

Trout highlights 2014 C.R. Hall class

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It didn't take Mike Trout long to make an impact at the major league level.

Just two years removed from patrolling the outfield at Veterans Memorial Stadium, Trout was the 2012 American League Rookie of the Year and finished second in voting for the AL Most Valuable Player.

While his latter accomplishments may have been the start of a career that will eventually lead to Cooperstown, it was for his former tour of duty that Trout will grace his first baseball Hall of Fame.

Trout is among five people chosen for induction into the Cedar Rapids Baseball Hall of Fame, the ballclub announced Wednesday. The 2014 class also includes former player Chris Sabo, and contributors Verna Nance, Ron Gonder and Tom Barbee.

Trout played for the Kernels at the tail end of the 2009 season, then played 81 games in 2010 before receiving a midseason promotion. He batted .364 with six home runs, 39 RBIs and 45 stolen bases for the Kernels in 2010. He was the first round pick of the LA Angels (25th overall) in the 2009 First Year Player Draft out of high school in Millville, N.J.

Sabo played third base for the Cedar Rapids Reds in 1983. He was selected by the Cincinnati Reds in the second round of the 1983 draft out of the University of Michigan and went on play nine seasons in the majors with Cincinnati, Baltimore, St. Louis and the Chicago White Sox. In 77 games for Cedar Rapids, he hit .274 with 12 home runs and 37 RBIs. He was the National League Rookie of the Year in 1988, won a World Series with Cincinnati in 1990 and was selected to three NL All-Star Teams (1988, 1990 and 1991). He finished his MLB career with a .268 batting average with 116 homers and 426 RBIs in 911 games.

Nance is the wife of long-time board member Bob Nance, and is know to several former Cedar Rapids baseball players as "The Cake Lady" or "Ma Nance." She started the practice of baking a cake for a player's birthday in 1963 as a way to make the players feel more at home in Cedar Rapids, away from their friends and family. A long-time supporter of professional baseball in Cedar Rapids, she did things to help the players become accustomed to living away from home

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in an era before Host Families and Booster Clubs. Verna and Bob still live in the Cedar Rapids area and have three children, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Gonder was the play-by-play voice of the University of Iowa football and basketball on WMT AM 600 from 1969 to 1999. He was a member of the Cedar Rapids Ball Club's Board of Directors until the mid-1990's and was inducted into the Iowa Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame in 1997. He and his wife, Pat, live in Cedar Rapids.

Barbee is a member of the Cedar Rapids Ball Club's Executive Board and served as Board President from 2006 until 2010. The Kernels won the MWL and national John H. Johnson Award in 2008 as the top organization in Minor League Baseball during his term. Tom is President of the Kernels Foundation and helped oversee the building of Veterans Memorial Stadium in 2002. He and his wife, Joretta, reside in Coralville and have three children.

The class of 2014 will be honored during the 8th Annual Hot Stove Banquet in January of 2014 at a date to be announced. The group also be recognized before a Kernels game on Hall of Fame Night during the 2014 Midwest League season.

The mission of the Cedar Rapids Ball Club Hall of Fame is to honor those individuals who, through extraordinary personal effort, have furthered the existence, quality or preservation of professional baseball in Cedar Rapids. The Hall of Fame is located in the Bimm Ridder Diamond Shop and a Hall of Fame Timeline is located on the suite level at Veterans Memorial Stadium and is open during all Kernel home games, normal store hours, or by special appointment.