

# 2023 Awards Ceremony

Sat, Jul 22, 2023

## **Josh Rawitch**

Good afternoon. My name is Josh Rawitch, president of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, and we're so happy that you're all here with us today at the internationally renowned Glimmerglass Opera Theater in Cooperstown to celebrate our 2023 award winners. Joining me on stage are Pat Hughes, who has eloquently captured the imagination of the Chicago Cubs fans from the radio booth since 1996, as he did for the Minnesota Twins and Milwaukee Brewers before that, earning him the 2023 Ford C. Frick Award. He is joined by John Lowe, the recipient of the 2023 BBWAA Career Excellence Award. His three decades with the Detroit Free Press, following stints in Los Angeles and have made him one of the most respected writers in baseball. And representing Carl Erskine, the recipient of the 2023 Buck O'Neil Award, is his son, Gary. The award is given to an individual whose extraordinary efforts enhance baseball's positive impact on society, broaden the game's appeal, and whose character, integrity, and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by the Hall of Famer, Buck O'Neil. And I would now like to introduce the Chairman of the Board of National Baseball Hall of Fame, Jane Forbes Clark.

## **Jane Forbes Clark**

Thank you, Josh and good afternoon. I am so happy to begin today's program with the Ford C. Frick Award, which is presented annually since 1978 to a broadcaster for major contributions to baseball. The award is named after a man who was a broadcaster, president of the National League, the Commissioner of Major League Baseball, and a Hall of Famer. Ford Frick was also a driving force with my grandfather behind the creation of the Hall of Fame, and he was instrumental in fostering the relationship between radio and the game of baseball. At this time, I would like to call your attention to the video monitor for a presentation about the 2023 Ford C. Frick Award winner, Pat Hughes.

## **Video Footage**

### **Jane Forbes Clark**

From his earliest days broadcasting in the minor leagues, Pat Hughes has allowed his wonderful voice and his love of the game to guide his path, turning him into one of the best ever to step behind a microphone. After one season with the International League's Columbus Clippers, Hughes joined the Minnesota Twins crew in 1983, before landing with the Milwaukee Brewers, calling games on radio with Bob Uecker through the 1995 season. Hughes then moved south to Chicago, joining the Cubs radio crew as the franchise began an unprecedented run of postseason appearances. Hughes has now called more playoff games than any other Cubs announcer becoming the team's only broadcaster ever to describe the final out of a Cubs win in the World Series. Pat has called more than 6,000 MLB games during his career, including eight no-hitters, a 25-inning contest between the White Sox and Brewers in 1984, and Kerry Wood's 20 strikeout game in 1998. In the classic tradition of the game's legendary voices, Pat conducts the symphony, that is baseball, blending all the elements into a narrative that never wanders far from the game's true roots. His passion for the game remains matched only by the

admiration of his listeners and his peers. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our 2023 Ford C. Frick Award winner, Pat Hughes.

