

Kris Turner: Hello and welcome back to Wisconsin Law and Action, a podcast where we discuss new and forthcoming scholarship with University of Wisconsin Law School professors. I'm your host, Kris Turner, and my guest today is the Head of Reference in Scholarly Communication, Elizabeth Manriquez.

In her role at the University of Wisconsin Law Library, Liz supervises an incredible team of reference librarians, oversees project planning for the UW Law School Digital Repository, and works with faculty to improve the discoverability of their scholarship. Liz has served in many leadership roles with the American Association of Law Libraries, including her current role as Chair of the Legal Information Services to the Public Section. She has also served as the President of the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin.

In her spare time, Liz enjoys traveling, attending concerts, and most pertinent to our discussion today, baseball. Today, Liz is here to discuss her chapter in the newly released book, *Attorneys in the Baseball Hall of Fame: A Collection of Biographical Essays*. Liz's chapter in this book focuses on Bowie Kent Kuhn, who served as the fifth commissioner of Major League Baseball from 1969 to 1984. However, prior to serving as commissioner, Mr. Kuhn was an attorney who served as legal counsel for the MLB.

Thank you for joining the podcast today, Liz.

Liz Manriquez: Thank you for having me.

Kris Turner: Let's start by bringing listeners up to speed a little bit on both your professional background and your interest in baseball.

How did your legal research background and your baseball love come together for this project?

Liz Manriquez: Sure. We should probably start with my background in baseball. It's much longer than my library career. I've been a huge baseball fan my entire life. It is the sport that was passed on to me from my father and his father before him. It is a tradition, and we are long-suffering Chicago White Sox fans, which could fill its own chapter for sure.

Kris Turner: I have a couch for you to lay down on if you'd like to.

Liz Manriquez: Yeah. Last season was not so bad. We were not the worst of all time, so that is an improvement.

Kris Turner: Low bar to clear, but you cleared it. Yeah.

Liz Manriquez: Yeah. But because I love baseball so much and I wanted to stay connected to it, I also got very interested in the Minor Leagues, so that is an obsession I could talk about quite a bit as well because I always have a team to cheer for even if the Sox are on historic lows. Once I became a librarian and I was researching...

And a lot of the work that I do is based in stats and collecting stats, and analyzing stats, which is something that is very baseball heavy as well, I wrote an article on entertainment law resources, and that was kind of the convergence of my baseball and legal research background at the time. It was that article that actually got me connected with this project.

Kris Turner: What was that article? Where was it published?

Liz Manriquez: Our library has a newsletter that comes out weekly, and we write on topics that are relevant to the law students, to the general public, anything that has a basis and some type of legal topic where we can provide resources for whoever's reading it. And so, that's something that's published weekly and we all take turns writing articles.

It could be anything that we want, so it's whatever's in our interest, whatever's going on at the time. As long as we're highlighting services or resources, it's within the bounds. I wrote one on Opening Day about baseball resources, and just entertainment law generally.

Kris Turner: It's a must read for anyone that's interested in legal research world, especially Wisconsin-centric resources. Maybe I'm a little biased, but doesn't mean I'm wrong. I'm not lying. Coming back to this chapter in this book, what drew you to write a biography about Bowie Kuhn in particular?

Liz Manriquez: I was actually contacted by the editors of the book. They reached out to me because they had seen my article and a couple other things that I'd written as well, and they asked if I was interested in the project. At the time, the other chapters had already been assigned to authors, so I was actually lucky to fall into the Bowie chapter.

It was an advantage to me for many reasons. There's just so much that happened during his tenure. There's so much to talk about. His legal career is very interesting both before and after his time as commissioner. I had the advantage of working with some authors that were much more established than me, so learning from their chapters and their writing was a huge advantage for me, as well as the editors were very knowledgeable on Bowie Kuhn already.

And so, they were able to provide me with some early research and then also supplement my research whenever the time came. It was really lucky that I actually got assigned to Bowie Kuhn, who I had not even thought of before I wrote about him. He's so interesting.

