

BBWAA Press Conference Jan. 22, 2020, New York City

Larry Walker: I'd really like to thank all of you for being here. A special thanks to the Baseball Writers for this incredible honor. I'll be going in with Derek and Ted and Marvin's legacy. It's a call I wasn't expecting. And maybe the greatest call I've ever got. It was an incredible whirlwind between yesterday and today. I'm very honored to be a part of this and look forward to the things that are going to be happening here. Derek doesn't have this issue but there's a certain cap I gotta put on when I go in to the Hall and ultimately it is the Hall's choice and we talked a lot about it today and I thought I'd clear that up. It comes down to two obviously Montreal and Colorado's. Being a Canadian, Montreal's spent a few years there had a great time spent 10 years with Colorado where the majority of my damage was done and with that I think the years that I spent there it will be a Colorado Rockies hat I'll be wearing to the Hall of Fame. It's a hard decision being a Canadian but I feel that all the (word) games played in Colorado the years spent there it really seems like the right decision but all three teams will be on that plaque represented and I'm honored I got to put all three of those uniforms on.

Derek Jeter: Thank you Jon, Jane, Tim, Jack all these years all the Baseball writers for voting for me. This is an absolute honor for me to go into the Hall of Fame alongside Larry alongside Ted Simmons and congratulations to the late Marvin Miller and his family. This is something that was not a part of the dream when you're playing. When you're playing you're just trying to keep your job. That's first and foremost. And you try and compete year in and year out trying to win and when your career is over and done with then it's up to the writers. And Again I just want to thank the baseball writers. I want to thank my family. My parents, my sister's not here my wife is here today, my two young daughters who are too young to make it but one day I'll be able to them some highlights. Thank you once again.

Question: Derek you never wanted to talk about the Hall of Fame all those years, now I think you can when you put it in perspective now what does it mean to you?

Derek Jeter: It's hard to put into words. I've told everyone throughout the course, only my career but the last five years up until yesterday I didn't want to talk about it because I didn't want to jinx any opportunity that I might have. I never took this for granted and I understand that these are the best players to ever play the game and when you're in it you don't necessarily sit down and view yourself that way. I've always been what's next, what's next, what's next how can we win and how can we win some more so to have the opportunity now to be inducted into the Hall of Fame I guess the best way to answer it is I don't know what to say. I'm looking forward to this summer. It's an emotional time. It's a time of reflection and it's a lot of hard work and a lot of years have gone into this and this is the highest honor.

Question: You said you played to keep the job and win championships. How does this compare to winning championships?

Derek Jeter: When you win a championship, obviously you're celebrating with 25 guys, more than 25 guys. You're celebrating with an entire organization. This is an individual honor but I'm sharing it with all the people that have helped me along with way so there's some similarities but yet there's some differences and both of them are very hard. I don't know if getting into the Hall of Fame is harder than winning a championship they're both very difficult but it's a good question but I don't try to compare

them because this is special all on its own. It doesn't get any better than this. There's no more awards there's no other place you can go. I mean this is it so this is as good as it gets.

Question: What have the last 24 hours been like for you and has there been anyone you've heard from that stands out?

Larry Walker: For me it wasn't quite that obvious that I was going to have Jack calling me so once that phone call happened, like you say, the tears come out, joy. When I went to bed last night I never realized how mentally tired I was and couldn't sleep everything was still spinning around and just the happiest involved. I apologize to everyone that's been messaging me. There's over 300 messages on my phone and my voicemail's full but I want to get back to every one of you. It's been great to hear from everybody and all the appreciation and thanks to family and friends. It's been overwhelming.

D: It's been a whirlwind. Like I said, I never just sat down and assumed that this was going to happen. It's not an assumption that you make. I spend time with family and friends and I wanted them to be around if potentially this were to happen. I wanted my two daughters to be around because obviously they never saw me play. They don't know much about my career or that side of me and it was a special moment. My family and my friends are extremely important to me. They're the reason why I'm here today and I just wanted to share that moment with them.

Question: While you guys were playing at some point in your career did you think you ever had a chance to be in the Hall of Fame?

Larry Walker: Like Derek said, you don't play your career to think that this is going to happen. You go out there and you bust your butt and your battle with your teammates to take on that other team and winning is the most important thing that you strive for your whole career and when it's over then you reflect on it and you hope that something like this could happen but it's such a small minimal number of people that get in to have this honor so maybe once said and done and the numbers started coming out it started to make a little sense to me but it still doesn't make sense that there's Hall of Fame everywhere on me right now and it hasn't sunk in.

Question: Derek, you mentioned two times now that your daughters never saw you play and you want to show them highlights. Other than winning championships, what highlights would you like them to see of your career?