### **Pat Hughes**

Last month, I received a humbling letter from a Cubs radio listener who wanted me to wish his dad a Happy Father's Day. Dear Mr. Hughes. My dad is a lifelong Cubs fan, and he raised his four sons to be as well. He used to record your broadcast on a cassette tape for us to fall asleep to. As a broadcaster, generally it's bad for ratings when part of your audience is snoozing. But thank you to Jane Forbes Clark and the entire staff here at the Hall of Fame. Thanks to Tom Ricketts and the Chicago Cubs organization for all of your support and being here. And congratulations to the other honorees this weekend. John Lowe is a brilliant baseball writer and a longtime friend. To Carl Erskine for his Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award. And to the newest Hall of Fame ballplayers the true stars of this weekend, Fred McGriff and Scott Rolen. It is my extreme pleasure to be with you today in this magical baseball village. I am delighted, proud and excited. But mainly I am grateful because while the Ford C. Frick Award is a cherished and coveted individual honor, there is simply no way I ever could have gotten here by myself. My family is here. My sweet wife of 36 years, Trish, is the very best friend I have ever had in my life. And a tremendous mother to our two daughters, Janell and Amber. I love all three of you very much. Amber came all the way in from Colorado on a red eye. So thanks, sweetie for being here. I really wish my parents were still alive. Virgil and Mary Margaret. They were kind and gentle. Both were educators. Mom was an elementary school teacher. Dad was a college professor. They stressed reading and learning and getting good grades in school, but they also encouraged athletic competition as well. My older brother John is another person who is no longer with us. He had a very, very difficult life. But in college at San Jose State University, John more than anyone else got me started in broadcasting. My younger brother Chuck is here all the way from San Jose. I love you brother. And members of my wife's family are in attendance, brothers Roger and Marvin Anderson and their families. Thanks to all of you for being here. Receiving the call from the Hall was one of life's best ever experiences. So sublime. It's almost incomprehensible. Baseball Hall of Fame President Josh Rawitch called me last December. I was at home with Trish, also in my living room were my great partner on Cubs radio Ron Coomer, Odyssey Chicago broadcasting executives, Rachel Williamson and Mitch Rosen and the Chicago Cubs president of business operations, Crane Kenney. Crane was thoughtful enough to hire a video crew to record the moment for posterity. The phone rang. And Josh Rawitch says, 'Pat, congratulations on being named the Ford C. Frick Award winner for 2023.' He said more, but I did not hear another word. My head started spinning with joy and emotion. And I truly wish that every baseball announcer could experience that thrill. Within a moment or two, I see a text message on the phone from the great Bob Costas, 'Congrats Pat richly deserved. Welcome to the Club,' and the "C" in the word club was capitalized as well it should be. I have loved baseball forever. Like millions of kids all over the world, I dreamed of being a big league ballplayer someday. I did experience the childhood euphoria of playing on multiple championship teams. I was a decent athlete, but never great. And at about the age of 17, I realized playing pro ball was not going to happen for me. But still I wanted to make a living somehow, in sports. That was my passion, professional sports, in particular, maybe coaching, possibly umpiring or refereeing, two things I did to help put myself through college by the way. And my older brother John was taking broadcasting classes and dabbling in play-by-play, and he encouraged me to do the same. My play-by-play had a very unusual beginning. At the end of my modest athletic career, I'm playing college basketball, or more accurately, sitting on the