Kris Turner: I think baseball, more than many other sports arguably, lends itself to just these characters that are just buried in history. To uncover it this way with that attorney angle is really cool. I'm really glad that you had such a great infrastructure in place to uncover and organize these essays on these attorneys/baseball Hall of Famers.

How did this attorney end up as MLB Commissioner? In your research, what in Kuhn's legal background prepared him for his role as commissioner?

Liz Manriquez:

Sure. Like myself, Kuhn is a lifelong baseball fan. He grew up, he inherited the Senators from his mother. And so, it was always in the background for him. His first law firm that he was with following law school, he partially chose because the firm represented the National League. He positioned himself straight out of law school to be involved in the baseball world.

One of the first cases that he was assigned to had to do with baseball's antitrust exemption, which is a very meaty topic that we could talk about quite a bit. This was his first brush with it, was when he was an attorney working for... Willkie was the main reason he joined this firm, but the firm has changed names several times, but Willkie's one of the reasons that he joined it.

He was working with him, and working through this case was the first time that he rubbed elbows with a lot of the big wigs in baseball, such as the commissioner at that time, who was Ford Frick, and League presidents. He got his exposure there, and that was in... it was early. It was two months after he joined the firm, so that was in the 1950s. That was kind of his first.

Then he also had another major baseball case when he was still an attorney. This is when the Milwaukee Braves wanted to leave Milwaukee and build a new stadium in Atlanta. At that time, the firm was hired by the Braves and Kuhn was very involved in that case. He gave the opening statement and he cross-examined various witnesses such as Bud Selig. As we know, eventually the Braves did move to Atlanta, and now Milwaukee has a new baseball team owned by Bud Selig.

That was very interesting. He was involved with baseball through his career. Then in 1968, when they were looking for a new commissioner, his name came up and he was appointed interim commissioner. Then a couple of months later, he was voted into an actual seven-year term.

Kris Turner:

That's a pretty impressive rise from working on some baseball-related cases to becoming interim commissioner to commissioner of baseball for 15 years. I want to be in the right place at the right time, is what I've learned. That's one of the moral of the stories that I've learned about this.

As you mentioned, this was a long time that he was commissioner. A lot of things happened. What were some of the challenging incidents and controversies that Kuhn encountered in his time as commissioner?

Liz Manriquez:

I can just go... I'm going to do a few of the really interesting ones because there was so much. In fact, that's one of the things that his term is known for, is all of the change that happened. Important to note too, is that one of the reasons he's a polarizing figure is because he opposed the majority of these changes and lost repeatedly. Lots of things happened despite him.

As I said, the first time he faced the baseball's antitrust exemption was the Toolson case, and that was when he was still an attorney. Once he became commissioner, it came up multiple times, like in 1969 when the umpires sued, in 1970 with the Curt Flood case. And so, antitrust was something that really hallmarked the beginning of his term as commissioner.

Then of course, with the passage of the Curt Flood Act, the antitrust exemption still remains in place, but lost a lot of its teeth. During his term, he also presided over free agency. Labor disputes really would probably be one of the hallmarks of his career. There were multiple labor disputes, multiple lawsuits, multiple strikes. 1972, 1973, 1976, 1980, 1981, some of the most famous strikes. He butted heads notoriously with the arbiter that represented the Players Association.

He also was commissioner in 1978 when Melissa Ludtke sued to allow female reporters into the locker rooms. He was the subject of many lawsuits. I've often said that he's probably the most litigious commissioner. I haven't officially studied that yet, but the amount of lawsuits that he was a party to when I went to the archives, just boxes and boxes of them. He had noted feuds with various owners such as Charles O. Finley. He banned people all the time. It was definitely 15 years of turmoil, I would say.

Kris Turner: That leads perfectly into my next question. Wow, it's like we planned this ahead of time. This leads perfectly into my next question. You mentioned in your chapter's introduction that Kuhn was one of the most polarizing figures in baseball history.

