

## Book Took 2,000 Hours And Several Years For Pawlush To Complete

*continued from page 3*

Pawlush. "The rosters really fluctuated. If you played well, they would keep you. If you got hurt, you were probably dismissed."

Run by the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the Colonial was formed in January 1947. For its inaugural season, there were six teams, including the Bridgeport Bees, Stamford Pioneers, and Waterbury Timers in Connecticut. After the regular season, the top four teams competed for the championship.

Along with playing league games, teams also hosted exhibitions against MLB squads. On Aug. 7, 1947, the New York Yankees came to Connecticut and earned an 8-0 shutout against Waterbury at Municipal Stadium.

"They (the Timers) had a day off (that week) and this was their chance to make extra money," explained Pawlush.

In researching the Waterbury franchise, Pawlush spoke with Cheshire residents John McKenna

and Ed Gihuly, who have both since passed away. As a pitcher, McKenna was invited to attend MLB spring training in Milwaukee in 1947, but chose instead to return home to Waterbury.

"He wanted to become a teacher and get married," said Pawlush.

In 1948, McKenna became an educator and also signed a contract to play for the Timers. After managing the Waterbury team in 1950, McKenna went on to become a guidance counselor, coach, basketball official, and baseball umpire in Waterbury. In the 1960s, he worked as a scout with the Baltimore Orioles in MLB.

While McKenna starred as a player in Waterbury, Gihuly worked as the Timers beat writer for the *Waterbury Republican* newspaper. As the president of the Connecticut Sport Writers' Association, the Associated Press asked Gihuly to have Colonial League beat reporters file their stories after games.

"He used to hope for double plays to end games quickly so

that he could get back to the office and meet his 2 a.m. deadline," reflected Pawlush.

Pawlush additionally enjoyed writing about Gihuly's military career, before he became a sports writer in Connecticut. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Gihuly enlisted in the Army Air Force the next day. He became an Army sergeant and correspondent for the newspaper *Stars and Stripes*.

"He was one of the first people to see the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb (on Japan in 1945)," stated Pawlush. "He saw a lot of things that others didn't get to see."

Pawlush chatted with Gihuly while attending Cheshire High School baseball games in the early 1990s. Pawlush had two sons—George and Tim—compete for the Rams, with George winning consecutive state titles in 1992 and 1993.

"Baseball has always been a family thing for me," Pawlush added.

Between conducting interviews and writing, Pawlush estimated that he spent 2,000 hours on his book.

"It was more of a labor of love," said Pawlush, who belongs to the Society of American Baseball Research (SABR). "In talking to the families of the players, they were very appreciative."

Through his research, Pawlush found that financial woes and dwindling attendance were the main causes for the Colonial

League's demise. The organization folded on July 16, 1950.

"People stopped coming to the games," said Pawlush. "Major League Baseball was starting to be televised and air conditioning was made available, so people could watch games at home. A lot of things suffered, including college football and boxing."

After writing for a year and a half, Pawlush finished up his first draft in October 2017.

"I must have gone over the material 10 or 15 times to check it," recalled Pawlush. "It can be hard to check your own work, so I had friends of mine take a crack at it."

Pawlush sought out a designer to create a book cover for him. After reviewing everything for four months, he uploaded his work and a photo of the cover to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for publishing back in March.

"It probably cost me \$2,000 to publish the book," said Pawlush. "In the past, you had to find a publisher. Today, you can do it yourself."

Pawlush was happy to hear that the book has been placed in the

American Baseball Hall of Fame. Over the next couple of months, he plans to give some lectures on the Colonial League.

"It (the book) isn't going to get a big audience, but it does fill a void in minor league history," explained Pawlush.

After reaching his goal of becoming an author, Pawlush now has plans for three more books. He is currently working on a story about the Wilkes University football team in Pennsylvania. A 1969 Wilkes graduate, Pawlush also worked in the school's Sports Information department.

"They (the football program) had won 32 straight games over four years," stated Pawlush. "Over the last four months, I've talked to 50 people. I'm writing about how it (the program) affected the community."

Pawlush is also researching for another book about the North Atlantic League, a Class D baseball program that ran from 1946-1950.

"It is not just about sports, but the region as a whole," said Pawlush. "I want it to be less about statistics and more

## Sampson Hosting Meet & Greet

State Representative Rob Sampson, Republican candidate for the 16th State Senate District, will be holding a legislative Meet & Greet event on Thursday, Sept. 13, at the Cheshire Senior Center, 240 Maple Ave. Sampson will

give a short overview of the last legislative session and talk about Connecticut's problems as well as possible solutions. A question and answer period will follow.

The event is schedule to be held between 1 and 3 p.m.

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