

Sports

MLB

Judge makes it mission to get Wills to Hall

BY BILL SHAIKIN
Los Angeles Times

Maury Wills walked into court, accompanying a young man charged with wire fraud. There was a good heart inside that young man, Wills was sure of it.

Wills had gotten into plenty of trouble in his life, beating back the rugged demons of alcohol and drug addiction. He was a seventy-something man who would stand up for someone a half-century younger, offer to mentor him, try to help him get a job and turn his life around.

Would that have any impact on the judge? Who knew? This was a felony charge.

"I was so elated," Wills said, "when I looked up and saw Andy was presiding over the case."

That would be the Judge Andrew J. Guilford, appointed to the U.S. District Court a decade ago by President George W. Bush. Wills and Guilford had forged an improbable friendship: the street-smart shortstop from the East Coast and the erudite legal scholar from the West Coast.

Their affection for one another came through loud and clear the other day in Guilford's chambers on the 10th floor of a Santa Ana courthouse, with Wills on speakerphone from his home in Arizona.

Guilford has made it his mission to see Wills inducted into the Hall of Fame. The judge retrieved an overstuffed file on Wills, pulling out a variety of statistics and testimonials making his case for Cooperstown, going line by line over a voting history in which Wills has been rejected for the Hall of Fame 15 times by the Baseball Writers Association of America and another five times by veterans' committees.

He came painfully close the last time, two years ago. "Three more votes, Maury," Guilford said. "Yeah, I know," Wills replied with a sigh.

"Who's going to be the next Dodger? It could be Clayton Kershaw, but that's not going to come for 13-15 years," Guilford said. "We've got to get you elected in the meantime."

"Andy, you're more on top of it than I am," Wills said.

"My job is justice," Guilford said. "So I hope we get justice."

Wills will receive the Player Lifetime Achievement Award at the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation gala Saturday in Beverly Hills. The campaign for Cooperstown goes on, the push to induct the seven-time All-Star and 1962 National League most valuable player, the man who revolutionized the art of base stealing in the considerable shadows of Sandy



ARMANDO ARORIZO / PRENSA INTERNACIONAL / ZUMA WIRE

Former Dodgers shortstop Maurice "Maury" Wills throw out the ceremonial first pitch before the game against the Phillies at Dodger Stadium in July.

Koufax and Don Drysdale.

Guilford has lobbied for Wills for 15 years, from letters to Hall of Fame voters to online petitions to citations in his articles in legal journals (University of Pennsylvania Law Review, Vol. 164, Issue 1, Page 287, footnote 29: "Famed Dodgers shortstop Maury Wills, whose achievements and intelligence should place him in the Hall of Fame ...").

"He gets upset each year when I get passed up," Wills said.

Wills said he no longer lets himself get unsettled by the rejections.

"No, not at all," he said. "I have the joy of knowing and recalling the great career that I had, and where I came from to get there, and what I went through. That's all priceless. You can't buy it, as much as I appreciate Andy's effort. ..."

"Through my program of recovery, I've learned to be grateful for where I am, and what I have, and how wonderful my life is. I've learned not to hold any ill feelings toward anybody, or any place or thing, for something such as that."

Wills' next chance at the Hall comes in 2017. If elected, he would be inducted in 2018, when he would be 85.

"I do believe I will be inducted," Wills said. "The question is whether they are going to induct me before I die."

"Ron Santo!" Guilford exclaimed, a reference to the posthumously inducted Chicago Cubs third baseman.

"Ron Santo was an outstanding player, and I think he deserved to be inducted into the Hall of Fame," Wills said. "But why couldn't Ron get to enjoy it? If that's God's decision, that's just the way it is."

Dodger Stadium opened in 1962. Guilford sat with his father in the top deck, at \$1.50 per ticket, his binocu-

lars trained on the shortstop. A decade later, when Guilford was in law school at UCLA, he ran into Wills and got his autograph. They chatted again 16 years ago, when Guilford was an attorney, as a judge both men knew was sworn into office. They have been close since, and Guilford proudly displays a collection of Wills memorabilia in his chambers.

Wills said he has been sober for 26 years. Guilford said he has visited with Wills at Dodgers games, often finding him opening his suite to men and women on the road to recovery. When Wills is asked for a suggestion for community service, Guilford is there to provide one.

"Each and every day, I get a phone call from Los Angeles, from some kid who I helped to turn his life around," Wills said. "We review what he continues to need to do. We review his day, and his thinking. I'll call him on it, if I think it's going in a direction it doesn't need to go."

