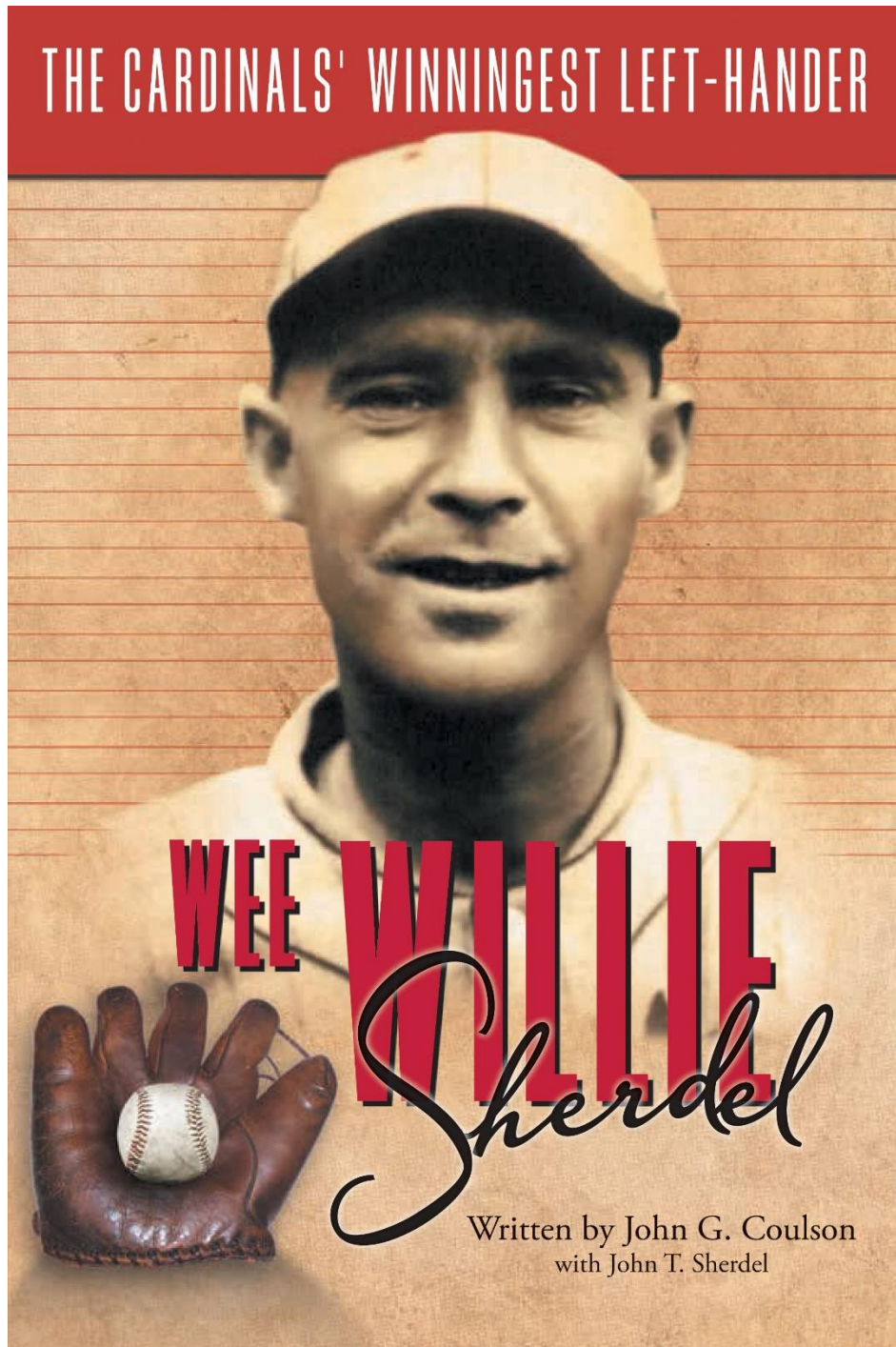


**MEDIA KIT FOR**  
**WEE WILLIE SHERDEL: The Cardinals' Winningest Left-Hander**  
**John G. Coulson with John T. Sherdel**



## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

The book is the life story of Bill Sherdel, a very humble, courageous left-handed pitcher who became one of the great southpaws in St. Louis Cardinals history. The son of a German blacksmith in a small Pennsylvania village, Willie's dream was to become a major league pitcher – a rather big dream for a small boy. Not the most talented or biggest, he worked hard and learned from greats like Eddie Plank, Branch Rickey and Grover Cleveland Alexander. Sherdel's best years were in the 1920s while Rickey was developing the farm system concept and the Cards were playing in two World Series. Known for his slow ball, Willie was given the honor of pitching the first game against Ruth, Gehrig and the powerful Yankees in both Series. This was quite an honor considering his pitching mates were Hall of Famers Jess Haines and Grover Cleveland Alexander.