Derek Jeter: All the good stuff. Nothing bad just strictly all highlights. That's it. I don't know if there's an in particular I would show, I think it's more explaining to them what my experience has been like, my career's been like. I played 20 years in the Yankee organization. In my mind, the greatest organization in sports. The only place I ever wanted to play and just sharing with them the opportunity that I had, the dream that I had when I was just a little bit older than they are and the opportunity I got through the Steinbrenner family for me to play my entire career with the only organization I ever wanted to play with. I had a lot of success. I had a lot of good teammates, played a lot of great teams. I'll just share all those stories with them.

Question: Derek, you had a very special relationship with the owner, George Steinbrenner as well as your manager, Joe Torre. What do you remember of their advice they had given to you that you took.

Derek Jeter: The Boss was simple. Win. That was it. You know he was an old football coach and I've joked about this before but he had a real tough time, and I say this in the most respectful way, he had a

real tough time comprehending that in the course of 162 games each season, you may lose a game. You laugh, but that's how he thought. And I can say I had the same mindset. There's no reason why you can't win on that particular day so he was a big preacher of accountability, possibility, work ethic and Mr. T's he's probably the best communicator I've ever been around. He preached that you treat everyone fairly, treat everyone the same and you have to take the time to get to know people and that's a lesson I learned from him early on in my career.

Question: You have different starts with Jeter being a first rounder and Walker being an international signee. How did your time in the minors help shape your careers?

Larry Walker: For me, it made my career. I didn't play high school baseball growing up. When you're born in Canada you enter the world with a hockey stick and skates on and that's what you do so baseball was something I never did. I played more softball than baseball growing up so until I was 16 and got an opportunity with Team Canada and got scouted by Jim Fanning (?) and Bob Rogers the minor league is I used to figure out how to do the game and play it. You heard my thing yesterday about cutting across the infield because I didn't know you had to touch second base and things like that. I didn't know the rules. I'd never seen sliders, fork balls, so the minor leagues is where it all happened. All the coaching, watching other player's success and failures, learning from them. It was the road that paved the way for me.

Derek Jeter: That's a true Hall of Famer. He didn't even have to play the game to make it to the Hall of Fame. He didn't even play baseball growing up. The minor leagues for me, I was completely over matched. I did it my whole life. It was a learning experience with growing pains and you have to overcome it. I grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan and I signed the day after my 18th birthday and then all of a sudden you're playing against the greatest players in the world and I was completely overmatched. I had to learn how to deal with failure because growing up when you're younger sometimes you don't have to deal with that and it helped prepare me for what was to come in New York.

Question: Derek could you please talk about May 29th 1995 your first game in Seattle and also how you were notified in Triple A that you were coming up and that night with Mariano in the restaurant with the disappointment of being sent down.

Derek Jeter: Ok that was in three parts.

Larry Walker: You got sent down?

Derek Jeter: Yea, yea. I'll tell you about that in a second. It wasn't my fault. So May 19, 1995, my first game in Seattle was 0-5. I remember that and after the game walking with my dad to McDonald's because there were no restaurants open. First time I was playing in a dome, other than the statistics that day, I can't tell you anything else because I don't remember. It was all a blur. Someone asked me about the first game I played in Yankee Stadium. I can't tell you who we played, I can't even tell you what I did because it was all a blur. Getting sent down was all Mariano's fault. It's true. Mariano was a starter at the time and he wasn't a very good starter and he had a bad game and they sent us both down on the same day so thank you to Mariano for the only time I got demoted in my professional baseball career. We laugh now but we were crying.

Question: What does Felipe Alou mean to you and what's the biggest thing you learned from him?

Larry Walker: Well, the whole family, Felipe and having Moises as a team mate was a great experience. Felipe came in with the '94 team that we were pretty good until the strike hit and it was fun to just watch him come to the field every day knowing that he had a ball club that was doing something pretty darn special and to watch him communicate with the guys. A lot of managers don't have that communication skill. He was hand on, take you aside and talk to you, the whole team. A manager you just felt comfortable around and you could say anything to him. I think that was the one thing I definitely remember, how approachable he was.

Question: What would you like to ask or say to the one writer that didn't vote for you?

Derek Jeter: That's where our minds are a little bit different. I focus on the ones that did. It takes a lot of people to all agree to get you to this point so I'm not thinking about that. I'm happy that I'm sitting up here on this stage right now and that's just somethings that doesn't cross my mind.

Question: Reminisce about the last week of the season because you sent out in a way that was uncommon for many great athletes.

