

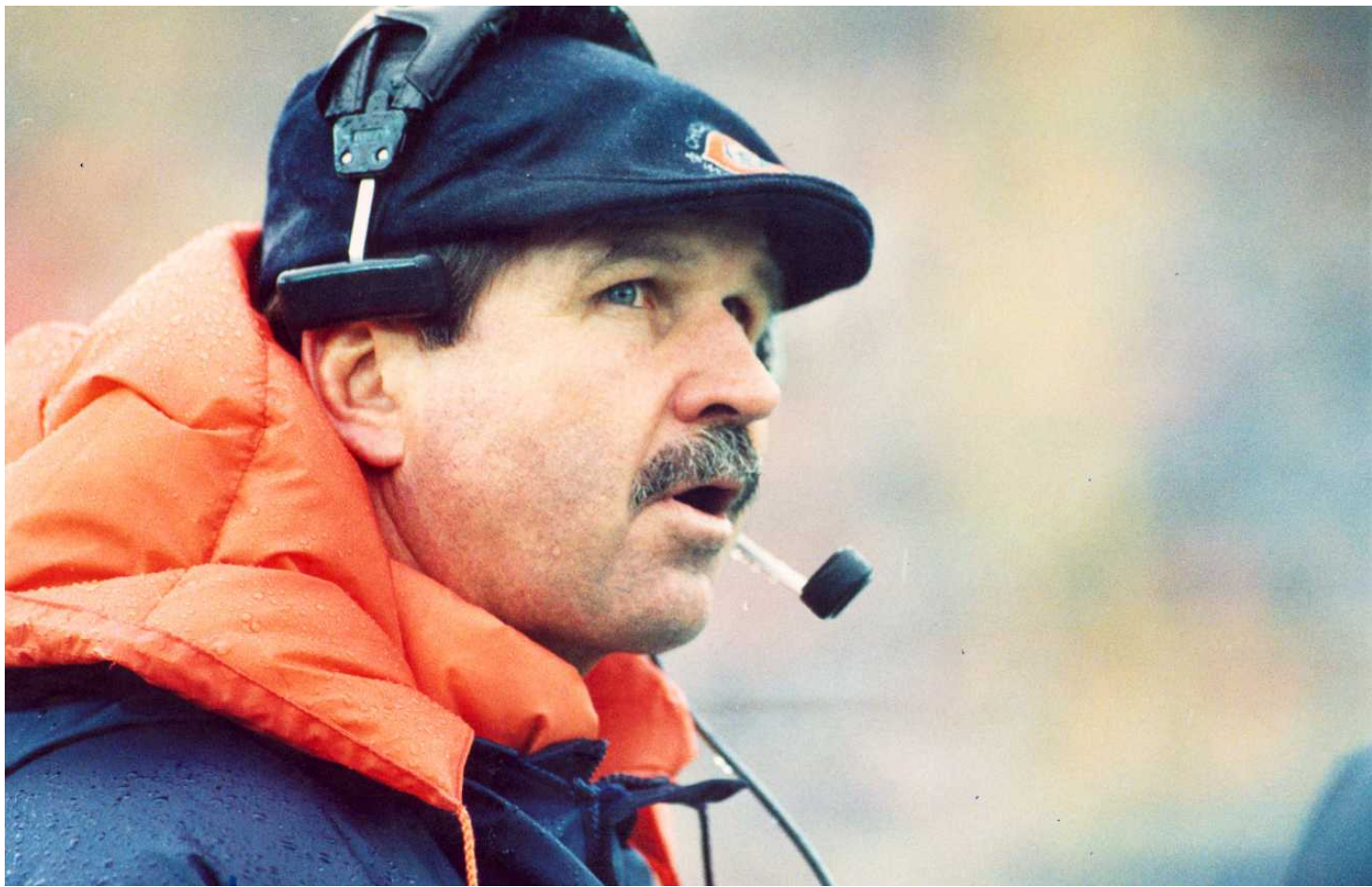
Chicago Tribune



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MIKE DITKA 1939-2026



SPORTING ICON OF CHICAGO

Ditka's larger-than-life persona defined the Bears — and is forever etched in stone



Brad Biggs

coach in franchise history Jan. 20, 1982. "I'm going to give Chicago a winning football team, an interesting football team and a football team that everybody is going to be proud of."

Ditka proved to be prophetic. He quickly restored glory to the organization. The Super Bowl XX champions — 40 years later — remain the measuring stick for everything the club does. A record-setting and Hall of Fame tight end drafted with the No. 5 pick in 1961, Ditka died Friday in Chicago, the city that adopted a guy from Western Pennsylvania as its own because of his unyielding toughness, intense determination and ability to connect with the Grabowskis. He was 86.

