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CHIPPER JONES HAS SEEN A LOT OF TRIBUTES IN HIS LAST SEASON FOR THE BRAVES. NONE ARE QUITE LIKE THIS. (PHOTO: DUREN FAMILY)

FANS HONOR CHIPPER JONES WITH CORN MAZE

ANDY JOHNSTON | Published: Tuesday, September 18, 2012, 9:40am

Chipper Jones has seen his share of tributes in his final season with the Atlanta Braves.

He's been honored by most of the teams on his farewell tour around the majors, receiving all kinds of items.

There was a cowboy hat in Houston, a surfboard in San Diego, a few used bases, an autographed Stan Musial jersey in St. Louis and even a year's supply of sausage from the Brewers.

A grill was part of the deal, so at least he has somewhere to cook all that meat.



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None of those tributes, however, are as large or grandiose as the one that longtime Braves fans Misty and Lamar Duren concocted for their farm near Walnut Grove, Ga., a town just east of Atlanta.

Little house, meet big cornfield.

The Durens have been turning seven acres of their farm into a maize maze for the past few years, so why not honor their favorite third baseman by cutting it in the shape of Jones' head, complete with his cap, his name and his number?

"We love Chipper and thought this was the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to him and honor his 19 seasons with the Braves," Misty said. "We'd love to have Chipper come and get lost in the maze."

Talk about getting lost in your thoughts.

Pitchers have been trying to get inside Chipper Jones' head for years, but they've never been able to completely fool Jones, who is considered a shoo-in to reach the Hall of Fame.

The Durens have just made it easy for anyone who visits Corn Dawgs Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch, which opens Sept. 23.

A company designed the maze and used a tractor and a GPS device to cut the design into the cornfield. It took four hours to complete it.

Last year, the Durens honored another longtime Atlanta icon by cutting Coca-Cola's trademark logo into their field to celebrate the company's 125th anniversary.

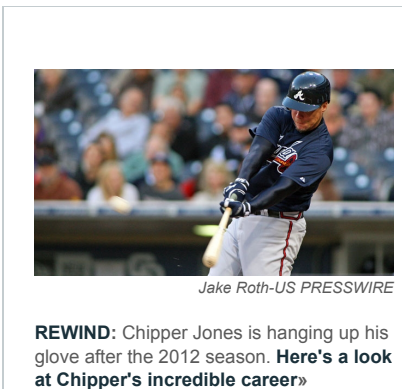
"We always want something to intrigue our customers," she said.

The Durens built it, so plenty of Chipper fans will come.

Jones continues to be the most popular Braves player and is the lone remaining member of the 1995 World Series championship team.

He's rejuvenated the Braves at times this season with clutch hits and heroic homers and is hitting .297 with 14 home runs and 60 RBI in his final season.

Jones, 40, just recently joined Hall of Famers Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial, Babe Ruth and Ted Williams as the only players in MLB history with at least 2,500 hits, 1,500 walks, 1,500 runs, 500 doubles, 450 home runs and 1,500 RBI with a career batting average of at least .300, an on-base percentage of at least .400 and a slugging percentage of at least .500.



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Braves falter in four key areas, drop Game 1 to Dodgers

The Braves' Game 1 defeat to the Dodgers was the result of breakdowns in four crucial areas.



Three Cuts: Kershaw, Dodgers overpower Braves in Game 1

Clayton Kershaw settled in and stifled the Braves as the Dodgers took Game 1 of the NLDS.



"We're big Braves fans. We love the Braves," Misty Duren said. "We're going to try to get Chipper out here. We have great hunting. Maybe that will get him to come out. We'd open the park exclusively for him."

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WRITER'S BLOCK

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Andy Johnston has written about pro and college sports for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Associated Press, CNN.com and the Athens Banner-Herald.



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