"There's about eight of them. I keep my phone close to me at all times. You had a great part in that, Andy."

Neither Guilford nor Wills remembers the punishment given the young man charged with wire fraud.

"Andy didn't let him off scot-free," Wills said, "but he did give him somewhat of a break."

That was not because Guilford and Wills were friends, but because defendants generally have a better chance at rehabilitation with what the judge called "the support of good people." That decision came down a decade ago, and Guilford and Wills have kept an eye on that person.

That is a life well lived, regardless of whether a Cooperstown plaque ever comes with it.

High school sports

10 to be inducted at West Hall of Fame ceremony

THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

West High School, in its 50th year of operation, will induct 10 into its inaugural hall of fame, which will hold its induction ceremony on Feb. 27 at Msgr. Leddy Hall at Garces High School.

The inductees are:

- The late **Booker Kilgore**, a longtime athletic trainer and equipment manager for the Vikings who received numerous honors and awards. West's stadium was renamed Booker Kilgore Stadium in 2010.

- **Thomas Andrews** (class of 1973), considered the most successful track and field athlete to graduate from West. He later was an outstanding track athlete at USC.

- **David K. Cohn** (class of 1968), the managing partner of the Bakersfield-based law firm Chain, Cohn and Stiles. He has been named "Super Lawyer" in Southern California and "Best Lawyer" in the 2015 Bakersfield Californian Reader's Choice Poll.

- **Dallas Grider**, a former teacher and coach who joined the West faculty in 1969 and became the varsity football head coach in 1977. The Vikings went 77-7-2 in his tenure with three Valley championships.

- **Jeff Garnett** (class of 1971), an outstanding athlete who played football, basketball and baseball at West who was also an exceptional athlete at Bakersfield College and Cal State Bakersfield. He led CSUB in scoring and rebounding for two seasons.

- **Fred Laningham III** (class of 1982), an

outstanding scholar-athlete who played football, basketball and baseball and was valedictorian. He earned his medical degree, served as a flight surgeon with the U.S. Navy and is now a specialist in pediatric MRI and Chief of Staff at Valley Children's Hospital in Fresno.

- **David Manning** (class of 1969), an outstanding lineman for West's football team who played at BC and was a junior college All-American. He also played for Utah State and in the World Football League He's now a Bakersfield businessman.

- **Brock Marion** (class of 1987) was a standout football player and also lettered in basketball and track. He had a 12-year NFL career, mainly as a free safety, playing for the Cowboys, Dolphins and Lions.

- **John Mears** (class of 1967), an outstanding football and basketball player who was an all-state high school basketball player and was a first-team all-state player at BC.

- **Bruce Scurlock** (class of 1978) was a three-sport, much-honored athlete who won the Tyack Award for outstanding Kern County senior athlete. He earned his medical degree at Loyola University and is now a Bakersfield anesthesiologist.

Tickets are \$100 each and the deadline to reserve seating is Feb. 5. Call West High School (661-832-2822), Jim Wren (661-364-8282), Warren Hall (661-809-7277) or Garrett Ming (661-332-3600) for more information.

NBA roundup

Surging Wizards match season scoring high

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

INDIANAPOLIS – Guard John Wall had 28 points, seven rebounds and eight assists on Friday night and the Washington Wizards defeated the Indiana Pacers 118-104 in Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

Guard Bradley Beal added 22 points for the Wizards (19-19), who matched their season scoring high in their fourth consecutive victory.

Thunder 113, T'wolves 93

OKLAHOMA CITY – Kevin Durant scored 21 points to lead Oklahoma City to a victory over Minnesota at the Chesapeake Energy Arena.

Durant shot 7 of 14 from the field to go along with seven assists and six rebounds. Dion Waiters came off the bench to post 17 points.

Blazers 116, Nets 104

BROOKLYN, N.Y. – Led by Damian Lillard outside and Ed Davis inside, Portland defeated Brooklyn at Barclays Center.

Lillard had 33 points and 10 assists, Davis had 14 points and 10 rebounds, Allan Crabbe came off the bench to score 19 points, C.J. McCollum had 13 points, seven assists and four rebounds.

Celtics 117, Suns 103

BOSTON – Boston reached a small milestone in the professional coaching career of Brad Stevens on

Friday night.

Boston's win over Phoenix gave the Celtics a 21-19 record and ensured the team will be above .500 at the midpoint of the season for the first time since Stevens left Butler three years ago for the pros.