Derek Jeter: People ask me what game stands out the most. It's a little unfair because it's the freshest in my mind. The last game I played in New York was the only game I ever played in New York where we were eliminated which, shouldn't mean anything but the relationship I had with the fan base, there was a playoff atmosphere. I've said it time and time again, how much respect and gratitude I have for the fan base in New York, the way they treated me, not just my final game but my entire career it was great to have one last magical moment is the best way to put it, at Yankee Stadium.

Question: Larry, you mentioned about that voicemail box full. You mentioned about 300 messages. Is there a message from Fergie Jenkins, who obviously will join as a fellow Canadian? Did you hear from Fergie or any other fellow Canadians?

Larry Walker: I have heard from a few Hall of Famers and that was one of the things I was asked today and some of them reached out and some guys got a hold of my number and I got some great messages and yes, I did hear from Fergie giving me a congratulations and welcoming me into the Hall of Fame. It was pretty cool. Pretty cool to go through the messages. Some names I didn't have in my phones and a number would pop up and I would push on that number and oh, okay Alan Trammell, you're kidding me that's cool. That was neat and a few other ones too.

Question: Larry, you didn't have the luxury of playing in a big market like Derek did. Over the course of these 10 years of being on the ballot was there a part of you that said maybe its Coors Field maybe its... maybe you didn't get to play in a big market. Did those thoughts go through your mind through this whole ballot process?

Larry Walker: It had to go through my mind because it was always talked about, I'd always hear about it so it's part of the deal. I played where I played. Montreal was a great time, I played up there and had opportunities to win. The same thing happened in Colorado. We did win the first wild card time in '95 so, we lost to the world champions that year with the Braves and then going to St. Louis, which putting that uniform on was quite an experience. A very famous, I guess, franchise but their low market but it was in the Major Leagues and I'm never going to shy away from where I played. I played in a hitter's paradise in Colorado but it was a Major League baseball team. Not a lot of kids get to live that dream out and I got to for 17 years so I'm good with it.

Question: Derek, you've mentioned your family a couple of times. What were the conversations and emotions like with your parents when it became official and now that your career is complete, what has their impact been on your career?

Derek Jeter: They were very proud to say the least. My dad mentioned to me that he's responsible for all the talent that I've ever had. He also mentioned that he was a much better short-stop than I was but that they used wooden bats that broke and they had to put nails in them. Both of my parents have been supportive throughout my entire life, not just my professional career and I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them. Moving forward they are obviously still very supportive. Their babysitting our kids right now which made it possible for me to come up here and spend some time with you. I could go on and on about the support that I've gotten from my entire family. My wife is here today. Obviously she wasn't around for most of my career but the support that she has shown the past couple years and the last five years, I wouldn't be here without her, as well.

Question: Derek, you made your clear about the one no vote. It's become a big subplot the past couple days, even O.J. Simpson checked in on it. I had your back, Derek. I'm just wondering for Jane or for Tim. If you just discussed the philosophy in not telling or not forcing voters make their votes public.

Tim Mead: I think there's ultimately the rules and regulations controlled by the BBWAA and the voting process and in that ballot, the voters have a choice of making that vote public or not and that is kind of the agreed upon guidelines established by the membership. I know Jack will be checking in as well but that's kind of the way that process has been run and it continues to be run.

Jack O'Connell: I need to clarify this position because it preceded Tim's term. The BBWAA made a proposal to the Hall, maybe five years ago or so to be completely transparent as we are with our awards and to make all the ballots public but the Hall's Board turned that down and they said they preferred that the individual decide whether he or she wishes to make the ballot public. And that's the option this voter has.

Question: For all the success you had in two decades As a player and as a teammate, has it made it all the more frustrating what you're going through in Miami with losing and the empty ballpark and where would a title as CEO of the Marlins fit in alongside for you the accomplishments of the Yankees.

Derek Jeter: It's been a lot of fun down there losing. I mean, look, the bottom line is, when you're competing you're competing to win and we've taken on quite a challenge down there in Miami but we look at it as being a huge opportunity. We believe in the fan base in Miami. We believe in the organization we're building. We understand it's going to take some time. I've said it before, I preach patience even though I have none but it takes a little time for the fan base to develop that trust for it. I can't go down there and tell everyone to trust me. They don't know me. I'm not going to make any promises I can't keep and every promise that we've made we've kept so far. I want to win as much as anyone. I didn't get into this to lose. I could have stayed home and retired. Just ask my wife. I'd be a little bit happier if I was home every day and retired but I got in to this because I always wanted to give back to the game at the highest level and I wanted to build something that we could be proud of, everyone in Miami could be proud of.

Question: Was there a turning point in your careers when either of you thought, this could go either way?