Although labeled a hard-luck pitcher in the Series, Sherdel performed many great feats on the diamond. Since his retirement in 1932, he remains the Redbirds' winningest left-hander and fifth all-time winner. Willie also pitched the third-most games and the fourth-most innings. Like all pitchers, he loved to talk about his hitting. Among Cardinals' pitchers, Sherdel owns the fourth-most career home runs and the fifth-best batting average for his .337 in 1923.

Willie's contemporaries included over 90 Hall of Famers and some of the greatest players of all-time including Ruth, Gehrig, Ty Cobb and Rogers Hornsby.

Along with Sherdel's story, the book traces the history of the St. Louis Cardinals from 1917 through 1932 when the club was creating a blueprint for future success through its farm system. Branch Rickey was a master at recognizing talent but was not good at handling his pitchers. Also, the book follows the tragic lives of several of Sherdel's teammates and the personal losses within Willie's family.

*Wee Willie Sherdel* is an easy read with many stories gathered from newspapers during that time period.

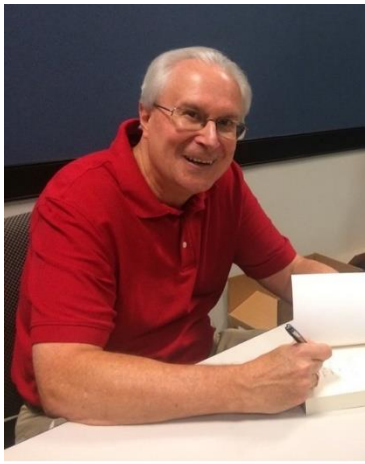
[www.johngcoulson.com](http://www.johngcoulson.com)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John G. Coulson was born in Hanover, Pennsylvania in 1951. He has been involved with baseball his whole life as a player, coach and fan. He claims he held a baseball bat before a pencil. His earliest memories include running around the bases while his father was coaching a state championship team. By the time John was in elementary school, his father had given up coaching men and had begun managing little league teams, a focus for another twenty years. The author stated that the baseball diamond was his babysitter. That same love of baseball has been instilled in his son and grandsons. The author adds, "Baseball always gave my father and me something to talk about."

Through the years, John has attended many major league baseball games – primarily in Baltimore. While in high school, he accompanied the local Associated Press representative to Oriole games and sat in the press box. Often, he rode the elevator with Chuck Thompson, the voice of the O's. While in Baltimore, he was fortunate to witness two no-hitters, an all-star game and a World Series game. He saw the Oriole debut of Eddie Murray, Cal Ripken, Jr., and Reggie Jackson plus the final Memorial Stadium contest and the first opener at Oriole Park at Camden Yards. His niece is married to former major leaguer Chris Heisey.

The author graduated from Millersville State College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. John spent his first career in banking technology, retiring after serving as executive vice president and chief technology officer for several mid-sized banks in the south-central Pennsylvania area. Now in his second life, he supports libraries and has served as chairman of the board of the county library system.



John's book on Wee Willie Sherdel: the Cardinals' winningest left-hander is his second. Previously, he authored a reference book on the class D Hanover Raiders and the history of the Blue Ridge League from 1915 to 1930. He remains a student of baseball history and a member of SABR (The Society for American Baseball Research).

## **ABOUT WRITING THE BOOK**

Q: Why did you write this book?

Willie Sherdel lived most of his life in the Hanover vicinity. He was born in Midway, grew up in Hanover and lived most of his adult life in McSherrystown. While I was growing up, I knew of Sherdel but not much was ever discussed. During my senior year in high school, he died. When I decided to write my first book on the Hanover Raiders, I dedicated a chapter to Sherdel and realized his life was a wonderful secret that needed to be shared. During his lifetime, Willie was so quiet and unassuming that most people did not know his incredible story.

As I thought about writing another book, I could not escape the need to tell Sherdel's story. It helped that I had developed a friendship with Willie's grandson. My research included many old newspapers from St. Louis and the Hanover area. Sherdel's story became even more interesting. The book almost wrote itself. I only hope that this story reaches a wide audience and that Sherdel's incredible life and accomplishments can live on through future generations.