bench most of the time. One game, out of sheer boredom, I just started doing play-by-play of my own team during the game. Youngie pull up, foul line jumper good again. He's got 10, Spartans by six. And then I stopped, I didn't want to be annoying. And one of my teammates said, Pat, you're not that bad. Keep that going. So you could say that in my play-by-play career, the first listening audience consisted of the other benchwarmers on my college team, sort of an inglorious beginning. But then I really did make a dedicated commitment to play-by-play announcing. On the campus radio station, KSJS, I called every game I could. Football, basketball, baseball, interview shows, sports wrap ups, then I would listen to my own tapes, critiquing myself harshly, eliminating forever things I didn't like hearing and developing things that sounded okay. And then I began listening with a different ear to established professional announcers trying to gain insights and ideas. And I've been favorably influenced and inspired by many of my broadcasting predecessors, including among others, Russ Hodges, Lon Simmons and Bill King, the Bay Area voices of my childhood, John Facenda, the masterful narrator of NFL films, Vin Scully, Al Michaels, and Marty Brennaman. Bob Costas, Harry Caray and John Miller. Bob Uecker and Al McGuire. McGuire, by the way, also taught me how to hitchhike. As I was climbing the sports casting ladder, I was hired by and worked for some great people, including among others, in 1979, Jim Reisinger in San Jose, California. 1981, John Petrie in Columbus, Ohio. 1983, Billy Robertson, Vice President, Minnesota Twins. And 1984, Bill Haig, Milwaukee Brewers VP. All of them treated me with friendship and respect. In Milwaukee, I was a radio partner with Bob Uecker for 12 seasons. Last December when I got the call from Cooperstown, Bob was among the first to text me congratulations. I called him right back. I said, 'Bob, I am sure I learned more baseball from you than any other person.' He replied, 'I probably should have learned the game myself before I tried teaching it to you.' Thanks to Bob and to Bud Selig, who was the Brewers owner for most of the time I was in Milwaukee. In the autumn of 1995, I was chosen to be the new radio play-by-play man, for the Chicago Cubs. A big transition, going from small-market Milwaukee to major-market Chicago. My new partner would be Cubs legend Ron Santo. Ronnie would become a very important person in my life. Thoughtfully, he called me the night before our first Cactus League broadcast. He said, 'Pat, I know you're nervous. Don't be. You do the play-by-play. You're going to be fine. I'll do the color. We're going to have fun. Okay, I'll see you tomorrow.' As he spoke those words, it might sound corny, but I could literally feel the tension leave my body. I felt very relaxed and ready to go to work the next day on Cubs radio. And the next day in the very first half inning, Ron Santo and I clicked immediately. After the third out, he stands up smiling and shakes my hand and the look on his face said, 'Oh boy, this is gonna be great.' And I thought man if he gets this excited over a Cactus League game, wait until we get into a pennant race. But it was a special time and Ronnie and I shared a unique chemistry that became known as the Pat and Ron show. We spent 15 years together, did plenty of laughing and around Ronnie that was not a big deal because he was one of the funniest people I have ever known, just by being himself. He could be variously a backseat driver, a fashion cop, a food cop and a championship chopbuster. Now I never knew Ron Santo wore a toupee, a hairpiece, until one night I found out. Cubs are playing the Mets at old Shea Stadium in New York, a cold April evening. In the visiting radio booth, right above our heads was this old-fashioned electric heater. The kind that glowed a bright orange when you turned it on. Ronnie and I stand for the National Anthem. Halfway through the song, I smell something burning. Then I hear something sizzling like bacon on a stove, zzzzz. Then I hear Santos say shoot. I turned to look at him. Ron Santo's hairpiece is on fire. A blue flame is shooting out the top of his head. Smoke is everywhere. I didn't panic, I kept my cool, sort of. I took a glass of water and splashed it on his head. And then he said shoot a few more times. Now Ron Santo was a handsome

man, but also kind of vain about his appearance. His first thought was, 'How does it look?' I lied. I said, 'It doesn't look that bad to me.' It actually looked like a golfer, maybe Phil Mickelson, had taken a pitching wedge and whacked one right off the top of his noggin. There was a divot in the top of Santo's head. 'How does it look?' We both thought it was very fitting that the name of the Mets starting pitcher that night was Al Leiter. But Ronnie and Harry Caray both went out of their way to welcome me to Chicago way back when, and I will forever be grateful. Harry also gave me some good practical advice about our profession. He said, 'Pat, when you become a baseball announcer, you don't just sign up for the winning games and the exciting seasons, you sign up for everything.' Pretty good advice. After the 2013 season, Ron Coomer joined me on Cubs radio. I'd say I've been pretty lucky with guys named Ron as announcing partners. The 10 years with Ron Coomer have been wonderful. He is simply one of the best people I've ever known in my life. A total team player, a Chicago native, lifelong Cubs fan. He played for the Cubs. He's insightful, He's smart. He's funny. He explains the game in a way that is easy for the audience to understand. Great sense of humor. And by the way, we got to cover a world championship season for the Cubs together. As long as I'm doing radio play-by-play for the Cubs, I want to have Ron Coomer right next to me. A thank you to all the other people I've worked with and shared a microphone with over the years. Currently the talented Zach Zaidman is the third man in our Cubs radio booth. Zach is a joy to work with. Other third men on Cubs radio have included Andy Masur, Corey Provus, now a prominent announcer with the Minnesota Twins, John Sirott, the radio play-by-play man of the NHL Boston Bruins and Mark Brody. And I've also enjoyed many on the air moments with guys like Bruce Levine, and Len Kasper, among others. I've worked with some of the best engineers in the country and production people, including Kent Sommerfeld in Milwaukee, and in Chicago, Matt Bolts, Dave Miska, and Paul Zerang. And on the production side, Todd Manley and Steven Leventhal, thanks to all of you. In Chicago, we work for great people, team owners, Tom Ricketts and siblings, Laura, Todd and Pete. They want the Cubs to win as passionately as the ballplayers do. And they give us total freedom as broadcasters to just do our thing. Thanks to the Ricketts family. And a very special thank you to Crane Kenney, the Cubs president of business operations, Crane had everything to do with putting me in the Cubs Hall of Fame last year, and he was certainly instrumental in the events that led to me being in Cooperstown here today. Crane, thank you for everything. I'd like to also acknowledge the Marquee Sports Network and their leadership team of Mike McCarthy and Mike Santini. They've been magnanimous enough to include me in some of their programming over the years. Thanks to Mike and Mike. And in 41 years of big league baseball play-by-play, I've worked with dozens of programming directors and station management types. The current executive producer of Cubs radio, Mitch Rosen is simply the best I have ever worked with. Thank you, Mitch. And in closing, I have a note to Cubs fans. If I was writing you a letter it might read, 'What an extraordinary group of people you are. I want to thank you so much for your unbelievable passion for the ballclub and your support of me. When I got the call from Cooperstown last December, I truly think there were some Cub fans who were just as happy as I was with the news. You make me feel like I am a part of your family. You invite me to special events like graduations, bar mitzvahs and birthdays. And I absolutely love those games at Wrigley Field. Those close ballgames where you fans are not just part of the ballpark atmosphere, you become part of the ballgame itself. And you play a significant role in a dramatic Cubs victory. That happens four to five times minimum, every single season. As a broadcaster I feed off of your energy. Let me just say it has been my extreme privilege to be one of your announcers for these past three decades. And before my career ends, I hope I get at least one more chance to say something like: The Chicago Cubs win the World Series! Thank you.

