



Bill Veeck: Baseball's Greatest Maverick

Paul Dickson

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William Louis "Bill" Veeck, Jr. (1914-1986) is legendary in many ways-baseball impresario and innovator, independent spirit, champion of civil rights in a time of great change. Paul Dickson has written the first full biography of this towering figure, in the process rewriting many aspects of his life and bringing alive the history of America's pastime. In his late 20s, Veeck bought into his first team, the American Association Milwaukee Brewers. After serving and losing a leg in WWII, he bought the Cleveland Indians in 1946, and a year later broke the color barrier in the American League by signing Larry Doby, a few months after Jackie Robinson-showing the deep commitment he held to integration and equal rights. Cleveland won the World Series in 1948, but Veeck sold the team for financial reasons the next year. He bought a majority of the St. Louis Browns in 1951, sold it three years later, then returned in 1959 to buy the other Chicago team, the White Sox, winning the American League pennant his first year. Ill health led him to sell two years later, only to gain ownership again, 1975-1981. Veeck's promotional spirit-the likes of clown prince Max Patkin and midget Eddie Gaedel are inextricably connected with him-and passion endeared him to fans, while his feel for the game led him to propose innovations way ahead of their time, and his deep sense of morality not only integrated the sport but helped usher in the free agency that broke the stranglehold owners had on players. (Veeck was the only owner to testify in support of Curt Flood during his landmark free agency case). *Bill Veeck: Baseball's Greatest Maverick* is a deeply insightful, powerful biography of a fascinating figure. It will take its place beside the recent bestselling biographies of Satchel Paige and Mickey Mantle, and will be the baseball book of the season in Spring 2012.

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