Q: Can you list three things that people do not know about Willie Sherdel?

First, he is the winningest left-hander in the St. Louis Cardinals' long successful history. Sherdel retired in 1932 and today, over 85 years later, he stills own that mark. He remains fifth all-time in most wins, third in most games and fourth in most innings. Surprisingly, he is fourth in most home runs by a pitcher, even though he was nicknamed "Wee Willie."

Second, Willie received his World Series ring from Charles Lindbergh. The Cards won the 1926 Series and the rings were presented in May, 1927, by Lindbergh less than a month after his record-breaking trans-Atlantic flight.

Third, Willie entered a game in relief with two on base, no outs and retired the side with one pitch. In a 1924 game against the Phillies and runners on first and second base, Willie threw one pitch. The infield was playing in. The batter bunted the ball in the air, the first baseman caught the pop-up, threw to second to double that runner and then the shortstop threw to first to catch that Phillie off base, also. A triple play on one pitch by Bill Sherdel.

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **From Hanover to the Majors: A Local Pitcher Becomes the Cardinals' Winningest Left-Hander**

#### **John Coulson publishes a book about Wee Willie Sherdel's amazing career and life**

[Hanover, PA – June 1, 2018] Very few people know that the St. Louis Cards' all-time top left-handed pitcher was born in Midway, raised in Hanover and spent all of his adult life in McSherrystown, PA. Bill Sherdel was the humble son of an immigrant blacksmith and dreamed of becoming a major leaguer. He mastered a tantalizing slowball while Branch Rickey was developing the majors' first farm system.

*Wee Willie Sherdel* is not only an intriguing biography but a rich history of the Cardinals of the late 1910s and 1920s. Sherdel's contemporaries included ninety Hall of Famers and many of the greatest players of all-time. Overcoming tragedies involving family and teammates, the little left-hander courageously won two pennants and battled Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and the powerful Yankees in two World Series.

John Coulson spent two years researching newspaper clippings from St. Louis and local newspapers to create this interesting story that has never been told before. The author worked with John Sherdel, Wee Willie's grandson, to uncover family photos and memorabilia from the star hurler's career.

*Wee Willie Sherdel* by John G. Coulson, produced by FriesenPress, is available for order from most major online book retailers including the FriesenPress Bookstore and Amazon. The eBook is available for Kindle, iBooks, Kobo, Nook, and GooglePlay.

#### **About the Author**

The author resides in Hanover and has been involved with baseball his whole life as a player, coach and fan. As a writer he previously wrote the book *Hanover Raiders* about the class D Blue Ridge League. His first book resides in the Library of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY. John is a member of the Society for American Baseball Research.

###

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## MARKETING PLAN

- Local book store consignments
- Book launch in McSherrystown
- Book signing and speaking engagement at Guthrie Library in Hanover
- Book signing and speaking engagement at St. Louis Cardinals' Hall of Fame
- Various radio, television and podcast interviews throughout country

## MEDIA COVERAGE

# The story behind McSherrystown's Wee Willie as St. Louis Cardinals' 'winningest left-hander'

**Dustin B Levy, Hanover Evening Sun** Published 7:39 p.m. ET June 27, 2018 | Updated 11:59 a.m. ET June 28, 2018



*(Photo: Dan Rainville, The Evening Sun)*

John Sherdel remembers catching pop flies from his grandfather at their home in McSherrystown.

Bound to a wheelchair and decades removed from his professional baseball heyday, Bill Sherdel had quite the story to tell. Before tossing baseballs to his grandchildren, he did it on the nation's biggest stages against players like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

But Sherdel would not talk about those days unless he was prompted, according to his grandson. He was far too humble.

"He wouldn't go around and say, 'I did this, I did that,'" John said. "If you didn't ask him, you didn't know it."

John's grandfather, best known as "Wee Willie" Sherdel, will now have the story of his illustrious professional baseball career told through the new book written by Penn Township resident John Coulson.

Entitled "Wee Willie Sherdel: The Cardinals' Winningest Left Hander," the book launched on Wednesday with an event at the Knights of Columbus in McSherrystown. The book explores Sherdel's pitching career from 1917 to 1932, a span which saw Sherdel compete in two World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals, winning one in 1926.

And John Sherdel, 65, has the ring to prove it.

## **'A labor of love'**

A love of baseball was ingrained in Coulson, 67, at a young age. He joked that he held a baseball bat before he held a pencil, and the ball diamond was his babysitter growing up.