### **Jane Forbes Clark**

We will now turn to the Baseball Writers' Association of America's Career Excellence Award, which has been voted upon annually by the BBWAA since 1962. The award honors a baseball writer for notorious contributions to baseball writing and is presented during the Hall of Fame Weekend by the President of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Again, I would like to call your attention to the video monitor for presentation about the 2023 BBWAA Career Excellence Award Winner, John Lowe.

### **Video Footage**

#### **Video Footage**

I would like to invite Shi Davidi, president of the Baseball Writers' Association of America, who covers the Toronto Blue Jays for Sportsnet, to tell us more about John Lowe and his illustrious career. I would also like to ask John to step forward.

### **Shi Davidi**

On the baseball beat for more than three decades, John Lowe brought the stories and statistics that matter to readers while injecting his prose with his never-ending love for the game. Growing up a Cardinals fan before his family moved to Southern California, Lowe graduated from the University of Southern California and began his career at the Los Angeles Daily News, covering the Dodgers and the Angels. He joined the staff of the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1984, covering the Phillies for three years and inventing a new quantitative measure for pitching performance, the quality start, a number that remains a stalwart for analysts to this day. In 1986, Lowe found a home at the Detroit Free Press. For the next 29 seasons, he chronicled one of the most successful stretches in Tigers history, starting with the 1987 team that won the American League East, Lowe covered the final seasons of record setting double play partners, Alan Trammell and Lou Whitaker, the close of Sparky Anderson's Hall of Fame career and the opening of Comerica Park. Starting in 2006, the revitalized Tigers became one of the American League's most consistently successful teams. Lowe provided his readers with the news and profiled the personalities as the team evolved into a powerhouse. In 2010, Lowe served as president of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Lowe's strong clubhouse relationships helped him win the trust of a new generation of Detroit stars like Miguel Cabrera, Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander as the Tigers won another American League crown in 2012, in the midst of four straight postseason appearances. Lowe retired after the 2014 season, leaving a legacy of dogged reporting along with countless disciples whom he mentored throughout the years. Equal parts wordsmith and newshound, Lowe's work ethic hearkened back to an earlier era while he covered the ever-changing face of the national pastime.

