, that would be a wonderful thing to see. And to see those historic people, you know, like Jesse Owens, you know, he ran in a couple of races, exhibition races after a blues game. It'd be great to see that. In the book, I don't get too much into separate games that this was a championship game, or this was a championship game.

I guess the one that I would really have wanted to see, I guess the crowning moment would be the game that Elroy Hirsch played in actually as a baseball player for a benefit. It was to buy war bonds. It was 1944. And he played on the Badger Sporting Goods team. And I guess they played against the Truex Field team. And some of his, part of the war bonds was they're going to have an auction of his old trophies and stuff that he had gotten from his old track shoes. And then there was a football from the famous 1942 season and bats there on the autographed. And these would be auctioned off after the fifth inning. And that was the plan. And sure enough, as the fifth inning approached, the bases started getting loaded. And all of a sudden Elroy comes up to the plate. And yeah, someone throws one right over the pan. And he hit a grand slam and the crowd went nuts. And, you know, just wild. And now they're going to start their auction and they're going to auction off the ball and, you know, that he had just hit, you know. And when you see what people bid on those things, it's just if you do the account for inflation, it's just insane. You know, I mean, someone bidding, you know, \$5,000 on a baseball during World War II. I mean, there's people telling me that's over \$100,000 today. I don't know if that's an accurate, you know, extrapolation with the inflation, but it's just amazing. It raised all sorts of money, all sorts of, you know, for the war. And I guess that would be the most big triumph and golden, you know, moment, the end of the, you know, the natural, the scene where the violin strings go up. And that would be the end of the movie. Yeah, yeah.

I think Oscar Rennebaum was one of the people bidding in that auction.

Yeah, he was. And he was a baseball enthusiast from the start. I guess he was at that first Roundy party. And yeah, he was on board. He was on the Madison Blues board. So, yeah.

The governor's luck. Maybe we'll see the governor at the 100th anniversary coming up this May. Maybe there'll be some other luminaries there. Who knows? Well, I think we should be extending the invitations already.

Yeah. As I say, I thoroughly enjoyed the book. You did a great job with the research. The writing is very sprightly. And there are a lot of words I circled because, oh, yeah, that's a word from the past.

Yeah, yeah. It's got them on the mouth balls. Yeah.

You should be very, very proud and satisfied with what you've got here. Congratulations on it.

Thanks, Stuart. That means a lot coming from you.

Now, the fact that you did not include me in the bibliography, that's something we'll have to talk about.

I'm afraid that is all the time we have today with David Michael Miller. Again, the book is *The Rise of Breese Stevens Field, Madison's Ballpark, and the Team That Made It Home, The Centennial Edition*. I'll be back next week with Wauwatosa Mayor Dennis McBride to discuss his new book, *A City on the Edge, Pandemic, Protest, and Polarization*. And then on October 6th, a special Pledge Driver reprise of my conversation with the great Joyce Carol Oates.

Until then, on behalf of News and Public Affairs Director Nate Carlin, Engineer Andrew Thomas, and the entire Madison BookBeat team, I'm Stu Levitan. Thank you for joining us.

Now, as Ben Sidran plays us out with a little bit of *Little Sherry*, please stay tuned for Alex Wilding White and *All Around Jazz*. You're listening to WORT 89.9 FM Madison. Listener-sponsored community radio since 1975.