

TONY GWYNN: Thank you. I love you too. Thank you. I'll say thank you to Jane Clark, Dale Petroskey, Jeff Idelson and Kim Bennett. Our stay here has been tremendous. For the first Hall of Fame to see this many people, riding on the bus I was listening to the other Hall of Famers on the bus that they couldn't remember a time seeing this many people, so for us four guys to come here for the first time on induction weekend and see so many people here, we cannot begin to say thank you enough. So thank you. Can I call a time out here, because I need my notes here because I'm going to struggle. Hold up. They've been telling me all day it's my day.

Commissioner Selig, thank you. I want to congratulate Denny and Rick on being here today. Cal, the last six-and-a-half months, I'm telling you, it's been unbelievable being able to hang out with you. My congratulations to you and your family, to everybody and their family.

For me, this story kind of begins in Long Beach, California. As a kid growing up, my brothers and I watched baseball all the time, played it all the time in our back yard, and for us, I don't think any of us thought that hitting a fig or hitting a sock ball or hitting a wad of tape was going to turn into this. Just unbelievable.

With my brother, my older brother Charles, he kind of led the charge. He was kind of the first guy to get out, and every day Chris and I would sit at home waiting for him to come back

to tell us whether he had won or not, and for like 16 straight games, they won. And that first time that he came home in the

championship game and they lost, Chris and I were crushed, but it kind of taught us a lesson in that if you want something and you want to compete and you want to be successful, you've got to get out there and you've got to try. You're never going to find out sitting at home. And Chris and I were sitting at home. And so the next year I was old enough to go out and start playing myself.

And in the course of playing, you run into or you have the good fortune to play for some good coaches, and for me I played for three little league coaches that are very important to me, Nick Ortega, Joe Perruico and his dad, we called him Mr. P because his name was Isadore and as kids we had trouble saying Isadore so we called him Mr. P. With those guys they really kind of taught us a foundation with us about the fundamentals of the game.

Later on I would go on to play basketball. And basketball is a lot different sport, it's constant motion. And three coaches again, Jim Ferguson and Ron Palmer and Errol Parker, those three guys kind of left me with some information that would help me when I got to this level.

And then from there it was on to San Diego State, and I went there on a basketball scholarship, believe it or not. I know people are out there sitting at home shaking their heads

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like these guys up here are shaking their heads, you went there on a basketball scholarship? Played there four years, played varsity four years, and Tim Vezie was my first coach there and he told me that as a point guard your job is to make sure that everybody on the floor, all your teammates are better players. And again, words that he's trying to teach me how to play the game of basketball, but later on would have a huge impact on

what I would later become.

At the same time, the reason why I went to San Diego State is so that I could play baseball also, and I played for a guy there by the name of Jim Dietz, and Jim Dietz is a baseball man. He's a fundamental man. He wants you to bat the bases up, hit your cutoff, do all the little things in the game of baseball that when you get to this level, all of a sudden those words that my little league coaches, my basketball coaches and now in college, my college coaches, they came into play.

From there, June 6th, June 6th is a very important date in my life because June 6th is the day that I met my bride Alicia Lorraine Church, and from that point on, my life was pretty much set because we were partners in this. We were going to go, she was going to let me go out and play baseball and she was going to raise our children, and I get constantly reminded of this once I got to the big leagues, because getting to the big leagues, I don't want to say it's easy, but once you get here, the object is to stay here. And my wife allowed me to go kind

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of chase my dreams. She allowed me to go out and spend all the time I could trying to be the best baseball player that I could be, and I'm saying it now because I'm trying to stay in order. Honey, I'll get back to you at the end.

Two days later, June 8th, 1981, I got drafted in the morning by the San Diego Padres, Jack McKeon who I saw here yesterday is the reason I was drafted by the Padres. The whole time I thought I was going to be an Astro and out of the blue the Padres called me in the morning wanting to know what my middle name was, and because I hadn't heard of them all year I thought oh, Lord I'm going to be wearing a brown uniform. I

signed with the -- I also got drafted by the Clippers later on in that afternoon and I don't think we'll ever see a guy get drafted in two sports on the same day, two different sports on the same day because the drafts have become shows themselves as we found out this year with Major League baseball, we had our own draft show and it was pretty cool.

