My career was founded on not being an expert but on focusing on what I do not know. One makes a contribution to a field of knowledge not by elaborating one's knowledge, but by attacking the common ignorance that we all share. My peculiar place in baseball history is that, 35 years ago, I was able to create a way for non-experts to participate in the discussion, thus blasting open the walls of conversation. I will discuss how to break open the closed circles of experts by posing a question. It is all done by finding the right question.

Bill James
Recipient CLAS 2010 Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award

Through his innovative work with baseball research, George William James has changed the way the sport is viewed, understood and managed. James is senior adviser to the Boston Red Sox, contributing to the team’s two world championships. James was identified by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. He has published more than 20 books and dozens of articles focusing on the elements of a winning baseball team. Every year, thousands of baseball fans eagerly await “The Bill James Handbook,” the most complete annual baseball guide available. His latest work, “The Bill James Gold Mine 2009,” is a groundbreaking collection of 17 original essays and statistical profiles. James received bachelor’s degrees in English and economics from KU in 1973 and a bachelor’s in education in 1975.