### **John Lowe**

Thank you Shi. Thank you, Jon Morosi for that tremendous introduction and also for being a terrific beat partner with the Tigers. Thank you to my fellow baseball writers for selecting me for this award. Your standards make it profound. Thank you to my friends and colleagues Bruce Jenkins and the late Jerry Fraley. To share the ballot with them for this award represents as high of an honor as being selected. Thank you to the folks at the Hall of Fame. Jane, Josh, Whitney, Becky, Jon, and their dedicated colleagues. Each of you makes the Hall of Fame where the best of baseball is preserved and

cherished. Thank you to my family for making the trip from California. My sister Jennifer, her husband Russ, and their son Ryan. Thank you to a man who is here today. Whitey Herzog is the epitome of the many managers who have taught me the game. When I was young, Whitey deepened and sharpened my understanding of baseball. He did so avidly and repeatedly. Whitey, wherever I have gone in baseball, I have heard your voice. Thank you. I'm thrilled you're here. I'd like to take you back to 1966. The year I realized what the World Series was. In the autumn of 66. I was a second grader in suburban St. Louis. On the afternoon of Wednesday, October 5th, game one of the World Series would start in Los Angeles just after 3 p.m. our time. School got out at 3 p.m. If I walked home from school as usual, I would miss the first moments of the game on TV. So that I could see the game from the start, I asked my mom to pick me up at school for the brief drive home. She said she would. Coming out of the front door of school at 3. I saw her waiting in her gray Oldsmobile. Decades later, I asked her why she was willing to pick me up at school so I could see the first moments of a game. She said I thought it was important. Once again, mom is right. I realized that by striving to see the start of that game, I began a lifetime lesson. The more enthusiastically I dove into baseball, the more I would be rewarded. The ride home from school that day in my mom's car became the first few minutes of my unending journey of baseball enthusiasm. Thanks to my mom, I got home that day to see big doings and the top of the first of game one. Frank Robinson and Brooks Robinson of Baltimore homered back-to-back. With those blows, the Orioles took control of the series for good. My mom, Nadine, gave me a lot more than that ride home for the 1966 World Series. Perhaps most importantly, she gave me a love of reading, which inspired my love of writing. My dad, Warner, gave me two disciplines vital for covering baseball, promptness and mathematics. When my journey led me to cover baseball, I had to learn how to apply my enthusiasm professionally. Because so many people taught me how to do that, I share something with Albert Pujols. As he surveyed his life in baseball, Albert said, 'I had so many people that taught me the right way early in my career.' Three people gave me those chances to learn. They opened the door to my first baseball beats. I went to high school and college in Southern California. While in school, I worked part time in the sports department on my hometown paper in Long Beach, the Independent Press Telegram. Its baseball writers were Tracy Wrinkles on the Angels and Gordie Burrell on the Dodgers. Tracy and Gordie urged a sports editor they knew to hire me for my first full time job. That sports editor was Frank Mazzeo of the Los Angeles Daily News. Frank soon entrusted me with baseball beats. First the Angels, then the Dodgers. In 1986, the Detroit Free Press hired me to cover the Tigers. The folks at the Free Press created ideal conditions for me to keep my journey of enthusiasm going full speed. They gave me freedom to decide how I covered baseball. And they provided teamwork that ensured I never came close to getting burned out. The sports editors who gave me those ideal conditions were Dave Robinson, who hired me and Jean Myers, who allowed me to stay on the baseball beat for more than 20 years. I thank everyone in baseball who spent time with me and taught the game to me. Many of those folks are Hall of Famers. I'd like to mention one because he's both no longer with us and because he was valuable. He became valuable when I, as a young writer, would cover Dodgers games in Montreal in the early 80s. Afterward, I often talked one-on-one in the Expos clubhouse with Gary Carter. From Gary, open and joyous, I learned about the Dodgers Expos game just played, and I learned about baseball on its larger levels. With his enthusiasm, Gary stoked my enthusiasm to learn as much baseball as I could from as many people as I could. With Gary Carter as the exemplar, I thank each Hall of Famer who enhanced my stories, and my baseball education. I have so many more people to thank. The list has more names than a page full of box scores. Many of you are kind enough to be here. If I haven't thanked you, I aim to before you leave Cooperstown. As for the

