

## ALUMNI PROFILE

# Glenn Geffner

Inside the Green Monster

As a Northwestern University freshman in October 1986, Glenn Geffner got a glimpse of the diehard passion that comes with being a lifelong Boston Red Sox fan. As the club came within one strike of its first World Series championship since 1918, Geffner saw his roommate, who hailed from the Boston area, dissolve from ecstasy to agony.

I should know. I was that roommate.

Now Geffner is vice president of media relations for the Red Sox, who are sitting on top of the sports world. Down three games to none in the American League Championship Series, the team staged an unprecedented comeback over their archrival, the New York Yankees. Then came a four-game World Series sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals.

Here are excerpts from a recent conversation with Geffner, after the season ended:

**Q. About a year ago, you told me the loss to the Yankees in the 2003 American League Championship Series created a feeling you never want to experience again. Can you elaborate?**

I could never imagine professionally going through something as difficult and disappointing as that was. It was

only my first year here, but to get as close as we did and to see the carpet pulled out from under our feet, it gets you to start scratching your head and say, "Maybe there is a curse of the Bambino."

**Q. When did you believe the team would win the World Series?**

I can honestly say I never lost the faith, down three games to none against the Yankees. After we were done with the media after the game, I was walking with (Red Sox manager) Terry Francona back to our clubhouse, and I said, "I may be the biggest idiot in town, but I believe we're going to win this thing."

**Q. You must have known your life would change when the Red Sox won the World Series. In what ways have those changes surprised you?**

I don't think that anybody associated with this team, from the owner to the batboy, will ever pay for another drink in Boston. It's cool to see the impact that it had on people. The other day, I was asking my wife what I should do when we get our (World Series) rings in April. You lose



Glenn Geffner (left) and Matt Baron as undergrads (above) and in June 2003 (below), at U.S. Cellular Field (home of White Sox) during a visit from the Boston Red Sox



Photos courtesy of Matt Baron

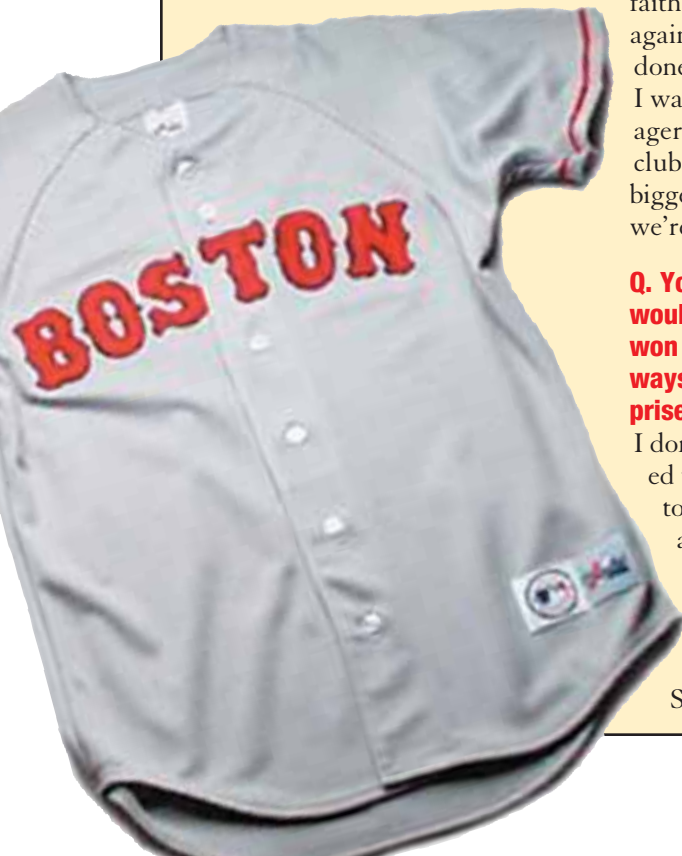
some privacy when you put that on your finger. It means so much to so many people.

**Q. How did Medill prepare you for the deluge of media demands that have come with the team's success?**

So little of the business of baseball these days has to do with what goes on the field for three hours every night. So much of it is in courtrooms or police blotters or in statehouses, or in the minds of economists. The game has gotten so complicated, it's just not a game any more. My whole Northwestern education in general prepared me for all this.

**Q. What suggestions do you have for others looking to get into sports-public relations?**

I wouldn't trade a second for the five years I spent working in the minor leagues. I know everyone wants to get into the big leagues, but the things I was able to do and the people I was able to meet prepared me to do what I do here now.



**Q. The Red Sox were named Sportsmen of the Year by Sports Illustrated. What role did you play in the story?**

I worked with (writer) Tom Verducci in securing the letters and the e-mails that wound up being the basis for the story. He and I talked about different angles. The first thing I said is, “You wouldn’t believe the letters and e-mails that are pouring in here.” No one has captured what it’s been like around here, locally or nationally, better than Tom did.

**Q. Are you ever consulted on personnel moves?**

No. But we are consulted on the ramifications. We do talk about PR strategy behind things. The question isn’t, “Should we make this move?” but “What would happen if we made this move?” or “Would we be better off announcing this move tomorrow or a week from now?”

**Q. You have done radio and television broadcasting in the minors and also with the Padres for two seasons. Are you looking to get back into the booth?**

I would like to if the right opportunity presented itself down the road. I co-host a weekly TV show (The Red Sox Report), so I’m able to keep my hand in it just a tiny bit. Down the road, it’s really what I enjoy doing more than anything. The lifestyle’s a little bit better, too.

**Q. Like any enterprising journalist, I’ve saved the toughest question for last: What’s it like inside the Green Monster (Fenway’s left-field wall)?**

I actually take people on tours. It’s the coolest key in Boston. It’s a small, narrow, cement hall. When I hit my head on the ceiling, you know it’s very cramped in there.

—by Matt Baron (BSJ90)