Coulson's father, a baseball coach, told him about the Hanover minor league baseball team from years ago, the Hanover Raiders. It wasn't until Coulson's father passed away that he began to gather information on the team.

"The more research that I did, the more impressed I was," Coulson said.



John Coulson, left, and John Sherdel talk about the life of Sherdel's grandfather, "Wee Willie" Sherdel, inside Coulson's Penn Township home. "Wee Willie" helped the Cardinals win the World Series in 1926. (Photo: Dan Rainville, *The Evening Sun*)

That led to Coulson's first book, "Hanover Raiders: Minor League Baseball in Hanover, Pennsylvania," which included a chapter on a man who got his start on the team: Bill Sherdel.

When he was working on that first book, Coulson contacted John Sherdel, a "cold call" of sorts. In his family, John was the keeper of Bill Sherdel's memorabilia.

The two kept in touch, aided in part by their grandsons playing together on a traveling baseball team.

About two years ago, Coulson was looking for a new project and decided that the story of Wee Willie, a record-setting Cardinals pitcher, needed to be told.



"People don't know the story," Coulson said. "They don't know a lot about him, and even if they knew the story, there is so much that I uncovered that's in the book that's interesting that people will find out about."

Coulson began his research after getting John Sherdel's approval.

"I was happy he wanted to do it," John said, adding that his grandfather is a source of pride.

Calling the book "a labor of love," Coulson dedicated the book to the Sherdel family as well as the people of Midway, Hanover and McSherrystown. Sherdel was born in Midway, attended school and played baseball at Hanover High School and moved to McSherrystown and spent the rest of his life there after getting married.

To this day, Sherdel's descendants live in the house he built on Ridge Avenue.

"Just about all of us live around here," John Sherdel said of his family.

## **The genesis of 'the wee one'**

The book covers Wee Willie Sherdel's career, including his beginnings after he was picked up by the Milwaukee Brewers from the Hanover Raiders in 1916.

Branch Rickey, the Cardinals manager at the time, was scouting the team and saw Sherdel fresh off his 10th straight loss. Rickey saw something he liked and paid the Brewers to keep Sherdel on the roster instead of shipping him off to a farm team so the Cardinals could bring him in at the end of the season.

Sherdel worked mostly in relief at the start of his career, but Coulson noted that sports writers revered him. They called Sherdel "Rickey's ready relief."

Coulson pondered if Sherdel would have achieved better statistics if he was a starter earlier in his career.

That happened after the Cardinals replaced Rickey with Rogers Hornsby.

"He was doing very well in relief, but he always wanted to be a starter, and he finally got more of his wishes when Hornsby took over," Coulson said.

Once the switch was made, Sherdel produced. He pitched well as a starter and gained a lot more recognition, according to Coulson.

Sherdel was known for the "slow ball" he developed, a change of pace pitch that even the likes of Babe Ruth would struggle to hit. Coulson compared Sherdel's delivery to the submarine pitchers of today.

Coulson joked that Sherdel had a "slow ball, a slower ball and a slowest ball." Being a lefty at a time when there were few southpaws in the game was an additional advantage.

Coulson praised Sherdel's competitive nature and resiliency. He was known for not giving up many runs even if he allowed some hits.

During the 1926 World Series, a throw from the catcher hit Sherdel in his index finger, causing it to turn "black and blue," Coulson said. Sherdel kept pitching through the rest of the game, fighting until the very end.

At 5 feet, 10 inches and 160 pounds, Sherdel was not as diminutive as his nickname suggested, but standing among the other pros, his size stood out. As a result, sports writers dubbed Sherdel "the wee one."

Sherdel did not seem to mind, as he would sign autographs as Wee Willie Sherdel.

John Sherdel recalled that, after his grandfather's retirement, he would sign autographs for anybody who reached out, and he would send back a letter thanking them as well.

John Sherdel, who keeps his grandfather's memorabilia, found himself discovering new things about him through Coulson's efforts.

"A lot of the stuff he found, I had no idea about," he said. "That helped me a lot to know who my grandfather really was."

## **Sherdel's impressive feats**

Coulson's book highlights the peaks and valleys of Sherdel's life and career. That includes some personal tragedies, like dealing with the deaths of some close teammates and a daughter.

But the book also uncovered some lighter tidbits, like the rumors from McSherrystown residents that Babe Ruth stopped by the town to pay a visit to Sherdel. Many of Sherdel's Hall of Fame teammates also visited.