remainder of my thank you list, I quote what Pat Hughes told his audience when the Cubs stood one out from winning a playoff series at Wrigley Field, 'I wish every one of you could be here right now.' Pat, congratulations to you. I'm thrilled to be a fan of yours. I'm even more thrilled to be a friend. Thank you to my fellow scribes. You always ensured business would be a pleasure. Thank you to each fan who read what I wrote. Your interest in baseball made my career possible. Thank you to so many folks with the three teams I had the privilege to cover, the Angels, the Dodgers and the Tigers. Thank you to my colleagues in the newspaper office. When I came to Detroit, there was a man there who became a year-round partner on the Tigers beat for 20 years. He taught me a lot about Detroit, about the Tigers, and about life. I thank the late Jean Guidy. Above all, I thank the Lord who gave me some writing ability, and who gave me an abundance of three vital components, teachers, opportunities and ideal health. As that kid in St. Louis, I became entranced by baseball history. As a writer, I love to merge past and present. One such chance came at the All Star game in Cleveland in 1997. That All Star game took place on the 56th anniversary of the 1941 All Star game. When you combine 56 and 1941 one thing comes to mind, Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak. But in that 1941 All Star game, DiMaggio nearly grounded into a game ending double play. He reached first with two out in the ninth. That brought up Ted Williams, who amid his .406 season, hit the game winning homer. 56 years later, entering that 1997 All Star Game, Cleveland's Sandy Alomar had a 30-game hitting streak. That night in the seventh inning in his home park, he homered to win the game. So there it all was, the mix of past and present. I could write that Alomar with his hitting streak might not match what DiMaggio did in 1941. But he had just matched what Ted Williams did in 1941. He had homered to win the All Star game. So that's my take on a famous baseball number 56. Now I have a 57, too. I've made it 57 years in my journey of baseball enthusiasm, the journey that began 57 years ago in my mom's Oldsmobile, the whole ride has been outstanding. Thank you very much.

### **Jane Forbes Clark**

And finally, I am honored on behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum to present the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award, which is presented not more than once every three years in honor of an individual, whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball's positive impact on society, broaden the game's appeal, and whose character integrity and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by Buck O'Neil throughout his lifetime. I would like to call your attention back to the video monitor for a presentation about the 2023 Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award winner Carl Erskine.

### **Video Footage**

#### **Jane Forbes Clark**

Carl Erskine's pitching career earned him a long list of impressive numbers and accolades. But his life after the diamond helping others is when his star shined the brightest. As a standout pitcher for the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers from 1948 to 1959, Erskine racked up 122 wins, two World Series championships and two no-hitters. Later, he became a successful business executive. With a long-standing, deep commitment to acts of citizenship. He helped break down racial barriers as a teammate and close friend of Jackie Robinson. And with his son Jimmy born with Down Syndrome, he fought for people with intellectual disabilities, their acceptance and to improve services available to them. Erskine had returned to his hometown of Anderson, Indiana, where he solidified himself as a pillar of the local

community, leading the Anderson College baseball team to four conference championships in 12 years. Erskine was a charter member of both the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the baseball assistance team. And with more than four decades as a volunteer, Erskine was awarded Special Olympics' highest honor, their Spirit of the Special Olympics Award. Ladies and gentlemen to accept our 2023 Buck O'Neil Award on behalf of his father Carl, please welcome Gary Erskine.