I signed with the Padres, I went off to Walla Walla, Washington, and that year in 1981 the big league teams were on strike and so teams, what they did was they didn't want to just hand out a free paycheck, they sent the coaches off to the minor league spots, and so in Walla Walla, Washington the two coaches they sent to me was Frank Howard, who was the manager of the Padres at that time and Bobby Tolan who was the hitting coach. And after signing with the Padres, after playing three years at

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San Diego State using an aluminum bat my concern going to pro ball was would I be able to swing a wood bat? Would I be able to generate enough bat speed to make it at this level? And Bobby Tolan assured me I would be able to do that and he promptly took me out on the field, gave me a Fungo bat and said here, I'm going to flip you some balls and take your swing. That day I hit balls further than I ever hit in my life. I really thought this game was going to be easy and he reassured me he wasn't.

The three guys I played with three guys off that Walla Walla team that eventually made it to the big leagues, one was a guy by the name of Greg Booker who I know is text messaging right now as I speak. The other one is a guy that I think a lot of you guys probably know, he's on Baseball Tonight probably three, four times a week, Johnny Kruk, and all three of us when they signed were three of the most quietest people you'd ever

want to meet. None of us really knew what the heck we were doing, we were going to play pro ball we were riding on these buses and for the first time we were away from home, and we got out on the road and we kind of made a pact with each other that we were going to try our best to get to the big leagues and have some success.

And so from there, again, you get started in your minor league career and you have some success right away. I started out in Walla Walla, Washington which is the Northwest League

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which is A ball, got off to a pretty good start. Jack Krol was the manager of the club and he said Tony, and I didn't believe him when he said it, he said, "Tony, you're too good for this league we are going to have to move you up a notch." And me being inexperienced with pro ball said, "Why, Jack. I'm having a good time, why do I have to move up?" He said, "You want to get to the big leagues, don't you?" I said, "Yes." "Then we have to move you up." I went from low A to AA to Amarillo, Texas. You follow these little credoes in this game, and at the time in the minor leagues they said if you can have success in the AA level, you can have success in the big leagues. I was only at Amarillo and I hit .462 so going into the winter I was pretty convinced that given the opportunity, I could do good in the big leagues.

Later on that year I got a chance to meet a guy I idolized as a kid and would have an opportunity to play against as a professional, and that was Rod Carew. The Padres and the Angels, we shared complexes and I heard earlier in the day Rod Carew was going to come out and speak to the Angel players, and because I was a Padre I wasn't allowed and so what I did was I

kind of hid and listened to his whole spiel on how to bunt to the Angel guys, which by the way, Rod, I don't think any of those guys were listening to you like I was. Got an opportunity to talk to, got an opportunity like I have with a lot of these guys sitting here today, had an opportunity to talk to them,

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asked them about their craft, how they do what they do. One thing about the game of baseball, if you want something, you can't be afraid to ask, and as a lot of these guys will tell you, I pestered the heck out of a lot of these guys. So I had the opportunity to talk to him and he gave me some really great advice, be yourself, hit the ball where it's pitched, work the count, hit a ball in the strike zone. That was all stuff I would carry on with me to the big leagues. And then once I got to the big leagues, there was a cardinal rule when you got to the big leagues, keep your eyes and ears open, keep your mouth shut, and I did that a lot. I kept my mouth shut. I laughed a lot because laughter I learned later on would be that thing that would disarm people. And so 1982 my first year in the big leagues, I'm getting a taste of what big league baseball is all about and I love it.

Couple years later, 1983, coming back from a wrist injury, I hadn't had a whole lot of time, I got hurt playing winter ball, missed half of the season, a turning point I think in my career, and that was in June of 1983 I was struggling, I was struggling bad, I was hitting .220 and we were on the road and I called home and I asked my wife, I said, "Honey, do you think you could hit the record button for me?" And we had an eight month old, our son Anthony was eight month old, he was running around the house in diapers, tearing everything up, pulling everything off the tables, just a real active child. And

luckily for me my wife said yes, she hit the record button and from the time I came home from that trip to the day I retired, I was a big believer in video. I would not be standing here today without video, and again, my wife hit the button and all of a sudden, it just opened up a new avenue for me because I learned at this level, it's about knowing what you do when you get in that batter's box, it's about knowing how they are going to pinch hit, how they are going to play you, how they are going to attack you, and you have the game plan to try to attack them because pitchers have the ball in their hand and they feel like they are dictating the action, but I can guarantee you there's some guys on this podium today who maybe won't yell it out, but you know what, when they had the bat in the hand they kind of dictated the action. For me it was a whole lot more fun because I really didn't hit the ball out of the ball park. Some pitchers would stand on the mound and look at me and say he's not going to strike out, he's going to put the ball in place and I would take advantage of that. So video really helped me to learn that.