"It's been actually a lot of activity at that house that should be pretty impressive," Coulson said.

The Cardinals achieved their first World Series victory the year before Charles Lindbergh accomplished a different first when he flew the Spirit of St. Louis solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Lindbergh was the one who gave the Cardinals their rings in the ceremony following their victorious season, meaning that Sherdel received his ring from a national hero.

Sherdel also succeeded in a considerable performance in relief. Coming into a game with two men on base, Sherdel managed to retire the side with a single throw — the batter's bunt attempt was caught by the first baseman, who threw to get the runner on second out, and then a triple play was completed to get the runner on first out.

When the game story was printed in the newspaper, the writer remarked that it was a story that Sherdel would one day tell his grandchildren. Reading that, Coulson couldn't help but think of John Sherdel.

Sherdel shared a habit of his grandfather's that will stay with him. Having lost a leg in 1961 to an infection, he still would manage to stand for the Star-Spangled Banner before baseball games.

Bill Sherdel died in 1968 at the age of 72.

It took John, who was 16 years old at the time, a while to grieve, as his grandfather was "more like a dad" to him at times growing up.

## **Cardinals' Hall of Fame?**

Coulson is hopeful that his book will spread the word about Wee Willie Sherdel.

As the Cardinals' winningest left-handed pitcher, and fourth-best all time, Coulson believes Sherdel should be elected to the team's Hall of Fame.

"That's quite an accomplishment, and it stood all this time," Coulson said.

Sherdel received a couple Most Valuable Player votes during his career and an honorable mention in the 1953 Baseball Hall of Fame voting.

Sherdel was trusted as the Game 1 starter in the 1926 World Series, facing the New York Yankee's famed Murderers' Row lineup.

In his two World Series bids with the Cardinals, Sherdel started four games. He never got a win, which Coulson attributed to bad luck, but he took the losses in stride and soldiered on.

His reward for his efforts came in Game 7 on Oct. 10, 1926 when, with the Yankees down 3-2 with two outs in the ninth inning, Babe Ruth was tagged out trying to steal second base.

Sherdel's ring would stay in his family. It's a prized heirloom John Sherdel wouldn't even think to sell.

"You have your grandfather's history right here, and that's where it belongs," Coulson said.



Penn Township resident John Coulson's new book, "Wee Willie Sherdel: The Cardinals' Winningest Left Hander." Sherdel's pitching career spanned from 1916 to 1932, and he competed in two World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals. (Photo: Dan Rainville, *The Evening Sun*)

# Book tells story of local baseball legend

BY MARY GRACE KELLER **Gettysburg Times** Staff Writer, June 30, 2018

The man who struck out Babe Ruth in the 1926 World Series had humble beginnings in Hanover.

Bill "Wee Willie" Sherdel is the winningest left-handed pitcher and fourth all-time winner in St. Louis Cardinals history, serving the team for 14 seasons. He pitched the third-most games and fourth-most innings. Sherdel played among the greats, like Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Ty Cobb, and Rogers Hornsby.

Despite his accolades, Sherdel never became a household name in the way his colleagues did. A baseball buff and author teamed up with Wee Willie's grandson to write a book to change that.

John G. Coulson, with the help of John T. Sherdel, penned a 402-page book on Bill Sherdel's life and career. They held a private book launch on Wednesday in McSherrystown, where Bill spent most of his adult life after growing up in Hanover.

"I was doing all I knew to keep his memory alive," John Sherdel told family and friends at the book launch.

Although known for his deadly slow ball, Sherdel's talent didn't stop at the mound. He boasted a .337 batting average and fourth-most career home runs in 1923. He earned the nickname "Wee Willie" for his small stature. Sherdel stood 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighed 160 pounds, according to John.

