

DENNY MATTHEWS: Thank you, Tom. Tom Terrific. What a perfect nickname because it fits the person as well as describing the pitcher.

Congratulations, Cal, Tony and Rick. And I'm so proud of the fact that all four of us have spent our entire careers with one organization.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Hall of Fame, today as you bestow upon me the greatest honor a baseball broadcaster can receive, I think back to the 1983 Frick award winner, a childhood hero of mine, Jack Brickhouse. Upon receiving the Frick award, Jack said, "Today, I feel like a man, 60 feet, six inches tall." Half a century, a million memories since I grew up listening to Jack, I tell you what, today I know exactly how he felt.

The summer nights in Bloomington were hot and humid. I'm 10-years old lying on the living room floor with a big pillow propped up against the big console radio, my baseball cards beside me. I'm listening to the local radio station, WJBC, one of the many stations on the Cardinals radio network, and the voices coming out of that speaker, Joe Garagiola, Jack Buck, Harry Cara, three of the best ever, together talking to me every night. Little did I know, little did they know, but they were preparing and teaching a 10-year old boy in central Illinois how to broadcast major league baseball. And what marvelous teachers they were. And to think I didn't have to

turn in any home work, write any term papers, pay any tuition, just lie in front of the radio each summer night and learn.

At age ten, you don't think about broadcasting. You want to play. And play we did. What beautiful summers they were, pickup games at Fell Avenue Park, wiffle ball games in the backyard, trading baseball games with your buddies, then when it grew too dark to play, head to the radio to see how the Cardinals were doing, and when that game was over, spin the radio dial. What other games could I get from far away cities. The quality of the radio signal was immaterial. The opportunity for education irreplaceable, so twist the dial, who do you get? Who's this Ernie Harwell? Boy, he's pretty good. Bob Prince, who does he announce for? I like him. He's funny. Chuck Thompson. Yeah. I didn't know what game is this? I liked to listen to him too. Maybe when I grow up my voice will be like Chuck Thompson's. You know what, it didn't work out that way.

But still, playing the game is all what it's all about. So you play Legion ball and you're fortunate enough to play in high school for John Keegan, and at Illinois Wesleyan University, baseball for Jack Horenberger and football for Don Larson. And you play in summer leagues and then you're lucky enough to get to broadcast some high school and college basketball during your last three years in college. Getting the opportunity to work with two talented professionals like Don Munson and Don Newberg at WJBC Radio while still in college. Great on the job

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training, priceless, invaluable.

And two years later, with a big assist from Jack Brickhouse, you are hired. Suddenly you're a big league announcer. How in the world did that happen so fast? And when you start out, you're working with one of the best, Buddy Blattner, and what a great teacher he was. More lessons and now you learn to do your homework.

There came a point during my second year 1970 when I thought my broadcasting career had come to a screeching halt. Now, those of you who listen to big league games, you'll know that every once in a while we have commercial drop ins, eight or 10 seconds and you just in between pitches or between batters drop in a little one liner. One of our sponsors was a company in Kansas city that made snack foods, potato chips, party nuts, pretzels, they were called Guy's Food, owned by a nice, little 80 year old man named Guy Caldwell.

We are in Milwaukee, we are coming up on the 4th of July weekend holiday. So I remember the producer handed me a little card that said "Guy's Foods" so I was supposed to think of a one liner that would be timely and appropriate and so I said in a burst of brilliance, "For those of you planning a party, make sure you take along plenty of those Good Guy's potato chips." It was kind of a slow game and I think (Antonio) Alfonseca, he was about to throw another pitch, and I thought you know what, that was pretty good, they are a good sponsor so give it another

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shot. And the next line out of my mouth was, "And fans, while you're in the store, be sure and grab Guy's nuts," at which point I thought my budding broadcast career was over and go back to school and who knows what. You know what, I survived, Guy's Food survived and here we are 39 years later. And so many people to thank and remember, my father George who was an all American second baseman at Illinois State University and he gave his four sons an awareness and appreciation of the fun and the beauty of the game of baseball. He always encouraged us to play hard, play smart, play well and have fun.

The support of a mother Eileen. She never failed to keep

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dinner warm after a long game or a practice.

Three younger brothers, Steve, Doug Mike, all good athletes, I think, aren't you? All very competitive who, by the way I dominated in the back yard until all three got bigger, faster and better.

I've had three main broadcasting partners in 39 years, my first partner, the original voice of the Royals, the very talented Buddy Blattner, my coach, my mentor, so helpful, so knowledgeable and so courageous to hire a young guy just out of college with very little broadcasting casting experience. I couldn't do it without him.

Fred White, my partner for 25 years, two guys from central Illinois who had the opportunity to broadcast the most exciting and significant games in Royals history. And now Ryan Lefebure.

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We share similar backgrounds, delight to work with. Ryan has a bright future. He will go a long way in the business.

And only two producer engineers in 39 years, that's pretty remarkable, the extremely capable Ed Shepherd and Don Free.

I find it hard to imagine any baseball announcer lucky enough to work for two better team owners, Ewing Kauffman and family and David Glass and family. Remarkable people, wanting only the best for the baseball fans of Kansas City, they are dedicated to that goal, passionate to that end competing against the big market advantages and all the while staying true to their mid-western values and beliefs. Royals fans are, have been and will be blessed to have them. David and Ruth Glass, Dan and Penny Glass are here. Thanks for everything.

The Royals have had a succession of excellent general managers, one of them is here today, John Schueholz from Baltimore. John joined the Oriol organization. And then in

1969, John and I both went to work for the Royals. John, thanks for being here. And I thank so much friends here from all over the country, great friends from childhood, high school, college and beyond. I'm thrilled and honored that they are here to share in this.

Kansas City has been honored previously here in Cooperstown and I'm so proud to be standing here. Ernie Harwell who stood here in 1984. Our great writer Joe McGuff, he won the Spink award. 1999 George Brett, the first Royals player to go into

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the Hall of Fame. George, thanks for being here. And just last year my good friend Buck O'Neil, and Buck stood right here. And you know what, folks, if Buck was sitting behind me this afternoon on the platform, I think right about now you'd hear "Oh, yeah, that's right". Buck, we do miss him.

As a baseball broadcaster, I often think about our listeners and I often think about our fans. But wait, aren't they one and the same? Think back to when you were a child when you really started to follow this great game of baseball, and I'm curious, were you a fan who became a listener or were you a listener who became a fan? Either way I now think of you all as friends and your hospitality really astounds me. You invited my voice into your homes, into your families, into your lives, I know because many of you have told me, in your kitchen, on your patio, in your car, your office, your family room, your basement, you've allowed my voice to ricochet around your garage, fishing boat, you've taken me on picnics and camping trips, but the essence of what a baseball broadcaster does is so well defined in a letter I received a few years ago from a lady out in Kansas, and bear with me because I've got a tough time

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getting through this letter.

"Dear Denny, I have loved baseball my whole life. I played softball as a young girl. I have listened to you since the Royals started in 1969. I am 93. I can't do the things I used to do. I can't see very well any more, but that's okay, because

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I have my radio. So you are my eyes at the ball park. I don't have to see because you create the picture in my mind with your words. Through your eyes and your words, I feel like I'm sitting at the ball park watching the game. Listening to the Royals is the highlight of my day. It gives me something to look forward to, so keep up the good work. Sincerely, Margaret Jenkins." Margaret, I hope you're still listening, because it's folks like you that inspire us to do what we do.

Fans, listeners, friends, my profound thanks to all of you for loving the greatest game in the greatest nation on the face of the earth. Thank you.

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