1984 was really a good year for us, for the Padres. We had some veteran guys in our club, a Steve Garvey, a Goose Gossage, a Craig Nettles and I was the fortunate one because my locker was right in the middle of all those guys, of Garvey, of Terry Kennedy, Bruce Bochy and Craig Nettle, and every day they talked about baseball and how the game was played and the things you

need to do and how to go about your business. And for me Steve Garvey was great, he gave me good advice, he gave me the kind of

advice that a young player can take and try to run with it, so I did. I really tried to emulate some of the things that Garv told me. He said, "Stay on an even keel." He said, "Never get too high, too low, just go about your business, go about your business the right way." And that's what I tried to do.

'84 was also my first all star game and another kind of break through moment for me because you walk into that all star locker room for the first time and you're seeing all these names, Mike Schmidt, Ozzie Smith, all these names, and you just don't feel like you belong. And my locker just happened to be between Ozzie Smith and Mike Schmidt and they welcomed me in, come on kid have a seat, just like these Hall of Famers, come on in kid, have a seat. But you know that being in an all star game there was still a whole lot more to learn about the game. One thing I learned about Ozzie that year at the all star game was that if I made any more all star games, I wanted my locker to be next to his and the reason why, because he laughed. He laughed all the time. And when you laugh and you can laugh at yourself and laugh at others, that makes the game a whole lot easier to play. So every time I made an all star team, I was like put my locker next to Ozzie's locker because Ozzie can stir it up, really. He's one of the best I've ever seen at stirring it up and I know he's making faces because I know something's

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coming later.

One other guy I'd like to mention because I think our careers kind of paralleled, and that's Wade Boggs. Wade Boggs was the guy in the American League that put the numbers on the board and the guy that I tried to emulate because we had a similar style, we did similar things, but he was in the American League and I was in the National League and the things that he

was doing on the field, that's what I wanted to do.

And pretty much from that point until 1992, things were like a pretty good player, a guy that really didn't hit the ball out of the ball park. You've got your hits, you did your thing, and then in 1992, earlier in the year, I had a chance to sit down with Joe Morgan and we were talking about hitting and I was asking him about when the weather gets hot, do you lighten the weight on your bat, some hitting questions, and Joe could tell I really was intrigued about the art of hitting the baseball and he said, "You know what, Tony, at some point you need to sit down with Ted Williams."

And later on in 1992 at the all star game I had a chance to sit down with Ted Williams, and I've got to tell you the reason why he made such a huge impact in my career I think is that growing up my father talked about Ted Williams all the time, he had two guys, Ted Williams and Jackie Robinson. My brothers and I, we had Ted Williams' book, that thing had all kinds of notes and pictures and diagrams in it. I'd been in the big league for

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11 years and I wanted an opportunity to meet Ted Williams. The first time I had a bat in my hand. He said, "Hey, Tony, how you doing? Give me your bat." I gave him my bat and he started picking his teeth with it. And if you're worth your salt as a hitter, your mind starts to race, it starts to tick and really what Ted really made me do, he made me think about the art of hitting a baseball. I've got to tell you he was a great man, but he was ornery when it came to hitting a baseball and I used to ask him, "Ted, you've got four guys on the right side of the field, why would you hit the ball the other way?" "I wasn't going to let those guys beat me." And that stubbornness, that

feistiness I think kind of rubbed off on me and from that point in 1992 to the end of my career, as far as I'm concerned I was a much better hitter. I've never been a home run guy, never been a big RBI guy, but from that point to the end of my career I was much better at it.

August 6, 1993, another kind of water shed moment for me, it's my mom's birthday, August 6th, and I got my 2,000th hit on August 6, 1993 and for the first time I think as a player I honestly thought about if I could get a thousand more, I'd have a chance of going to the Hall of Fame. I was standing on first base with Gerald Clark, a former Padre, and the Padres, we didn't have many people get to the 2,000, as a matter of fact we hadn't had any get to the 2,000 mark, and we tended to kind of go overboard, the video, the fire works, the messages from

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people across the league. And I remember standing at first base telling Gerald, "Man, I've got to get a thousand more." This is great, don't get me wrong, I'm happy to get to this point, you've got to get to this point to get to the next point, but to me hitting a 3,000 was going to kind of get me where I needed to go. It was going to kind of justify the type of hitter that I was. And so that's the first time I honestly thought I might have a chance to get here.

'98, we just had a tremendous team in 1998. We were lucky enough to get to the World Series, won our division, beat the Astros, beat the Braves and happened to play the best team maybe in the history of the game, 1998, the Yankees, and getting to Yankee stadium for me is still one of the biggest thrills of my life, being able to walk out there with the monuments, seeing the history, the retired numbers, seeing the guys who kind of paved the way for us to get here.

