

RICK HUMMEL: Thank you very much, Paul. I think it's almost every kid's dream to be sitting on this stage one day as a Hall of Fame player, but my dream like those of many others was cut short, call it death by curve ball, couldn't hit it, couldn't throw it, couldn't even catch it, couldn't run very fast or hit with any power, but I bet I can type faster than any of you guys up here.

I didn't even want to be a sports writer. I wanted to be a sportscaster until my high school driver's training instructor who happened to be a sportscaster too told me that many of the sports broadcasting jobs were going to go to ex-athletes. This is 1962, but as we've learned, he was absolutely right. He told me if I wanted to be in the sports business, and apparently he had seen me play, I ought to try to be a sports writer.

So I tried that. And I went to my home town college Quincy College in Quincy, Illinois. The only problem with that was that then, I did not know how to type. So I would write my articles out long hand for the school's weekly newspaper and then give them to my mother, who was a professional typist, who would type them for me. That worked out fine for the first year but it didn't seem very practical to expect my mom to go to all these games with me, so I took a typing class in my second year of college ledge.

There was a stop at the University of Missouri journalism school where my sports editor, John Walsh, and he is here today,

showed me the finer points of writing and what to read in the library besides the box scores.

I spent three very undistinguished years in the US Army and I've been at the Post-Dispatch for 36 years and enjoyed every month. Everybody remembers his first game. I got lost driving to the first high school football game I ever covered at the Post-Dispatch. I arrived at half time. The score was six to nothing and I figured I hadn't missed much, but unfortunately that would be the final score, so not having seen the touchdown, in essence, I had missed the whole game. This is where I the creative part of my writing career began.

For 34 years it's been my pleasure to cover major league baseball and the players who make it the greatest game of all. Today you're seeing something you will never see again, two players in Tony Gwynn and Cal Ripken, Junior who each had more than 3,000 hits who each played 20 or more years with the same major league team going into the Hall of Fame on the same day. You add Frick award winner Denny Matthew, the voice of the Kansas City Royals for 39 seasons, you have an almost unparalleled combination of loyalty and excellence . Sometimes you wish that baseball could return to those days when players stayed with one team throughout their careers and fans could identify them more easily on their team, but we'd have a bunch more court cases on our hands probably, and Commissioner Selig wouldn't like that very much. He has other issues on his

3

plate anyway.

Many of the people you see behind me are here because they had 3,000 hits or won 300 games or hit 500 home runs. I'm here because I've watched 4,000 games, but I've enjoyed almost every one of them, even the playoff game in 1982 when my computer was kidnapped and held for ransom. The ransom was only \$300 in those games.

The St. Louis fans, the best in the game, got to see plenty of Tony Gwynn in his career and almost got to see him hit number 3,000 in 1999, but August 5th of that year Tony had just one hit in the final game of a three game series to get to 2,999. He would get 3,000 the next night in that baseball hot bed Montreal and, typical Gwynn, he then tacked on hits number 3,001, 3,002 and 3,003 in the same game.

One of the great regrets I and many St. Louis fans have is that we never got to see the great Cal Ripken, Junior play in St. Louis. Of all the games he played in all the places he played them, none of those ever came in any of the Busch stadiums.

Now it's relatively easy to cover baseball in St. Louis. For one thing, ownership now under Bill DeWitt and Walt Jocketty has put together some really good teams and for another thing, the Cardinals have had some really greatly players, many of whom you see behind me today. Hall of Famers everywhere from Stan Musial to Red Schoendienst, Bob Gibson, Lou Brock, Ozzie Smith,

4

Bruce Sutter and others like Steve Carlton, Orlando Cepeda and Dennis Eckersley who started in St. Louis.

Thirdly, the Cardinals in my tenure at the Post-Dispatch have had four of the greatest managers in the history of the game: Red Schoendienst, Whitey Herzog, Joe Torre, Tony LaRussa. If you can't learn any baseball watching these men, talking to them or better yet just listening to them, then you aren't paying attention. They all did their jobs a little bit differently and all of them won World Series, although Joe Torre would have to wait until he was fired by the Cardinals and then joined the Yankees. Joe wasn't blessed with too much pitching

when he managed the Cardinals.

A number of people I'd like to thank for getting my career started and despite my best and worst efforts keeping it on track, I'd like to thank my family. I love you. Debbie, Scott, Christy, Lauren, Ellen, Chelsea, Greg, Virginia, Marcella, Irv.

I'd like to thank the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for investing 36 years in me, especially the late Bob Broeg who hired me, who was the guiding force behind this award and who won this award himself. I wish he were here today.

I'd like to thank the Hall of Fame, Jane, Dale, Brad, Becky, Jeff, Jackie and everyone else for everything they've done for my family and me.

And hardly least, I'd like to thank my long-time friends in the Baseball Writer's Association who have honored me with this

5

award. I've learned something from you guys every day about how to do my job better. Your support has been incredible, your friendship has been unending. This is more than just a dream come true because I never could have dreamt this. Thank you, everyone.

- - - - -