So based on what you just told us, what is his legacy?

Liz Manriquez: Even knowing everything that I just said, I would say that he is a somewhat forgotten member of history. I mean, even though I was aware of all of these controversies in baseball, and am a pretty rabid fan, I didn't know that they all happened under the same commissioner. I had not even heard of him to know that these things happened despite him.

We know Steinbrenner is a very well-known name. Charles O. Finley, people that he feuded with are still figures that even passing fans of baseball would be familiar with. I don't think that they realized that he was the nemesis that they were fighting against.

Kris Turner: I have a background in history where in a moment in time, this person can be extremely important and play an important role, and then just becomes lost to history where they're a nemesis or they stood against or for something, and then it just becomes part of the history books. That kind of seems what's happened in this case.

Liz Manriquez: I would agree.

Kris Turner: Tell me a few of your favorite or most surprising facts that you uncovered in your research.

Liz Manriquez: I would say I was most surprised by his career following his term as commissioner. He founded a law firm, Myerson & Kuhn, and the person that he founded this law firm with was known to be a crook, had been in a firm that imploded. It was a famous case where they were over-billing their clients.

It surprised me that Bowie Kuhn, who was always characterized as being a stuffed shirt and very by the book, would hook up with somebody like Harvey Myerson. The results were, as you would expect them to be, that their law firm filed for bankruptcy. He reestablished his residency in Florida that had better bankruptcy laws, but he still faced over three million in debt that he had to repay, and Myerson was convicted of fraud.

So if you look at his term as commissioner, he wasn't a crooked commissioner. He was very much against it. He would ban people like Willie Mays for doing publicity for the casinos. It's just surprising that he would make a decision like that.

Kris Turner: Yeah. His third act, if you want to put it as attorney before, and then commissioner, then his third act back doing legal work, was very shocking to me as I read through your chapter too, to imagine how, as you characterized him, a stuffed shirt that seemed to be very by the book and opposed to things like representing or working with a casino, like you just said for Willie Mays.

Then he goes and partners with someone that was over-billing and was eventually going to be charged for fraud. Something went terribly awry here. It was just very odd to me. Again, just unearthing the story was wonderful for me to read about, not for him, but for us to learn about what happened afterwards. He still is in the Baseball Hall of Fame. We'll just reemphasize that he's in the Baseball Hall of Fame as a commissioner.

Liz Manriquez: He was never indicted or convicted of any crimes whatsoever.

Kris Turner: Just odd things were afoot afterwards. That might be still a mystery of exactly what was going on in forming that partnership.

Liz Manriquez: Indeed.

Kris Turner: What were some of your other favorite chapters? Any unique characters that stood out to you?

Liz Manriquez: Yeah, so one of the chapters I really enjoyed was the one on Hughie Jennings. This was authored by another law librarian. Her name is Savannah Nolan, and she's at Mercer in Georgia. It's one of the first ones I decided to read because solidarity with the librarians. The majority of the other authors are all law professors.

I loved the chapter on Kenesaw Mountain Landis just because I didn't know enough about him, and I just found him to be so impressive. Reading a chapter about George Washington or something, everybody knows who he is, but what

do I really know about him? As far as characters go, the Tony La Russa chapter was also one of my favorites. I knew a lot about him because of his term as manager of the White Sox, but it was still cool to learn about him and more of his background.

They're all very well-written. They're all interesting. It's not a long book. Because of the way it's broken down into different characters, I would say it's a pretty fast read.

Kris Turner: I agree. I'm holding the book in my hand as we speak and I'm looking at Tony La Russa's chapter because that is one, as a very casual baseball fan, I'm aware of him. I did not know that he had a law degree from Florida State that he obtained after he was playing in the Minor Leagues, it looks like.

That's pretty interesting how he had a dual set of careers going on at the same time. Then of course, as you said, he went on to be a manager for the White Sox and many other teams as well. I just was reading in the intro that of the eight managers who had a law degree, six of them that are in Cooperstown. That's a pretty good percentage that if you're a lawyer and you go on to be a baseball manager, you got a good shot at Cooperstown.