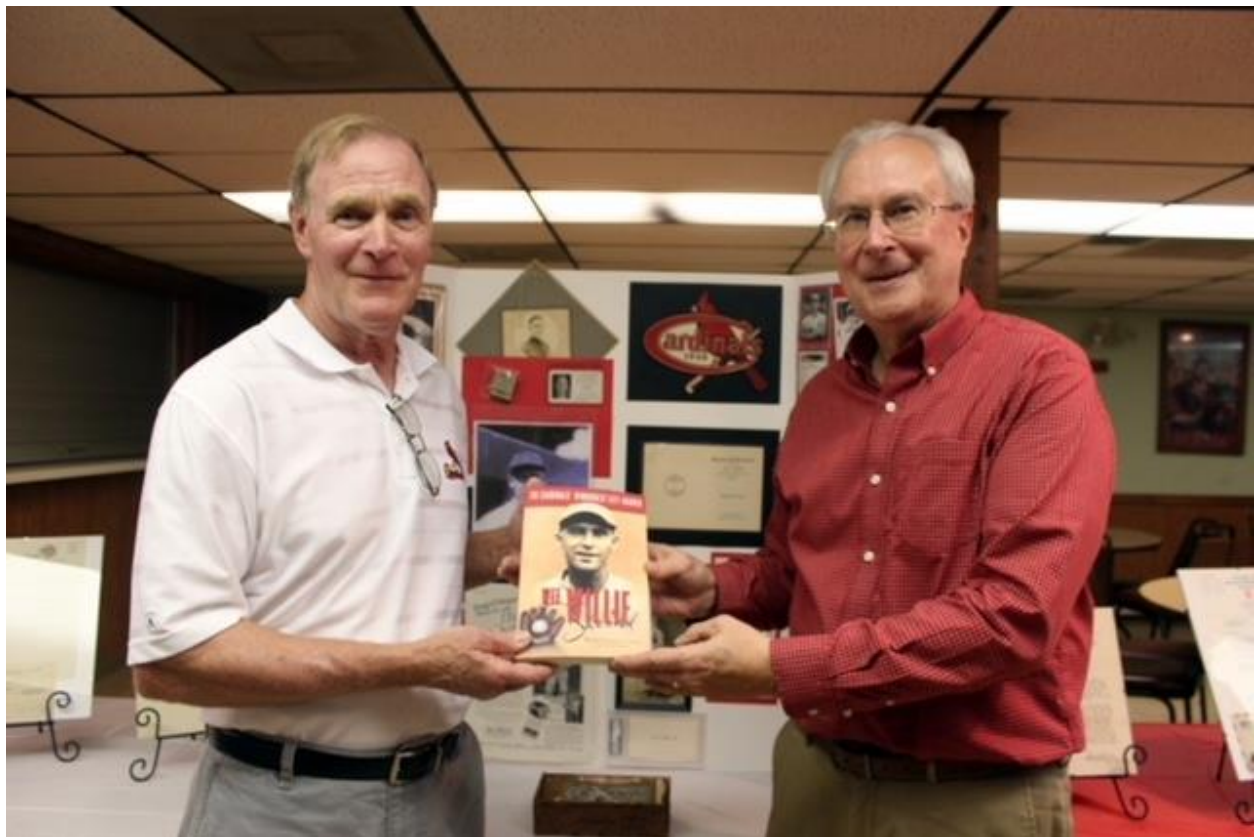
Growing up in the same house as his grandfather on Ridge Avenue, John developed a "special bond" with his "papaw." He spent his days catching balls thrown from the hand that earned a World Series ring.

"He'd make me run for them," John said with a smile.

That 1926 World Series ring was given to Sherdel by pilot Charles Lindbergh just after he completed his solo transatlantic flight, according to John.

It wasn't until after his grandfather died in 1968 that 16-year-old John learned the full scope of his papaw's career and began collecting bits and pieces of his history.

"He never talked about it," John said.



TRIBUTE - Author John Coulson, right, teamed up with John Sherdel to write a story about his major league baseball playing grandfather, Bill "Wee Willie" Sherdel. (Photo: Mary Grace Keller, Gettysburg Times)

He started with the Hanover Raiders, a now-extinct minor league team, and the topic of Coulson's first book.

Coulson first connected with John when he called him about devoting a chapter of "Hanover Raiders: Minor League Baseball in Hanover, Pennsylvania" to Wee Willie. Coulson said the more he learned about the lefty, the more interesting the story became. He knew Wee Willie deserved a book of his own.

Sherdel pitched the first games against Ruth and Gehrig in the 1926 and 1928 World Series. In those same years, Sherdel received honorable mention in MVP voting, according to Coulson.

He said Ruth grew to respect Sherdel and even visited him in McSherrystown.

"Wee Willie Sherdel" is available online at [books.friesenpress.com](http://books.friesenpress.com).

## **TO ORDER**

Wee Willie Sherdel: The Cardinals' Winningest Left-Hander

Print specifications

- 388 pages
- Black & White – Paperback and Casebound
- 6" x 9" – Rolland Crème Paper

Categories – Sports & Recreation, Baseball

## **Book Pricing**

Direct list price (for consignment or bulk order sales contact the author)

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