### **Gary Erskine**

Good afternoon as mentioned, I'm Gary Erskine, son of Carl and Betty, and it is a thrill of a lifetime to accept this award for my dad. Dad and mom at 96 and 94 years old or years young I should say, are still living in our hometown of Anderson. And they would be here today if possible, but they're enjoying this on live stream I'm sure right now. So hi, mom and dad. Even though they couldn't be here, well represented by family my wife Beth, daughter, Megan. Sister Susie and two of her three kids, Abby and Luke are here. And Luke's wife Susie, and their three children, Carol, Allen, and Brooklyn. And several other friends are here as well. Of course, we'd like to thank Jane Forbes Clark and Hall of Fame people for all the support that they've given us. And special thanks to Josh and Jon and Whitney, and thanks to the board of directors for selecting our dad for this great lifetime achievement award. Dad's baseball career spanned from 1948-1959 all with the Dodgers. Brooklyn was home for the majority of his career, but he did spend the last two seasons in LA and actually was the starting pitcher for the first Dodger home game on the West Coast in 1958. As Jane mentioned, dad won 122 games, threw two no-hitters in 1953, he struck out 14 of the great Yankee team. He set a then World Series strikeout record, and a member of the '55 Dodger World Championship team, and a member of the 1959 LA World Series team. So in dad's 12 years as a pitcher, he played with seven future Hall of Famers. Walter Alston, and Tommy Lasorda were elected as managers, and the legendary Ford Frick Award winning broadcaster, Vin Scully. During that time, he was a player rep for that Boys of Summer team for most of his career and really, in addition to helping his teammates as the player rep, it was really during this time that dad began using his format as a baseball player to encourage others to act for the greater good. So in 1952, which again was in the middle of his baseball career, he met Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, who became a friend and mentor. Dr. Peale was quoted as calling him one of the finest young men he had ever met. He would convince dad to write a cover story for his new Christian publication, Guideposts. The article titled "The Inside Pitch," was an early example of Dad's spirit of giving and sharing of his faith with others. He was 26 years old at that time. It was during this time that dad affectionately became known as the gentleman from Indiana. In 1954, dad and a handful of professional athletes were part of the very first meetings of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In fact, Branch Rickey organized the fundraiser and dad gave the very first keynote address. And with that the FCA was born. Due to injury dad retired from baseball midseason '59. He stayed on as a coach the remainder of that year, and was part of that first LA Dodger, World Championship team. So those highlights of his career are impressive, well documented, but it was his work off the field during this time, that really laid the groundwork for dad and the many society-changing initiatives that he would go and be a part of. And that is where his true legacy lies. So after retiring from baseball, mom and dad returned to New York, planned to live in the Big Apple, but dad will tell you that God had another plan because in April of 1960, little brother Jimmy was born. He was our parents' fourth child. And he was born with Down Syndrome. And that was at a time when it was common for place children with special needs in institutionalized settings. But there was no doubt in our parents' mind that we would bring Jimmy home and raise him with the rest of us. And he'd be a part of everything we did. So as a family, we moved



back to hometown of Anderson to be near our grandparents, and extended family and our parents knew this was the very best place to raise their children, including Jimmy. So as Jimmy grew up, mom and dad became instrumental in bringing local families together with disabilities in our community. They initiated the first support groups and educational programming for individuals and their families. And it was around this time or soon after that, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, his sister had special needs, began hosting camps in her home for special needs individuals. She saw the power and the happiness that sports provided for those who attended and Special Olympics was born. In those early years, Mrs. Shriver asked Dad to speak at the Kennedy Center, just about my parents' experiences with Jimmy and that speech inspired so many that dad went on to travel the country promoting Special Olympics and its mission of fostering acceptance and inclusion for all. So we're proud to say that Jimmy, little brother Jimmy, participated for 50 years in Special Olympics. Another way dad continued to support those in need and stay connected to baseball was as a board member of baseball's Baseball Assistance Team through the Commissioner's office. He also coached Anderson University baseball team for 12 seasons, and I know that many of those players come and see him today and thank him, credit him for their life of service to others. So as FCA and Special Olympics flourish nationally, so that awareness and opportunities for special needs individuals. It spanned right in our hometown of Anderson. And again, this was due to a small group of parents that saw the need, and our parents were leading the way. So a small commercial building in Anderson was made available as an educational facility to our brother and others. As awareness and acceptance grew, so did the facility and eventually in 1987, a new state of the art center called the Hopewell Center was built. And many people say that the Hopewell Center would never have come to be without dad's participation. In it thrives today and in all those that receive services there thrive as well. In the meantime, all this going on, Dad, because he's got a huge heart and boundless energy for giving back, wrote three books. The first, "Tales from the Dodgers Dugout" is just a collection of short stories from his years in baseball, and he loves to tell baseball stories. The next, "What I Learned from Jackie Robinson" is just a heartfelt story of that piece of baseball history. And the third, "The Parallel" really speaks to the many similarities of Jackie's experiences in his playing career with those that brother Jimmy experienced early in the first decade of his life. It involves an overall theme of kindness, acceptance and inclusion. So until just recently when age finally caught up with dad's true traveling, or he would be here today, dad continued to be sought after as a motivational speaker. His talks are always entertaining full stories. But they always centered around that same message, seeing the best in others and looking for similarities and not differences. Everyone who ever heard dad speak, hopefully inspired to do better and do more for others. So dad were here today, he would tell the story of how all this started with his good childhood friend, Johnny Wilson. Johnny and dad met in elementary school remain friends for life. Johnny's son Johnny Jr. made the trip and is with us today. But these two young guys from the other side of the tracks in Anderson, Indiana. Both went on to succeed in professional sports. But it was their work off the field and off the court that motivated them both. So both Johnny and dad have been honored with life-size statues in our hometown commemorating their lasting contributions to society and service to others. So dad's dedication to serving others has also been recognized by a local hospital who named the rehab center after him. And an elementary school that was named Erskine Elementary when it was newly constructed. And most recently, the Erskine Green Training Institute was established providing job training to individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the state of Indiana. So dad still receives fan mail every day. A lot of them ask for autographs, but a lot of it includes handwritten letters just basically thanking him for the person that he is. Dad personally thanks, answers all those letters.

