

Former Sox Slugger Gus Zernial: The Man who Introduced Joe to Marilyn

By Art Berke

Former White Sox slugging outfielder **Gus Zernial**, who once held the club's single-season home run record with his 29 in 1950, died last week of congestive heart failure at the age of 87.

For you younger fans unfamiliar with the name, the man affectionately called "Ozark Ike" broke in with the White Sox in 1949, played with the Pale Hose the following year and part of 1951 before he was traded to the Philadelphia A's in a three-team trade which brought **Minnie Minoso** to Chicago from Cleveland. In all, he clouted 237 homers in 11 major league seasons with the Sox, A's (both in Philly and Kansas City) and Tigers. He was an All-Star in 1953 as a member of the A's.

Zernial also has a unique distinction that goes beyond baseball. He was the man who introduced **Joe DiMaggio** to **Marilyn Monroe**. It has been reported that DiMaggio saw that Zernial posed with Monroe for 20th Century Fox publicity photos and wondered how Zernial made it happen. Joe then got in touch with Marilyn via the former Sox outfielder--and the rest is history.