Pelicans 109, Hornets 107

NEW ORLEANS – Ryan Anderson scored 21 of his season-high 32 points in the first half and Anthony Davis iced the game with an alley-oop dunk off a feed from Jrue Holiday with two seconds left to lift New Orleans to a victory over Charlotte at the Smoothie King Center.

Davis' game-winning bucket came after Holiday penetrated against Kemba Walker. Holiday saw Davis roll to the basket and threw a soft lob that Davis finished with a two-hand finish to break a 107-107 tie.

Mavericks 83, Bulls 77

CHICAGO – Dirk Nowitzki scored a game-high 21 points to lead Dallas to a win over Chicago at the United Center.

Trailing 61-59 entering the fourth quarter, the Mavericks outscored the Bulls 24-16 the rest of the way. The lead was exchanged for the 13th and final time when Deron Williams connected on a 3-pointer to put the Mavs ahead 71-69. The basket began a 11-3 run for Dallas.

Williams and Nowitzki keyed the Mavs' fourth quar-

ter. Williams scored 10 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter and Nowitzki had five of Dallas' final seven points.

Bucks 108, Hawks 101

MILWAUKEE – Michael Carter-Williams and Giannis Antetokounmpo each hit 3-pointers in overtime as Milwaukee rallied late for a victory over Atlanta at the Bradley Center.

Antetokounmpo had six of his game-high 28 in the extra session while Carter-Williams finished with 15 and added nine rebounds and seven assists.

Heat 98, Nuggets 95

DENVER – Hassan Whiteside had his third career-triple double, Chris Bosh scored 24 points, and short-handed Miami rallied to beat Denver.

Whiteside had 19 points, 17 rebounds and 11 blocks to pace the Heat. The 11 blocks were a season high and one shy of his career best and helped Miami end a three-game losing streak.

Cavaliers 91, Rockets 77

HOUSTON – Kyrie Irving and LeBron James combined for 42 points and Cleveland rebounded from their first loss this month by stifling Houston at Toyota Center.

Cleveland limited the Rockets to a season-low point total while Houston shot just 35.1 percent (26 for 74) from the floor, including 6-for-25 shooting from behind the 3-point arc.

NHL

Ducks start fast, beat Stars

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

ANAHEIM – Right wingers Corey Perry and Jakob Silfverberg joined defenseman Hampus Lindholm and Sami Vatanen in scoring goals during in the first period to lead the Anaheim Ducks to a 4-2 victory over the Dallas Stars on Friday night in front of 16,201 at the Honda Center.

Goalie Frederik Andersen stopped 22 shots for the Ducks (19-17-7), who won their fourth in six games.

Left winger Jamie Benn scored his 26th goal for the Stars (29-12-4), but fellow left winger Patrick Sharp's 12-game streak with a point ended. Dallas sustained its fifth loss in six games and sixth in a row on the road.

Silfverberg began the scor-

ing 3 minutes, 5 seconds into the game by redirecting defenseman Josh Manson's slap shot at the right post past goalie Kari Lehtonen for his fifth goal of the season and his second in two games. Left winger Carl Hagelin began the scoring sequence by intercepting Dallas defenseman Johnny Oduya's blind drop pass from the right corner intended for left winger Jamie Benn.

Then, 31 seconds later, Vatanen converted a wrist shot from the slot for his sixth goal to give the Ducks a 2-0 lead. Center Nate Thompson started the play by sending a pass from the Ducks' zone to right winger Andrew Cogliano. At the left boards, Cogliano spun away

from Stars defenseman Jyrki Jokipakka before passing to Vatanen, who eluded left winger Antoine Roussel's checking from behind to score.

Lindholm extended the lead to 3-0 with a power-play goal at 15:04. Center Ryan Kesler passed the puck from the left post across the crease to Lindholm, who used a wrist shot from the right post of Lehtonen's stick to register his third goal.

Perry added his 17th goal 33 seconds later by redirecting defenseman Shea Theodore's pass from the inner edge of the left circle inside the right post.

The Ducks, who launched 19 shots on goal in the first period, had not scored four goals in any first period

since Dec. 17, 2013, in a 5-2 road win against the Detroit Red Wings.

Dallas center Mattias Janmark broke the shutout with a short-handed goal 1:15 into the second period. Left winger Travis Moen intercepted Perry's pass in the neutral zone and freed Janmark for a breakaway that the Swedish center ended with his 10th goal, a wrist shot past Andersen.

Benn scored on a power play at 11:58 of the third period to break the Ducks' team record of 34 successive penalties killed. Benn received center Jason Spezza's pass between the right corner and the right post, and stuffed the puck under Andersen's right leg pad.

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