

Guest Column: Allen's omission from the Hall of Fame is a disgrace

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Times Guest Columnist

The election Sunday that once again denied Dick Allen induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame can best be described as an absolutely shameless act performed by a handful of totally misguided individuals.

As we all know by now, Allen received 11 votes from the 16-member committee that was appointed to cast ballots for those who performed in what was called The Golden Days Era. He needed 12 votes to gain entrance into the Hall.

The identities of the five clowns who didn't vote for Allen are at this point unknown. What is known, though, is that they unjustifiably refused to acknowledge that Allen most certainly belongs in the Hall of Fame.

Dick, who sadly passed away one year ago, hit .292 with 351 home runs and 1,119 RBI during a 15-year career that included nine seasons with the Phillies during which he hit .291 with 204 homers and 655 RBI. His slugging percentage of .530 ranks second on the Phillies all-time list, just behind Hall of Famer Chuck Klein.

Along with his career stats, Allen had an extremely memorable hitting binge in 1966. As one of 33 unmatched achievements covered in my latest book, *Amazing Phillies Feats*, during 21 straight games played in 19 days, Dick smacked 26 hits, including eight home runs, and drove in 27 runs, twice collecting four in one game.

The feat prompted star first baseman and former Allen teammate Bill White to say: "It was an amazing, amazing streak."

During his career, which ran from 1963 to 1977, Allen, the Phillies first African-American superstar, won honors as Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player, made seven All-Star teams, and finished in the top 10 in home runs eight times and in batting average six times.

Of course, these days, often meaningless analytics are used to define a player's ability while some twerps who cover baseball never even mention things like batting averages. But that being said, many of those unrecognizable numbers also put Allen high on the list of accomplished hitters.

This is not to suggest that overall they didn't deserve getting elected into the Hall. But they posted some numbers that were not all that great.

Speaking of numbers, the 16-member panel, which included names we never heard of, added to its deplorable election by barely recognizing another worthy candidate. Chester native and highly successful Pittsburgh Pirates manager Danny Murtaugh got only three votes. That's disgraceful.

But then, this is not the first election that the panel jumped into the gutter. Who can forget the 2014 committee that also gave Allen 11 votes? Since then, we have learned that two of the five who didn't vote for Dick were Pat Gillick and Dave Dombrowski.

Unfortunately, it appears, just as it did in 2014, that Allen's sometimes erratic behavior influenced the way some people voted. It should be noted, however, that there are many misfits in the Hall, including drunks, molesters, and racists. Notably, over the years, Dick, as he once told me, admitted that "I made some mistakes, which I now regret." But these were not really mistakes that should've had an effect on some panelist's votes.

Conversely, Mike Schmidt worked hard both times to get Allen into the Hall. So did many others, not the least of which was Mark (Frog) Carfagno.

Having become friends with Allen while he was a groundskeeper with the Phillies, Carfagno spent more than one dozen years campaigning for Allen's induction. His tireless and limitless work, which attracted hundreds of supporters, was far beyond the call of duty and earns Carfagno special praise for his honorable efforts.

It is utterly disappointing to see that these efforts were ignored by five unknowledgeable voters. Dick Allen absolutely belongs in the Hall of Fame. Today, that should've been a done deal.

Rich Westcott is a baseball writer and historian, and the author of 27 books, the latest of which is :Amazing Phillies Feats – The Greatest Player Performances in Philadelphia Phillies History." He once covered the Phillies as a sports writer for the Daily Times.