

Legends awed by likenesses

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PHILADELPHIA — Statues of four legendary Phillies — three of them living — were unveiled before Citizens Bank Park's official season opening Monday. And the heroes themselves were awed.

Mike Schmidt, whose giant likeness greets patrons at the third-base gate, said in a pregame news conference, "It's a weird feeling, standing by a statue of yourself."

"You realize later on the impact you have on a city and the fans," said Robin Roberts, the great pitcher whose statue resides at the first-base gate.

Steve Carlton's statue sits at the left-field gate, and Richie Ashburn's is in Ashburn Alley, the open concourse of concessions that line the outfield. Thirty-seven Ashburn family members — 12 from his native Nebraska — were in attendance as the deceased Hall of Famer was honored.

"The statue really hit home," said son Richard Ashburn.

Carlton didn't address the media, as per his custom, but did appear before the crowd.

World-renowned sculptor Zenos Frudakis created the four 10-foot tall bronze statues of the four Hall of Famers. Schmidt expressed appreciation for how the statues and the new park reconnect the fans, and maybe today's players, with the positives of the past.

"Probably a lot of that is missing in baseball nowadays within clubhouses," Schmidt said. "Players today aren't as attached to the game's history.

It's great that fans and organizations like the Phillies want to honor their history. ... And who's to say one of (the current Phillies) won't have a statue someday?"