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LETTERS

Ernie Banks was a great man

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When I was 10, I tagged along with my dad — then the team physician for the DePaul University men's basketball team — to the 1979 NCAA Sweet 16 in Provo, Utah. The Blue Demons beat Louisville in a double-overtime nail-biter.

After the game, I met Ernie Banks. The conversation naturally turned to baseball. I joked about how I was a Cincinnati Reds fan, and we made a \$5 bet on the Reds-Cubs game coming up in the spring.

About three months later, the Reds beat the Cubs, and I was at home eating dinner with the rest of my family when there was a knock on the door. Since interrupting dinner never went over well, and I was the youngest of five kids, it was always my job to answer the door.

I opened the door. There was Mr. Cub.

With a big smile on his face as if he was ready to "play two," he shook my hand and handed me a \$5 bill.

"A bet is a bet," he said.

As he walked away, I stood there speechless. I remember trying to wrap my brain around someone of his stature, a baseball legend and Chicago icon, taking time to honor a trivial commitment to a little kid like me.

He taught me the importance of honoring your commitments, no matter how small.

Ernie Banks' commitment to Chicago transcended baseball and became part of the fabric of our community. That is how great men become greater.

— *Ted McNabola, Chicago*

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