

William E. “Dummy” Hoy

1862 - 1961

“Deaf Major League Ballplayer”

William Ellsworth Hoy, a graduate of the Ohio School for the Deaf, was a well known deaf person who succeeded in the Major Leagues. During his 14 year career (1880 -1902), Hoy played in 1,798 games, collecting 2,054 hits and 1,004 walks for a lifetime average of .288 with 5 professional teams. At 5 feet 5 inches and only 155 lbs., he stole 607 bases (17th among all-time leaders) including 82 as a rookie leading the National League, and had 9 seasons scoring more than 100 runs.

Hoy was a also a pioneer, inventing the umpire’s hand-arm signals for “strike”, “ball”, and “out” – a tradition that still stands today. In 1951, Hoy became the first deaf person inducted into the American Athletic Association of the Deaf Hall of Fame. In 1992, he was inducted into the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame. Discussion is ongoing to induct him into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

“Dummy” Hoy is to Deaf America what Jackie Robinson is to Black America. Jackie broke the “color barrier” and Hoy broke the “communication barrier”.