And then 2001, October 9th, 2001, that was the day I retired and I thought that I had a chance to get here and wasn't sure but that day, it dawned on me that you know what, you've had a pretty good career, people have enjoyed what you've done, and for me, what a day, what a day that was, and it's a lot like today. You don't expect it, because I never really looked at what I did as being anything special. I loved the game. I think that's why you guys are here today, because you love the game, you have a passion for it. I have a passion for it. I

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still have a passion for it. I just don't play any more.

I love teaching, I love what I'm doing now and I'm now the baseball coach at San Diego State, this is my fifth year, actually it's going to be my sixth th year, and I truly love what I do. I'm a big believer in whatever you want, if you want something out of this game, you've got to put the work in it. You've got to work hard. My father said you work hard, good things will happen. Boy oh, boy he was absolutely right. I worked hard in the game because I had to. I wasn't talented enough to just get by on a billing. I really had to work at it. I had to do the video stuff. I had the extra hit. I had to go about my business and do things the way I did. I think people, we make a big deal about work ethic. We make a big deal about trying to make good decision and doing things right, and you know what, we are supposed to. That is what they pay us for. When you sign your name, I'm a big believer when you sign your name on a dotted line, there's more than just playing the game of baseball. I think if you look out here today, you see all these people out here today, they love the game too and there's a responsibility when you put that uniform on that those people,

the people who pay to go watch you play, you're responsible, you've got to make good decisions and show people how things are supposed to be done.

I played for one organization, the San Diego Padres, and when this day started out today, I thought I was going to go

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third. I thought I was going to get to hear what other people said about their towns and their cities. I only know one way, that's the Padre way. I wore brown, I wore the brown and gold, I wore the blue and orange. I didn't get a chance to wear the sand and whatever color blue you want to call that, but I'm proud as heck to be a San Diego Padre. I played for one team, I played in one town. I told the people of San Diego when I left to come to Cooperstown, they were going to be standing up here with me, so I hope they are just as nervous as I am, because this is a tremendous honor to be here today.

There's some people that I want you to meet. When I first started, I played for Ray and Joan Kroc, and both are deceased now, but Linda Ardell, their daughter, is here today. Thank you for coming. Next in line was Tom Werner, and the group of 13 or 14 or however many owners we had, Tom is one of the owners of the Boston Red Sox. I don't know if he's here today, but John and Becky Moores, the best owners in baseball, thank you for being there for me. John Junior and Jennifer, I know you're here somewhere today too, thank you. The community service team with the Padres, we did a lot of good work, didn't we, we did a lot of good work and we will continue to do good work. Thank you.

And all the fans that have made this trek all the way to Cooperstown. I can't begin to thank you. I know some of you were in a bus, some of you drove in your cars. I see the brown

and gold, I see the orange and blue. Again, thank you for coming. You guys, I've got a time limit. These guys are on me like a hawk. I've got to finish because we don't want to get rained on out here.

My mom, she came with us today. She came with us on this trip, but the whole time that we have been here, she's been a little bit under the weather, so mom, I know you're watching on TV. I love you. Thank you for coming. Don't feel bad about not being here. We love you and I'm glad you could make the trip with us.

My father passed in 1993 and this would be an event he would love to be at. He would love it.

My older brother Charles is here with his two daughters Danielle and Clarice, Chris my younger brother and his wife Joanne and their son and daughter Josh and Mya, thank you guys for coming.

And then my family, my wife who again, I would not be standing here today without her. Honey, I love you. Thank you. My son is here. He made it yesterday. Him and his wife Alees, thank you guys for coming. I'm going to be a grandpa in October for the first time so that child's got no chance, he's got no chance. And my daughter Anisha sang the Canadian Anthem and the National Anthem. You guys, I'm so proud of you guys, I really am. Your mom did a wonderful job and I kind of rode in on the back end. You guys make me so proud just watching the way you

handle. Being a son of a major league player is sometimes a difficult thing, but you guys have always handled it great.

And the rest of my family, and that's you guys, that's the fans. My adopted family, especially my fans from San Diego. It was 20 years and I had a blast, I had a blast. I truly enjoyed it, but it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun if you hadn't been as supportive as you were, so I say thank you for all of our fans sitting at PetCo park in the morning, thank you to the fans who made the trek, thank you to the fans who are here to see everybody. I say thank you because you know what, for the rest of my life when I come here to the Hall of Fame and I look out and I see as many people as I see here today, I can say in our first time here, our first Hall of Fame weekend, the people were lined up way, way back through the trees, so thank you, everyone. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

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