



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

BERNIE FOSTER
Founder/Publisher

BOBBIE DORE FOSTER
Executive Editor

TED BANKS
Advertising Manager

JERRY FOSTER
Account Executive

LISA LOVING
News Editor

HELEN SILVIS
Multimedia Editor

DAVID KIDD
Graphic Designer

MONICA J. FOSTER
Seattle Office Coordinator

JULIE KEEFE
SUSAN FRIED
Photographers



The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published each Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.,

415 N. Killingsworth St.,
P.O. Box 5455, Portland, OR 97228.
Telephone (503) 285-5555.

E-mail: info@theskanner.com
World Wide Web site:
<http://www.theskanner.com>
Fax: (503) 285-2900

The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

All photos submitted become the property of *The Skanner*. We are not responsible for lost or damaged photos either solicited or unsolicited.

© 2012 *The Skanner*. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION PROHIBITED.

To see *The Skanner News* on your smart phone go to theskannermobile.com or scan this QR code with your app.



- Local news
- Opinions
- Jobs, Bids
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Music reviews
- Bulletin board
- RSS feeds

Baseball Strikes Out with Curt Flood

It's April and the 2012 baseball season has begun. Time to remember something disconnected from batting averages and a pitcher's ERA: the continuous failure—actually refusal—of the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame to recognize the contributions of the late St. Louis Cardinals outfielder, Curt Flood and the retired Executive Director of the Major League Baseball Player Association, Marvin Miller. This refusal has taken the explicit form of rejecting their nominations to the Hall of Fame itself.

Flood and Miller, both together and separately, were involved in ending the indentured servant-like system of the “reserve clause” in baseball, a system that tied an individual player to a specific team for as long as the team owner wanted him. At a tremendous sacrifice, Flood (with the support of Miller and the Major League Baseball Players Association) sued Major League baseball over the matter, with the case going the U.S. Supreme Court. Although Flood lost at the highest level, the publicity of the case and the arrogance of the team owners set in motion a process that resulted in unraveling of the system. The Major League Baseball Players Association, under Miller's leadership, brought an end to the reserve clause through their struggle with the owners of the teams. Their victory resulted in the introduction of free agency, a system from which players have benefited immensely.



TRANS AFRICA

Bill Fletcher Jr.

or Miller. The fact that Flood and Miller dared to challenge the absolute domination of the sport by the owners was a crime for the owners, and one for which Flood and Miller would never be forgiven.

There are tremendous ironies in the refusal of the Hall of Fame to admit Flood and Miller. One such

banned from baseball for life (including the famous player “Shoeless” Joe Jackson) for their alleged participation in throwing the 1919 World Series. Landis was applauded by many for supposedly cleaning up baseball, but this was also the same Landis who tolerated the exclusion of Black players from Major League Baseball and, according to many observers of the period, undermined efforts at desegregation. Yet, Landis, who never played baseball, was admitted into the Hall of Fame a year after his death.

Curt Flood died in 1997 and Marvin Miller—God bless him—is very much alive at the age of 95. Both of them contributed, in very fundamental ways, to reshaping the sport of baseball. Yet, the fact that they challenged the employer class and suggested that the players should have the freedom to bargain—a right for which all workers should be guaranteed—has resulted in a systematic attempt to cast them into oblivion.

We should not let that happen. Maybe this baseball season we need a few million tee-shirts proclaiming that Flood and Miller must get into the Hall of Fame. What do you think?

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a Senior Scholar with the Institute for Policy Studies

The fact that Flood and Miller dared to challenge the absolute domination of the sport by the owners, and one for which Flood and Miller would never be forgiven

irony is summarized by the name Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the first commissioner of Major League Baseball. He was widely

The fact that they challenged the employer class and suggested that the players should have the freedom to bargain—a right for which all workers should be guaranteed—has resulted in a systematic attempt to cast them into oblivion

owners—the team owners and many sympathetic sports writers have never forgiven either Flood

known for his role in addressing the 1919 Chicago White Sox scandal in which eight players were

The Greek Economy's 'Austerity Budget'

Dimitris Christoulas was a retired pharmacist whose neighbors said he had enormous dignity. At 77 years old, he looked forward to a life. He had saved during his 35-year career and did not expect government to be involved in his pension. But the austerity budget that Greece has imposed on its citizens reduced Christoulas' pension. So he killed himself after writing in a suicide note that he would rather have “a decent end” than forage through garbage to find enough “rubbage to feed myself.” Neighbors say he wanted to send a political message. They say the law-abiding man was a committed leftist who was so meticulous that he paid his condo fees ahead before taking his life.

The Christoulas suicide has mobilized many in Greece, some of whom describe his act as one of fortitude, not simply despair. Some describe it as a “political act” because it took place in a public square during the morning rush hour. Generally, Greece has a lower level of suicide than the rest of the countries in the European Union, but last year suicides rose by 45 percent, giving it one of Europe's highest rates. Many attribute the increase in suicides to the economic crisis. Anecdotal cases are reported: of the anchorman who killed himself when his contract was not renewed, and of a man who set himself on fire when a bank foreclosed on his home.

The United States is threatening an austerity budget. We are threatening, like Greece, to balance the



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

budget on the backs of the least and the left out, of the poor and the needy. We have maintained the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy even though we do not need to, largely

right when he railed against Republican values. The most recent statistics show that poverty is on the rise. And even those living above the poverty line are struggling. Too many Americans live in hardship. The unemployment rate in Greece is 21 percent. The actual unemployment rate in Black America exceeds 25 percent.

Yet we Americans are docile recipients of our poverty and unemployment. Except for the Occupy movement, there has been

for food, or lining up at soup kitchens because they don't have enough to eat? How many young brothers feel that they improve their lives by going to jail where they at least get “three hots and a squat?” How many folks care enough to explore these questions and find answers?

Dimitris Christoulas has a bevy of friends who say he didn't really commit suicide, that killing himself was a message and an act of protest against the ways that Greece's financial crisis has an unequal impact on the wealthy and the poor. While killing oneself is an extreme way to protest economic inequities, it has also been a way to rivet Greece's attention on the hardships that too many in that country are facing. What does it take to mobilize people in the United States, with unemployment still unacceptably high, with foreclosures still out of control, with too many people managing “underwater” mortgages? What would happen if the economically aggrieved showed up in a public square? Would Mitt Romney or Rick Santorum even pay attention?

The Christoulas suicide shines light on the human effects of austerity budgets, not just in Greece but also in the rest of the world. We should take heed on his public action, as it is repeated, though silently, behind closed doors.

Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina.

We have maintained the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy even though we do not need to, largely because Republicans want to respond to their donors, not to working people

because Republicans want to respond to their donors, not to working people. And as I read that the Newt Gingrich health think tank has gone bankrupt, I wonder why this man would dare run for

extreme silence about our current conditions. Still, the Christoulas suicide makes me wonder what silent acts of desperation Americans are experiencing because of economic austerity. How many

Many attribute the increase in suicides to the economic crisis

President of the United States when has set up a fiscal flim flam house (one of his creditors is his wife).

President Obama had it exactly

robberies or suicides are economically motivated? How many are unreported because they don't take place in the public square? How many seniors are actually foraging