

- 2015 INDUCTEE -



GIL CARTER

OUTFIELDER BEST KNOWN FOR HIS HISTORIC HOME RUN - ESTIMATED AT 733 FEET - WHILE PLAYING FOR THE CARLSBAD POTASHERS IN 1959. STARTING LEFT FIELDER FOR THE WICHITA DREAMLINERS, NATIONAL SEMI-PRO CHAMPIONS IN 1962 AND 1963. MEMBER, 1960 NORTHERN LEAGUE ALL-STAR TEAM. MEMBER, 1962 NBC ALL-AMERICAN TEAM.

Topeka native Gil Carter is credited with hitting what is arguably the longest home run in the history of professional baseball.

It was August 11, 1959. The place was Carlsbad, New Mexico. Carter's team, the Carlsbad Potashers, was contesting a minor league game against the Odessa Dodgers. In the bottom of the seventh inning, Carter foiled a no-hit bid by the opposing pitcher. In the ninth, he launched a shot that went ballistic, traveling an estimated 733 feet before it landed. The game's official scorer, concerned about issuing a "believable" estimate, reckoned the distance at a conservative 650 feet. Calculations based on an aerial photograph, however, revealed an even more impressive accomplishment, variously reported between 700 and 733 feet.

The Carlsbad home run is Carter's signature baseball feat, but hardly his only one. Twice, he was signed by legendary scouts—first, by Tom Greenwade of the Yankees and later, by Buck O'Neil of the Cubs. Carter spent his three minor league seasons as an outfielder in the Cubs organization, including two with the Carlsbad Potashers of the Class D Sophomore League (1958-1959), and one with the St. Cloud Rox of the Class C Northern League (1960). He led the Sophomore League in home runs in 1959, with 34. The next season, he was named to the 1960 Northern League All-Star Team; among his All-Star teammates was future Hall-of-Famer Joe Torre. In 296 minor league games, Carter recorded a .264 batting average, hit 72 home runs, and produced 266 RBI.

Following his minor league career, Carter moved to Wichita and continued his power-hitting ways in the semi-pro circuit. The Wichita Rapid Transit Dreamliners, with Carter as the starting left fielder, won state and national semi-pro baseball championships in both 1962 and 1963. After hitting .484 and six home runs in the national semi-pro tournament in 1962, he was named to the National Baseball Congress All-American Team. Thirty years later, the Wichita Eagle included Carter in its dream team list of Wichita's "All-Time NBC Greats."

After living in Wichita for 39 years, Gil Carter returned to Topeka in 2000. Back in the city where he was born and raised, Carter involved himself in community life through a variety of activities working with Topeka's youth.