So it was almost three years ago that mom and dad were approached by filmmaker Ted Green, who's also here today, about creating a documentary about their life's journey, and impact on others. "The Best We've Got" was released in August of last year, it has been a source of love and inspiration for people all over the country. Through all of this, dad is always being himself, takes a positive approach to everything that comes his way and always sees the best in everyone. And dad was and still is The Gentleman from Indiana. So with that, Ted Green was kind enough to shoot a short little video of dad and we want to show that now.

### **Carl Erskine Video Footage**

Hello, everybody. I'm Carl Erskine. It's quite an honor to receive the Buck O'Neil Award. I'm very, very grateful. I'm not traveling much anymore, so I'm not able to be in person. I'm sorry about that. And Betty and I share it all together. A lifetime, 75 years you might add. Just a skinny kid from Anderson, Indiana, it's been quite a journey for me to be on the big stage. That's a dream a kid has, you know, to play on the same stage with superstars of the game. Of course my roommate was Duke Snider, one of the all-time greats. I played with Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella, and all that team, they're all Hall of Famers. I don't know where I fit in there, but I feel glad to be there. I think what I've tried to do is have some humility, and an athlete it's hard to do sometimes if you accomplish very much. But I think there's a lot of strength in having humility. And I think I tried my best to do that. Servant-leader, that resonates strongly with me. I want to thank the Hall of Fame for this incredible honor. Thank you.

### **Gary Erskine**

Well, as you can tell he's still in there pitching every day. So in closing, our family wants to congratulate John and Pat for their awards. And also look forward to the Induction Ceremony tomorrow honoring Scott Rolen, another fellow Hoosier, Fred McGriff. And again, thanks to Jane Forbes Clark and the entire Hall of Fame team for selecting dad for this award. Thank you.

### **Jane Forbes Clark**

Thank you, Gary. And thank you and congratulations, Carl. This has been a wonderful afternoon. And now I'd like to ask Gary, Pat and John to join Josh and I so that we can congratulate them collectively one more time. Ladies and gentlemen, our 2023 Buck O'Neil, Ford C. Frick and BBWAA Career Excellence Award winners.

### **Jane Forbes Clark**

Thank you all so much for coming this afternoon to this wonderful event at this beautiful Glimmerglass Opera House and we hope that you'll join us tomorrow for our 2023 Induction Ceremony at the Clark Sports Center at 1:30 or tune in to MLB and you can watch it live. Thank you very much and travel safely.