

## Pronounced Cracks in Baseball's Glass Ceiling

Written by Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr.  
Tuesday, 10 November 2009 15:58

---



**Kim Ng has been key in helping break through baseball's glass ceiling for women.**

*Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr. is a guest contributor to The Biz of Baseball. See other submissions by him within the [Articles and Opinions](#) archive.*

---

Dr. Donna Lopiano, renowned scholar on gender equality in sports, recently gave a lecture to a group of sports business scholars on women's sports markets and barriers to their growth. At the outset, Lopiano recounted a time in her childhood when she aspired to play for the New York Yankees and become a pitcher just like her childhood idol Bob Turley. Unfortunately, a childhood dream to pitch in the Major Leagues would never become a reality due to four words that would change her life forever: "Girls can't play baseball."

Even though it is highly unlikely that a woman will ever don a major league uniform, their impact on the baseball industry has been profound. Today, women have ascended to positions of tremendous power and influence within Major League Baseball's hierarchy. Not only have women become chief executives and financial officers, presidents and executive vice presidents of Major League ball clubs, but they have successfully infiltrated the male dominated baseball operations department. Trail blazers such as Kim Ng and Jean Afterman currently hold desirable positions as Vice Presidents and Assistant General Managers for two of baseball's most historic and successful franchises, the Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees. In recent years, the Seattle Mariners and San Diego Padres were so impressed with Ng's credentials as a talent evaluator and executive, both ball clubs interviewed her for their vacant general manager

## Pronounced Cracks in Baseball's Glass Ceiling

Written by Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr.  
Tuesday, 10 November 2009 15:58

---

positions. While the Mariners and Padres both decided to go in different directions, Ng convincingly proved that her time will come sooner rather than later.

Ownership groups are no longer a fraternity defined by myopic attitudes and egregious behaviors regarding women. Instead of bravado and machismo impairing business decisions, owners now actively seek counsel from female executives whose sports business acumen is extraordinary. Not only do they understand the nuances and eccentricities that accompany both E.B.I.T.D.A. and E.R.A., but they are able to bring a new perspective to the seismic changes impacting baseball's consumption. In the past, Major League Baseball has earned its fair share of criticism for its reluctance to embrace societal advancements. However, they should be commended for their genuine efforts in the hiring of female executives and building relationships with an audience other than the male 25-54 year old demographic.

Over the past decade, Major League Baseball has engrossed itself in comprehensive market studies and initiatives geared towards building lifelong relationships with women. Astonishingly, women comprise 46% of the sport's audience. Licensing of merchandise now reflects the excessive demands that women and young girls have placed on baseball for apparel designed specifically for them. While promotions honoring Mother's Day and raising money for breast cancer awareness have been well received, it is the unique ball park experiences that have piqued the interest of many. Afternoons of yoga at Dodger Stadium or pregame wine tasting events with the Minnesota Twins have given women an opportunity to intimately connect with baseball while purchasing a product tailored to their hobbies and interests.

Even the hallowed halls of Cooperstown have recognized the importance of women to baseball by honoring their vast accomplishments. The grandest tribute comes in the form of a plaque hanging in the Hall of Fame gallery for civil rights pioneer Effa Manley. The former co-owner and business manager of the Negro League's Newark Eagles was a prominent female executive during a tumultuous time of war and civil unrest. She is also the only woman ever to be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

As the general manager meetings take place in Chicago this week, I am confident that a woman will proudly represent a Major League ball club at these meetings within five years as a Senior Vice President and General Manager of Baseball Operations. To many, a venerable position like this is held in high regard and treated with great reverence. While some might view the hiring of a female general manager as a novelty, others will see it for what it actually is: an opportunity to hire the best qualified candidate. Baseball and business intelligence are not a birthright to a single gender, but acquired through passion and perseverance. While a woman might never throw a perfect game or hit a home run in the World Series, they can and will

## Pronounced Cracks in Baseball's Glass Ceiling

Written by Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr.  
Tuesday, 10 November 2009 15:58

---

assume a position of great power and influence in a sport deeply vested in tradition and lore.

---

### OTHER NEWS FROM THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS NETWORK

#### (THE BIZ OF FOOTBALL)

- [Boise St. Engages PR Firm in Attempt to Gain BCS Game](#)
- [Does the NFL Salary Cap Still Work?](#)
- [Browns Fire GM George Kokinis After 1-7 Start](#)
- [UFL Failing to Dazzle at the Turnstiles](#)

#### (THE BIZ OF HOCKEY)

- ["Buzz" Hargrove Resigns As Interim Ombudsman of NHLPA](#)
- [BANKRUPTCY JUDGE APPROVES SALE OF COYOTES TO NHL](#)

#### (THE BIZ OF BASKETBALL)

- [Timberwolves File Lawsuit Against AEG Over Target Center Signage](#)
- [Clippers Owner Donald Sterling Settles For \\$2.725M in Housing Discrimination Lawsuit](#)
- [NBA.TV Adds Brent Barry to On-Air Talent Roster](#)

#### (SPORTS BASH)

## Pronounced Cracks in Baseball's Glass Ceiling

Written by Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr.  
Tuesday, 10 November 2009 15:58

---

- [Roger Clemens Should Have Listened to Momma](#)
  - [The NHLPA Is Sports' Dysfunctional Stepchild](#)
  - [Rumor: Liberty Media Backing Out of Purchase of Bodybuilding.com After FDA Raid](#)
  - [Sammy Sosa Proves Being a Metrosexual Has Its Consequences](#)
  - [Key Off-Season Dates on MLB's Calendar \(and notes about them\)](#)
- 

*Wayne G. McDonnell, Jr. (wayne.mcdonnell@nyu.edu) is a clinical assistant professor of sports management at the Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management at New York University.*