The Bears won the NFC Central six times during

Mike Ditka imagined there was a life plan for him, a vision or a calling that he was meant to do one thing.

"I believe that everyone has a destiny in life, and mine is with the Chicago Bears," he said when he was hired as the 10th head

Ditka's run as head coach between 1982 and 1992, compiling a 106-62 record in the regular season and 6-6 in the postseason, including the magnificent march to a title in January 1986.

The Bears retired his No. 89 in December 2013, the 14th and final number the team retired, according to Chairman George McCaskey. A star for the 1963 NFL championship team, Ditka was a pitch man for every product and service you can imagine.

Michael Jordan may be the greatest cultural sports icon across the globe, but Ditka — decades removed from his coaching career and more than a half-century since he was a player — remained the sporting icon of Chicago, the largest personality from a team that was full of swash-buckling, sometimes-rogue characters. In a very big way, that's perhaps one reason it all worked — because Ditka showed how to walk the walk.

"There's been a lot of big-time names and big-time celebrities, but nobody has surpassed Mike's status," Hall of Fame defensive lineman Dan Hampton said. "Jordan

See **DITKA** on Page A12

INSIDE: Bob Odenkirk, the actor and Naperville native, on how Mike Ditka made "Superfans" of us all. **Chicagoland, Page A13**
Bears fans reminisced on Ditka's legacy while tailgating outside recent home games. **Chicagoland, Page A14**
Chicago mourns the Pennsylvania kid who became the ultimate symbol of our city. **Paul Sullivan in Sports**

Above: Bears coach Mike Ditka on Dec. 7, 1986. **BOB LANGER/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

ELECTION 2026
U.S. SENATE

From fiery primary to low-key campaign

Stratton's supporters say she has diplomatic skills built as a mediator

By Olivia Olander
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton may be best known among voters for the F-bomb-filled ads she ran to show she had the fight to take on President Donald Trump on her way to winning the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate.

"F--- Trump," U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth and others say in the February ads, as Stratton contends: "They said it, not me."

It was a striking message from the favorite to become the next U.S. senator from Illinois, and one that presciently summed up the Democratic base's desire for a bit more dynamism in its leaders' opposition to the Trump administration.

But underrated in Stratton's story, supporters and friends say, are the more diplomatic skills she built over more than 20 years as a mediator, qualities they see in her approach to government and politics.

And the candidate who rose to the top of the March primary with fiery ads and policy proposals that caught the eye of even the state's staunchest progressives — a



Stratton

See **STRATTON** on Page A4

INSIDE

White Sox's season ends with 2-0 loss

 The White Sox couldn't find sustained success at the plate all night as their improbable season ended with a 2-0 loss to the Guardians. **Coverage at chicagotribune.com**

Officials tie at least 4 deaths to Isaias

Isaias peeled off hotel and condominium rooftops and facades along Florida's panhandle before charging north Saturday. **Nation & World, Page B5**

Closing cold case, CPD says cop killed child

8-year-old girl brutally murdered in 1960

By Sam Charles
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Eight-year-old Gloria Kowalewicz's school and church were less than a half-mile from her back door in West Englewood.

On Nov. 12, 1960, a Saturday, her mother Esther was up early to get

her dressed. Gloria had received her First Holy Communion recently, and a nun at St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church had urged the third grader and her classmates to receive the sacrament every day for two weeks to impress the ritual into their memories.

That Saturday was the last day. But her father needed the family car, so Gloria would have to make the 3 1/2-block trip on foot.

For her daughter, the older of two

kids, Esther picked out a pink-and-brown checkered dress and a blue leotard. Esther kissed her goodbye and watched from the family's porch as Gloria walked north on Damen Avenue before turning east onto Marquette Road, past a gas station and out of sight.

Gloria never made it to the church. Her body would be found just a few hours later in a secluded

See **CASE** on Page A5

Right: Girls from Gloria Kowalewicz's First Communion class walk beside her casket as it is wheeled out of St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church in Chicago on Nov. 16, 1960, following her funeral Mass. Gloria's parents, Edward and Esther Kowalewicz, follow close behind. Editor's note: This historic print shows some hand painting in the background. **CHICAGO TRIBUNE HISTORICAL PHOTO**



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St. Andrews tees up more than golf outings



Rick Steves

Tiny St. Andrews has a huge reputation, known around the world as the birthplace and royal seat of golf. The chance to play on the world’s oldest course — or at least take in the iconic view of its 18th hole — keeps the town perennially popular among golfing pilgrims. But any visitor to Scotland should consider at least a short stop in this scenic, intriguingly historic university town.

Located about a one-and-a-half-hour drive north of Edinburgh, and dramatically crowning the cliffs at the tip of a peninsula jutting into the North Sea, St. Andrews has been a tourist destination for centuries — in part because of its important role in Scottish history.

