News



Brooks Boyer, left, Chicago White Sox senior vice president, chief revenue and marketing officer, speaks at a news conference about the baseball team commemorating the fandom of Chicago native Pope Leo XIV with a graphic installation at Rate Field May 19. The news conference came ahead of a game between the White Sox and the Seattle Mariners. The Mariners won, 5-1. (AP/Nam Huh)

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There is a new landmark at the home of the Chicago White Sox — Section 140, Row 19, Seat 2.

That's where Father Bob — the future Pope Leo XIV — sat for Game 1 of the 2005 World Series.

The White Sox unveiled a graphic installation May 19 that pays tribute to the new pontiff and that moment during their last championship run. The pillar artwork features a waving Pope Leo XIV, along with a picture from the TV broadcast of the future pope sitting with good friend Ed Schmit and his grandson, Eddie.

The team also plans to commemorate the Rate Field seat the pope occupied during the 2005 World Series opener.

> 'The pope absolutely has an open invite to come back, to come sit in Section 140, to throw out a first pitch. Heck, maybe we'll let him get an at bat.'
> —Brooks Boyer
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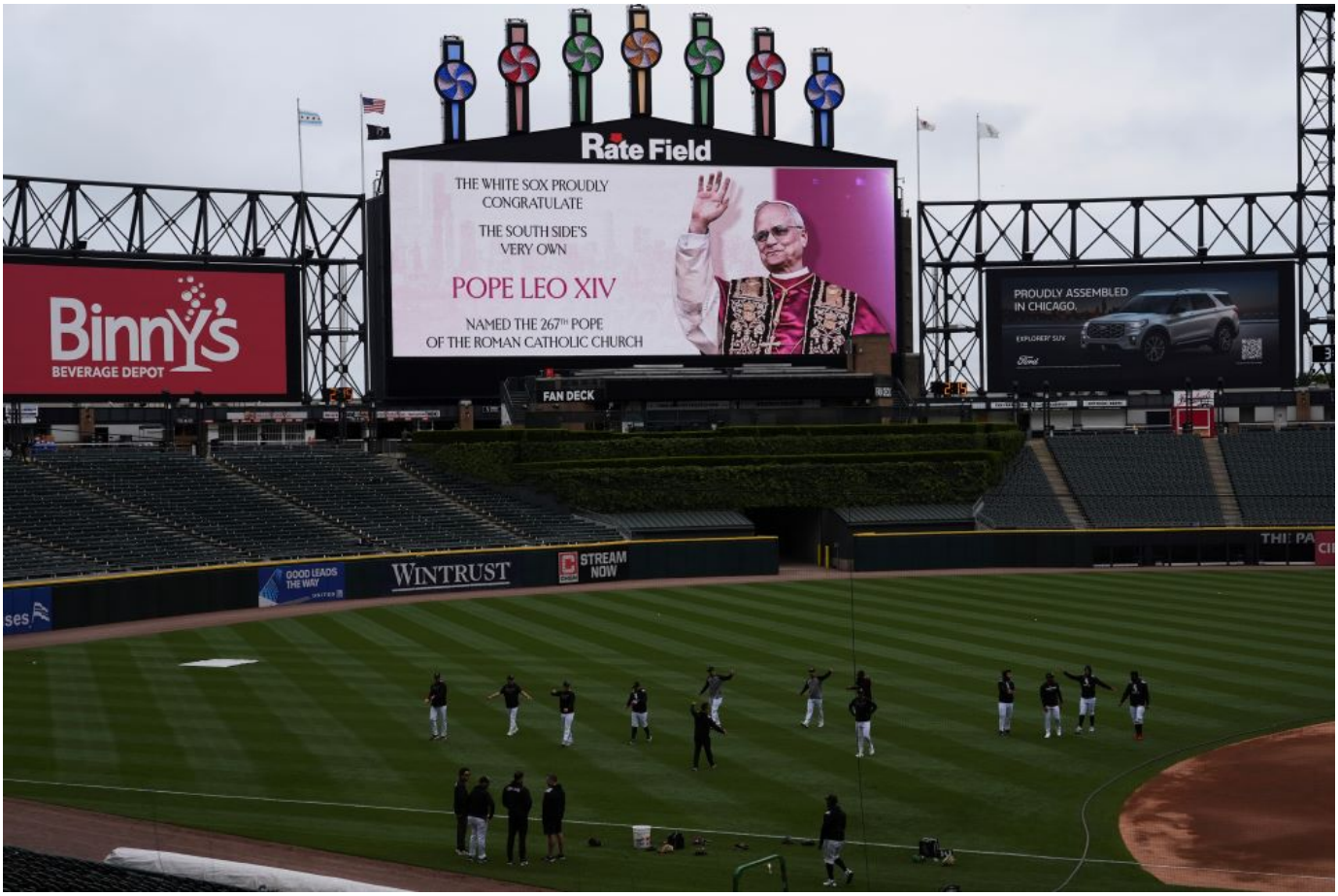
"When people come into the ballpark, it's an interesting piece of our history and they're going to want to see it," said Brooks Boyer, the chief executive and marketing officer for the White Sox. "So we're going to be able to put something on that seat."

Robert Prevost became the first U.S.-born pope when he was elected on May 8. The Chicago-born Augustinian and missionary, who took the name Leo XIV, is a White Sox fan, according to his friends and family.

Prevost attended the World Series opener with Schmit, a longtime season-ticket holder who died in 2020. The White Sox beat the Houston Astros 5-3 on their way to a four-game sweep for the title.

Eddie Schmit, 25, who works in the family's daycare business, described the future pope as a great guy and kindhearted.

"A lot of this is about the White Sox. It should be more about what kind of guy the pope is," Schmit said. "You look at some of the things he's done with his missions, I mean it's incredible. He's been in places that are so poor, just trying to help other people."



The Chicago White Sox honors Pope Leo XIV on the scoreboard at Rate Field before a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the Chicago White Sox in Chicago May 19. The Mariners won, 5-1. (AP/Nam Huh)

Prevost and Schmit knew each other through their work at a Catholic high school on Chicago's South Side, and Schmit's son, Nick, remains the account holder for the

pope's World Series seat.

Ed Schmit used to tell Father Bob he was going to be the next pope, Schmit's daughter, Heidi Skokal, said.

"Right around when my dad was passing, Father Bob made sure, he couldn't be there, but made sure he spoke with him and everything," Skokal said. "And he said, 'Father Bob, Father Bob, I know you're going to be the next pope. I may not be here to see it.' And he goes, 'But I'll be definitely looking down.' And I'm sure he is today."

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The White Sox, who have struggled on the field in recent years, and their fans have embraced their connection to the new pope since he was elected. The team said it sent a jersey and a hat to the Vatican after the announcement.

Some fans have been dressing as the pope for White Sox games, and several T-shirts celebrate the team's most famous fan.

"The pope absolutely has an open invite to come back," Boyer said, "to come sit in Section 140, to throw out a first pitch. Heck, maybe we'll let him get an at bat."

This story appears in the **Pope Leo XIV** feature series. View the full series.