Liz Manriquez: I would say so. I don't think that the careers are mutually exclusive. They seem to play on a lot of the same characteristics and strengths. One thing I learned about La Russa is not only did he have his law degree, but he has encouraged other players to get their degrees as well so that they would have a second act built in for them when their baseball careers are over. Just that mentoring aspect, I think is so important.

Kris Turner: That is excellent. I hadn't considered that before, to have something in place for when the playing days are over.

What do you most hope readers take away from this chapter or the book in general?

Liz Manriquez: I think that for newer fans or the more casual fans, people take for granted that baseball now is what baseball has always been. There were major changes that occurred during Bowie Kuhn's tenure that it was a different game. The way players were treated was very different, just everything was different. I think knowing that and knowing that from a labor perspective, it's nice to see that the players came together and made actual changes for themselves and for the future players. That's nice to see.

Also, I think the Ludtke story, I only barely touch on it in the chapter because it's its own story, but if anybody wants to read more up on that, Melissa Ludtke wrote an excellent book about it and I recommend that. As far as this book, I think that just knowing that there's this much overlap between the game of baseball and the practice of law and all the different venues that they intersect.

I think when you look at the different chapters, each person is so different and their story is so different. There's only, I think, two commissioners or something like that. It's not like you have to be a commissioner and be an attorney. It's more than that. There's lots of players and just some really nice stories in here.

Kris Turner:

Yeah. For me, the context and the nuance that this brings is, we talked about how the strengths of an attorney and the strengths of a baseball manager, commissioner, player can sometimes run in parallel for how they think. That really helped me understand how baseball may work in a different manner. That was something that really was brought forth in this whole collection of essays. I'm really excited. We have a copy in the Law Library here, so if anyone wants to check one out, we can absolutely help you with that.

One last question for you. Tell me more about your work in the Law Library. What's a day like? What faculty do you work with? What students do you work with?

Liz Manriquez:

Sure. Cop-out answer is every day is different, and that is why I love being a librarian. I come in and I'm not sure who's going to ask me what kind of question, or what's going to come through, and I love that. A ballpark answer would be that I perform reference for our students. They'll come to me with lots of questions about how to find resources and how to format blue books.

I also work very heavily with our journal students, helping them find sources, helping them with the minting of persistent identifiers. Then I carry that over to my work with the faculty as well and help with the best practices in scholarly publishing and how they can boost the discoverability of their work, but at the same time, also performing research for them.

You and I recently worked together trying to find a legislative history for a law that passed in 1861, and it was challenging to find things that were that far back, but also still relevant to the debates that we're having today. This is work one of our faculty members is doing to topics that are happening right now in our current administration. It's really rewarding to even have a little bit of a role in that.

Then of course, just working with the public. You mentioned I was Chair of the Legal Information Services to the public section of AALL, and that is a section that is very important to me because it's mission of just making sure everyone has access to legal information and some resources to help them understand it, and how important that is to our lives today and in the future, and just what we can do as librarians to facilitate that.

Kris Turner:

It's always wonderful to hear of all the great work you and your whole reference team do, Liz. Thank you for joining the podcast today. We will link out to Liz's scholarship page on the repository that Liz oversees. Thank you again for joining the podcast today, Liz. It was really great hearing about your book chapter and about all the work that you do.

Liz Manriquez: Thank you.

Kris Turner: That was Liz Manriquez. We were discussing Liz's newest chapter all about Bowie Kent Kuhn, published in *Attorneys in the Baseball Hall of Fame* earlier this year by McFarland and Company.

Thank you for listening. Find links to all of our previous podcasts at willlawandaction.law.wisc.edu. And you can stay up to date on Wisconsin Law School's scholarship by subscribing to this podcast via the Apple iTunes store or follow the UW Law School on any social media that you may be on out there for updates on faculty news and publications.

I'm Kris Turner. See you next time and happy researching.