During the religious turbulence between the Great Schism and the Reformation, St. Andrews was the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland, and its cathedral was its showpiece church. The relics of its namesake saint first put the town on the medieval map, drawing pilgrims from around Europe ... until it was ransacked by Protestants, and its stones repurposed for newer buildings in town. Just a few blocks away from the cathedral ruins is St. Andrews Castle, which had also been largely destroyed during the Reformation. What little is left makes a fun visit for its dungeons and tunnels.

In addition to its ruined cathedral and castle, St. Andrews still retains its original medieval, compact street plan, with just four main streets that all lead to the cathedral, connected mostly by narrow, twisting lanes called “wynds.” (The street sign for one of them, Butts Wynd, often goes



While golf is the main draw to St. Andrews, the ruins of its castle and cathedral are another reason to visit Scotland. **DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI**

missing for some reason.)

But golf is the main draw of the town. For any serious golfer, a visit to St. Andrews means the chance to play a round where the sport was supposedly invented: the Old Course. Since the grassy beachfront strip just outside St. Andrews couldn’t support crops, it was used for playing the game — and centuries later, it still is. The first record of golf being played here was in 1553 (but nobody knows exactly when and where people first hit a ball with a stick for fun).

While golf’s origins might be a little ambiguous, there’s no doubt that the town turned it into the sport we know today. Why do golf courses have 18

holes? Because that’s how many fit at the Old Course. Except for when it’s hosting the British Open, the Old Course is open to the public. But playing a round here is pricey and requires major planning: Reserve at least a year in advance, or try your luck in the daily lottery. The St. Andrews Links include six other courses that are much easier (and cheaper) to play.

Nongolfers (like me) can still brag that they’ve golfed at St. Andrews by playing a round at the Old Course’s fun putting course — nicknamed “The Himalayas” for its dramatically hilly terrain. And anyone can take in the history of the sport at the nearby World Golf Museum, with a compact

exhibit that reverently explains the game’s origins and changes over time.

Just below the Old Course is a broad, 2-mile-long beach called the West Sands, offering great views of the town — and the chance to reenact the opening scene of Chariots of Fire (which was filmed on this stretch of sand).

The town is also the home of Scotland’s most important university. Founded in 1413, the University of St. Andrews is the third-oldest in the English-speaking world (only Oxford and Cambridge have been around longer). The quad of St. Salvator’s College, known to students as Sally’s Quad, is the university’s heart. As most university

classrooms, offices and libraries are spread out across town, during the school term, shops and pubs brim with student energy.

The university’s most famous recent graduate is Prince William (class of 2005). Soon after he enrolled here, the number of female applicants to study art history — his major — skyrocketed. When he married fellow St. Andrews alum Kate Middleton 10 years later, nearly the entire student body was there to celebrate on Sally’s Quad.

St. Andrews is well-connected by train and bus to Edinburgh, making it an easy day trip from Scotland’s capital. The town also makes a handy home

base for a variety of fun side trips to some less-touristed spots nearby: interesting museums in the city of Dundee; Glamis Castle (the childhood home of the late Queen Mother); and a string of relaxing fishing villages along a stretch of coast called the East Neuk.

No matter what brings you to St. Andrews, you’ll be welcomed with a cool sea breeze, a vibrant student culture, and the rich history of this wee town.

Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

CELEBRITY TRAVEL

Leenalchi members dream of festivals

By Jae-Ha Kim
TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY

Founded by Jang Young-gyu (who scored the hit films “Train to Busan” and “The Wailing”), Leenalchi is a unique alternative rock group that conveys its lyrics through the traditional Korean storytelling genre known as pansori. The septet is signed to David Byrne’s Luaka Bop Records and has had its music featured in Apple TV’s “Pachinko.”

Ahead of the recent released of their album, “Sugungga,” and the U.S. leg of their tour, the group members spoke from their homes in Seoul and Paju.

This interview with Leenalchi has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: What do you remember about your first professional gig?

Park Soobum: Jan. 20, 2019, at Channel 1969 in (Seoul) as the Sugungga Project. Other than worrying that we might not have enough songs to fill the set, I remember having a lot of fun performing.

Ra Seo Jin: I still remember my first performance with Leenalchi in early May last year. We performed in Namwon and Tongyeong. Since I had to sing almost the entire Leenalchi repertoire, I was extremely nervous and felt a lot of pressure. We also didn’t have much time to rehearse together. But thankfully we made it through without any major mistakes.

Q: Do you work on songs while traveling?

Ahn Yi Ho: I worked on and rehearsed the new songs in hotel rooms while we



The members of pansori group Leenalchi are visiting new cities on their latest tour. **ROBERT MACAISA**

were on the road. It was fun and not entirely ineffective, but it was also chaotic and difficult to concentrate, so I’d rather not do it that way again if I can help it.