Larry Walker: I guess for me, a turning point was August 16th in 1989 when I got a call saying you're coming up to the big leagues so that's the ultimate turning point where you're going from living on meal money and riding on buses everywhere to playing in parks where they've got backgrounds where you can see the ball and lights that actually light the field and everything just becomes easier. That was just getting that opportunity to put on a Major League uniform was my turning point.

Question: for Larry, I just can't fathom what it must have been like to learn the game, getting into it without really knowing that much about the game and Derek, I'd like to ask you too about your struggles when you first got started when you started winning with the Yankees. Do you think back on those days and say you've made it. Did you ever take a moment and just reflect on how hard it was to get to that point.

Derek Jeter: You go first.

Larry Walker: I forgot what he asked me. I guess as my friends all seem to tell me I'm athletic and I have the ability to pick up sports maybe a little quicker so baseball was a lot of work and a lot of practice but I was a great learner, listener and just took anything that anybody ever told me. A lot of my success was from watching other players. I love to watch other players and see what they were doing. If they did it and were successful with it, it was something I could try and maybe add my own twist to it and I also did the bad things they did. I didn't want to see them and repeat them from myself so I could learn from them. I took up 10 pin bowling after I retired and I threw a perfect game 2 years later. I just love the challenge of trying to earn something new. Baseball was new for me.

Derek Jeter: And I forgot my part. I always had a tough time appreciating the journey along the way. My parents always used to tell me, hey you have to sit back and enjoy the moment. I was just never able to do it. I don't know if that's a character flaw or part of the reason I'm here. It was just always what's next, what's next. If we won, I forgot about it and tried to prepare to win the next season. If we lost, I forgot about it and tried to prepare for the next season. I never really got a chance to sit back and reflect. Even when my career was over, I really haven't had an opportunity to sit back but maybe that starts now.

Question: When you debuted in the in the big leagues around 95 about 16 percent of the Major league baseball players identified as African American. Regrettable by your final year that number dipped to 6 about percent. As an ambassador for the game, and now an owner and Hall of Famer, how do you feel about the decline in black participation in the game and what do you think should be done to involve more black participation in the game?

Derek Jeter: I think it's sad. I think part of it is a generational thing. The younger generation, and let me finish before anyone judges me, I think they're into instant gratification. If you see a player playing college basketball, the next year they're in the NBA. You see a player playing college football the next year they're in the NFL. You see someone playing college baseball, they're disappear for 3 years even if they're the best and it's 2 or 3 years later than you see them in Major League baseball so I think kids, nowadays want to go towards, not the easiest route, but the fastest route and that's unfortunate but I think that one thing that Major League baseball has done is doing a better job of getting inner city kids to play the sport but we need to do a much better job at that and I don't think there's an easy answer for it. If there was an easy answer for it, we'd have figured it out a long time ago but it's something that's top of mind and going forward we have to do a better job. We have to get more kids playing baseball.

Question: Have you talked to Mariano, what did Mariano tell you now that you're a Hall of Famer like Mariano and how special is it for you to go in your first year like he did.

Derek Jeter: I had not spoken to Mariano again since yesterday. Mo disappears a little bit. I was talking with Jason Zillo earlier on and if I go down with this, you're going down with me, Jason. You can reach out to Mo, he won't answer his phone for a couple months then he'll resurface. I haven't spoken to Mo, I've seen the kind words that he's said. I was happy I had the opportunity to be at his induction ceremony last year, it was a special moment. I think everyone knows the special bond that a group of players had in New York and I'm looking forward to touching base with him here.

Question: Inaudible.

Derek Jeter: First of all, that's news to me. Is that accurate, where the plaques go? Make sure everyone's on the same page here. Hey it's awesome. Me and Mo have known each other since I was 18 years old. We've been through a lot together. What can you say, he's arguably the greatest relief pitcher in the game. It's always up for debate, right? He's a guy that we wouldn't have all these championship if it wasn't for him because he was basically automatic so it's an honor for me to be in the Hall of Fame. I don't care where they put me. They can put me in the restroom if they want to but to be next to Mo is quite a thrill.

Question: How's your nephew?

Derek Jeter: He's doing good. He's getting older now. He's 8 years old and he's playing all the sports and enjoying himself. He's a little torn now he roots for both teams which is a good thing. He plays in different leagues so he's doing great, thanks for asking.

Question: When you look back on your career, what are you most proud of?

Derek Jeter: I'm most proud that I was a Yankee. It's the only thing I ever wanted to do since as long as I can remember, to play shortstop for the New York Yankees and I had an opportunity to do that. An opportunity to do that for a long time and when it's all said and done that's what I'm most proud of.