



Craig Williams of DeWitt cries while discussing his memories of MacArthur Stadium with David Orbino of Solvay. Williams has been attending games at MacArthur for 30 years and Orbino has been attending games for 35 years.

# Saying goodbye to an old friend

*Fans pack MacArthur Stadium to bid a fond farewell to the 62-year-old landmark*



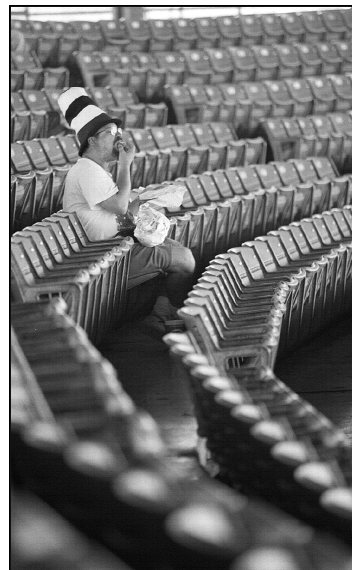
Grounds crew members remove home plate from MacArthur Stadium after the game. It will be placed in the new stadium.



Jim Purkin of Liverpool has been a vendor at Big Mac for thirty-seven years.



Fans scoop up dirt from around home plate for a souvenir of Big Mac.



Twenty year Chiefs fan Shane Sutliff of Syracuse eats a hot dog before the game starts.



Last day game tickets in the hands of Tom Jurkiewicz of Syracuse.



Over 10,000 fans cheer on the Chiefs in the sixth inning.

from The Post Standard

With their future rising in the background, the Syracuse Chiefs waved goodbye to their past Monday.

Before more than 10,000 fans on a sun-splashed afternoon, the Chiefs played their final game at 62-year-old MacArthur Stadium, named for Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Although the Chiefs lost 5-4 to the Pawtucket Red Sox and "Big Mac" will soon be demolished, the day served as a birth, not a funeral.

That's because next season, the Chiefs will move into a \$32 million stadium that's being built next to MacArthur. Without the new stadium, it's likely Syracuse would have lost professional baseball. The Chiefs' parent team, the Toronto Blue Jays, wanted its Triple-A players working in a better facility than aging Big Mac.

"This is the start of a new chapter in Syracuse baseball," said Ron Gersbacher, the team's longtime historian. "With the new ballpark, the

Chiefs will reach a pinnacle they've never reached before in the history of the franchise."

At the end of the postgame ceremonies Monday, the Chiefs unfurled a banner from the upper deck of the new stadium that read:

Countdown to  
Opening Day 1997  
213 Days

"I'm a little sad, because I have a lot of memories in this park," said Tom Sparks, 16, of Syracuse, who was the first fan in line at the front gate at about 10 a.m. Monday. "But I'm excited about the new park."

Don Waful, the president of the Chiefs' board of directors since 1971, scanned the crowd before the game and smiled when he noticed how many children were in the stands.

"They say baseball is dead, but look at all these young people here today," said Waful, 80. "They're the future of baseball in Syracuse."

The Chiefs' new stadium was designed by HOK Sports Facilities Group, the same firm

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Photographs By **BRIAN TOTIN**