Ejae: Even when I’m sleeping or walking, I’ll turn on my recorder and record them. I think my future self can only understand about 10% of those recordings.

Q: Are you visiting any new cities on this tour that you’ve never been to before?

Ahn Yi Ho: Almost every city will be somewhere I’ve never been before. I’m looking forward to it.

Q: What is your bucket-list venue?

Ra Seo Jin: Coachella. **Ahn Yi Ho:** It’s not a venue, but I’d love to see a festival where we could take a train from Busan, travel through Kaema Plateau (in North Korea) and across Russia, Eastern Europe, and West Europe, getting off in major cities along the way to perform. **Ejae:** Dubai.

Q: Does the music you hear in a particular city or country inspire your own work?

Ahn Yi Ho: A few years ago, I came across a band called Brama. I think they were a French band, and I found them really interesting. **Ejae:** Bali’s traditional Gamelan music and Legong dance were particularly impressive. They felt like such a completely new language that I couldn’t even begin to imitate one

percent of it.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

Ahn Yi Ho: I like vast natural landscapes where I can feel safe. I’ve had the chance to perform in a few programs in the Swiss Alps and on the beaches of Costa Rica, and I really loved both experiences.

Ra Seo Jin: I like warm countries. I don’t like cold weather. I love playing in the water. I also really love tropical fruits. I could probably live on tropical fruit without eating regular meals. It probably wouldn’t be very healthy, though.

Q: What was a trip you took as a child that stands out?

Ejae: My first trip to Japan with my family when I was a child. The croquettes were delicious.

Park Soobum: I once visited Heaven Lake on Mount Baekdu. I was lucky enough to see it on a clear, sunny day. It was so vivid and majestic that it almost looked like computer graphics. It remains an incredible memory for me.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?

Park Soobum: I’d like to go anywhere with vast natural landscapes, places like the African savanna, the glaciers of Antarctica, the Himalayas or the Amazon. **Ahn Yi Ho:** An oasis in the middle of a desert.

For more from the reporter, visit www.jaehakim.com.

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

Couple missing refund after airline downgrades seats to economy class

By Christopher Elliott | KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

My wife and I recently purchased tickets from Miami to Prague through Lufthansa. We paid \$3,274 for premium economy class, including specifically reserved seats. On our return trip from Prague to Miami, our flight was rebooked. For the long-haul segment from Zurich to Miami, the airline downgraded us to economy class.

Lufthansa sent us an email stating that the downgrade was due to “operational reasons” and told us to contact its service center for a partial refund. We followed these instructions and filed a form. Lufthansa then forwarded our request to Swiss, which operated the flight.

The response from Swiss was confusing. It claimed that because we safely landed in Miami within 3 hours of our scheduled time, no compensation was due. We weren’t asking for delay compensation; we were asking for a refund for the seats that we paid for but didn’t get.

We tried everything to get a real answer. We used the Lufthansa live chat, but the agent ended the session while we were waiting. We even emailed executives at both Lufthansa and Swiss. No one responded.

When we finally heard back from Swiss after filing another form, a representative claimed that we had already received an Easy Cash card as compensation at Zurich Airport. This never happened. A Swiss agent at the airport actually told us that we couldn’t apply for compensation until the flight was over.

The price difference between premium economy and regular economy is \$165. We just want our money back for the service we didn’t receive. Can you help us find our missing refund?

— *Mila Schoun, in Pompano Beach, Florida*

A: Swiss should’ve processed your refund the moment it moved you to a lower class of service. Under European Regulation EC 261-2004, passengers are entitled to a refund of a percentage of the flight price if they’re downgraded.

The airline also shouldn’t have told you that it had paid you without checking. Claiming a passenger received a cash card they never saw is a great way to end a conversation, but a terrible way to run a business.

You did the right thing by keeping all your records. You contacted the right people and even escalated the issue to executives, which is exactly what I recommend when front-

line agents fail. I publish the Swiss and Lufthansa executive contacts on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I contacted Swiss on your behalf and asked the airline to look into the missing cash card. Swiss conducted a careful review of your case and determined that there had been a communication breakdown.

“It has become clear that the original complaint was not properly understood, despite the relevant documentation having been provided by the passengers,” a Swiss representative told me.

“We deeply regret that the passengers did not receive the correct information from us and sincerely apologize for the incon-

venience, concern and frustration this may have caused,” the representative added.

The airline confirmed there wasn’t a record of a cash card being issued and that your compensation was, indeed, outstanding. Swiss contacted you and offered a refund of \$165 for the downgrade, in accordance with EU regulations. It also sent a \$200 travel voucher as a gesture of goodwill for the inadequate service.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.