

Local Students Honor Circleville Legends

A group of local students is working to see a stretch of highway renamed in honor of Jackson County brothers who found fame in the world of major league baseball, with one also serving the nation in World War I.

The legislation is introduced in the Kansas House by Holton Republican Representative Trent Ledoux, who says the students provided first hand testimony in Topeka last week why they want the highway renamed(Play Audio :25 seconds)

The Barnes Brothers, Jesse and Virgil, were residents of Jackson County's Circleville community, with both pitching for the then New York Giants from 1919 to 1923.

In 1923, Jesse was traded to Boston and then to Brooklyn two years later.

From 1923 to 1927, the brothers met ten times in national league games, five times as starters and five times in relief.

Prior to the two beginning their major league careers together, Virgil had served in World War I, receiving his orders, in 1917, to respond to a military summons.

Reporting to his Jackson County National Guard unit, he became Private Virgil Barnes, a member of Company B of the Kansas Infantry, and later a part of the 137th Infantry Regiment in the Army's 35th Division.

It's this part of local, Kansas history that the Royal Valley middle school students are working to remember, with Representative LeDoux's help.

He says he's proud of the group of youth, and the commitment they've made to seeing their goal become reality(Play Audio :26 seconds)

It was only two years ago that a group of 7th grade students, from Royal Valley, also under the leadership of Nate McAlister, worked towards a similar goal.

They successfully lobbied the legislature to rename a portion of US-75 highway, from the southern city limits of Holton to the intersection with North West 46th Street in Shawnee County, as the James Lane Freedom Trail.