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The company you keep: Batboy Jimmy Raugh — later the Heels' first All-American — poses with, from left, the Yankees' Buddy Hassett, Johnny Sain of the Boston Braves, an unidentified press agent, minor league pitcher Don Kepler, and the Boston Red Sox' Ted Williams and Johnny Pesky.

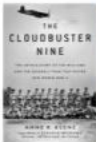
Diamond Dreams of a Cloudbuster Batboy

Jim Raugh Jr.'s diamond dreams began dancing around his head when he was a 9-year-old batboy and unofficial mascot for the U.S. Navy Cloudbusters baseball team. It was a remarkable time in Chapel Hill: As one of a handful of college campuses chosen for pre-flight schools as the U.S. entered World War II, Carolina was briefly home for Hall of Famer Ted Williams and major league stars like Johnny Pesky and Johnny Sain.

The trainees took classes in aeronautics, outdoors survival and conditioning. And the Navy gave some of them plenty of time to play ball.

Raugh Senior was second in command of the UNC school in 1942 and later its

commandant. Raugh Junior '37 — adopted by the players as an unofficial mascot — would become Carolina's first baseball All-American. He flirted with the majors, but in the end the experience was more frustration than joy.



His daughter, Anne Raugh Keene '87, confesses she and her sister paid little attention to their father's stories when they were growing up in Hickory — she didn't attend a big-league game until her husband took her to Wrigley Field when she was in her 40s. But Keene, who owns a public affairs and communications firm with her husband in Austin, Texas, was her family's choice to craft her father's obituary and deliver the eulogy after he died on New Year's Day 2014.

"He was a good person who had his hardships," Keene explained. "We heard bits and pieces as children. He would get very sad and go to that place with his family. But he didn't show that outside the fam-

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ily. He was very well liked in Hickory. Very popular. Mr. Personality. He clearly had a place in his heart for the underdog, and he always liked to put a smile on a kid's face.

"But I didn't really know how talented he was until I opened the trunk and found the cards from scouts from the Brooklyn Dodgers, Cleveland Indians, Detroit Tigers," Keene said. "That's where the proof of his talent was. It's in color when you see those cards and letters from the scouts."

The trunk, which hadn't been opened since JFK was president, set Keene on a three-year journey researching the Cloudbusters. "I thought, 'Well, surely there are 20 books on this team alone.' And there was nothing."

Keene doesn't think she could have written *The Cloudbuster Nine: The Untold Story of Ted Williams and the Baseball Team That Helped Win World War II* while her father was alive. "I think things come in their time," she said.

Williams and Pesky babysat the young Raugh. They gave him hitting lessons and took him to the Scuttlebutt for lemon custard ice cream. They took him to the movies, seating him on the front row while



Williams and Pesky giving batting lessons to Jimmy Raugh, for whom they also babysat.

they sat in the back row with their dates. "Don't you dare come back here," Williams would say. "Don't even think about looking back, you little son-of-a-bitch ... not even if you have to go to the bathroom." Jimmy sat in the dugout, toted bats and rode the team bus. His photo, taken with heroes, appeared in national publications.

After the war, he became a prep star in Philadelphia. The right-handed pitcher returned to Carolina, site of those idyllic times with his heroes, and earned All-ACC recognition three times. In 1957, he was third-team All-America and senior class president. He signed with the Detroit

Tigers and spent five years in their minor league system, including a season with the Durham Bulls. He struck out Mickey Mantle with the bases loaded and two outs in a 1960 spring training game and won 11 times for the Tigers' AA team in Victoria, Texas, where his manager was former Cloudbuster Pesky. His "future seemed to be draped in clover," Keene said. But "his arm felt as if it was on fire." An elbow injury and a "noise like crunching rocks" in his shoulder ended his career in May 1961.

There also was a promise to his parents that he would retire if he didn't make it to the major leagues in five years. His father told him that maybe he wasn't good enough for the majors.

So Jim Jr. buried his diamond dreams in that trunk, became a traveling textile salesman, watched games in a cloud of cigarette smoke in his basement, and told his daughters stories of his baseball career and that magical time with his heroes.

"He never really got over it," Keene told the *Austin American-Statesman*. "All he ever wanted to do was ride the bus and play."

— Paul Gardner '86