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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 13, 1990 50 SEP 13 P5:23

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH:

CHRISS WINSTON *cw*

FROM:

CURT SMITH *CS*

SUBJECT:

WORLD SERIES ARTICLE

I. SUMMARY

Enclosed is the suggested text of a story, to be published under your byline, that Major League Baseball has requested for its official World Series program. There are several passages which I have bracketed. They reflect what I hope are your views regarding different aspects of your love of baseball.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE:

9. 14

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TO:

Curt

I'd like to mention my

pride in having son George connected
with Major League Ball as managing
partner (??? need exact title)
of Rangers..

and my respect and admiration for
my friend Ted Williams.. perhaps the
greatest hitter in baseball.

4

MEMORIES IN THE FALL

By George Bush

It is said that you never forget your first love. For me, that was, and is, Barbara. But a runner-up is baseball -- and more specifically, America's grandest sports event, the World Series.

My first memories of baseball came as a boy, growing up in Connecticut. I followed The Game, and memorized its box scores. My favorite team was the ~~New York Yankees~~ ^{Boston Red Sox - though I loved the Giants}, and ~~my father would take me to the big ballpark in the Bronx.~~ ~~There, I watched my favorite player, the Pride of the Yankees.~~ ^{My Dad took us} ~~to see~~ His name was Lou Gehrig, and he was a Hall of Fame first

baseman. Moreover, he was a good and quiet man about whom teammate Bill Dickey observed, "Every day, any day, he just goes out and does his job." Half-a-century ago, the Iron Horse was stricken by a form of paralysis which now bears his name -- yet in a speech at Yankee Stadium, he said, "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." Lou Gehrig was, and remains, my hero -- but we were lucky just to see him play, especially in the World Series.

[[Even now, I remember my Dad and I listening to the radio as Graham McNamee described the fabled No. 4 step to the plate, swing his bat, and electrify America.]] Lou played in seven World Series from 1926 through 1938 -- the Yankees winning six. Lou blasted 10 home runs, had 34 runs batted in, and batted .361. Last fall, presenting the Lou Gehrig memorial stamp to the Hall of Fame, I thought of how he enriched the national pastime --

much as baseball and the World Series enrich our national character.

Since 1903, the Fall Classic has become a metaphor for America's love affair with baseball. Millions watch it; millions more listen to, read about, and even argue over it. For a few golden days every October, each of us becomes a self-anointed expert. After all, baseball is the most democratic of sports (of course, it's also the most republican) -- and whether in the major leagues, or in Little League, what counts is the size of your heart, and of your dreams.

Babe Ruth, whom I met in 1948 when he presented his papers to Yale University, spoke of this when he said, "Baseball comes up from the youth. You've got to start from way down, when you're six or seven years old. And if you try hard enough, you're bound to come out on top." He knew the World Series enchants kids of every age. (~~In the Babe's and, later, my children's time that meant hiding a radio in class to catch a few innings before school recessed.~~) Today, it means convincing parents to let you watch a big game after bedtime. Whichever, the Fall Classic evokes a continuum of memories. We mark chapters of our lives by the World Series we recall.

Those memories often evoke a feeling of family. For instance, after graduation Barbara and I packed up our red Studebaker and left the Northeast for Texas. Our next decade was marked by the sights and sounds of baseball. Nationally, I remember three of the greatest announcers in baseball's tide of

times -- Mel Allen, Red Barber, and Vin Scully -- airing the 1950s Subway Series with the Yankees of Stengel, Mantle, and Berra v. the Dodgers of Robinson, Furillo, Hodges, and Reese.

Back in Texas, ^{our} ~~my~~ four boys ^{all played} entered Little League ^{ball.} I coached ^{for awhile} ~~it.~~

As for Barbara, well, even then, ~~ten~~ of thousands of Texas kids played Little League -- and there were times I thought she was

car-pooling all of them! *(Incidentally Barbara Bush knows how to score a ball game along with the best of them)*

[[Next came the sixties, when our youngest child -- Doro -- too, learned the magic of baseball.]] Together, the Bush family marveled at the Impossible Dream Red Sox, St. Louis' El Birdos, Detroit's first Series title in twenty-three years, and, of course, the Miracle Mets. In 1970, we watched as Brooks Robinson devastated the Reds and received an automobile as the Classic's Most Valuable Player. A defeated Johnny Bench said after the Series: " If we'd known he'd wanted a car that bad, we'd have bought him one." The next year evoked more heroics by Roberto Clemente of the Pirates. Said Bowie Kuhn, accurately and eloquently, "He had about him the touch of royalty."

Clemente's artistry touched more than just this country, showing that the Series is not only an American institution. It's a global affair. In 1975, the Red Sox and Reds staged what has been called the greatest game ever played -- Game Six of the World Series. Carlton Fisk smacked his twelfth-inning home run at 12:34 A.M. Eastern Time, giving Boston a 7-6 triumph. [[I was stationed in Beijing as Envoy to China at the time, and recall how our Embassy's Red Sox fans -- nearly eleven thousand miles

from Fenway Park -- were cheering Fisk's homer almost as soon as it cleared the wall.]] Two years later, I was back in Washington when another baseball event traveled far outside America. In college, I had batted eighth -- or as I put it, second clean-up. In Game Six of the 1977 Classic, a real clean-up hitter surfaced. Reggie Jackson blasted three home runs to give the Yankees their first world championship since 1962.

In the 1980s, the World Series added to its unique history as stars like Mike Schmidt, Bret Saberhagen, Kirk Gibson, and Dave Stewart showed why baseball is America's ambassador of goodwill. Over the past year, I've been impressed, anew, by how true that is -- whether greeting Little Leaguers on the South Lawn of the White House, hailing the Oakland A's in the Rose Garden, or telling Polish boys and girls in Warsaw, "Few things show America's love like bringing our national pastime to you." The World Series embodies that love, and the teamwork, generosity, and dedication which, every fall, brings the league champions together in the biggest show in town.

Roy Campanella was the beloved catcher of the Brooklyn Dodgers who played in five World Series. Once, he explained why the Series -- like baseball itself -- is so special. "You have to be a man to be a big-leaguer," he said, "but you have to have a lot of little boy in you, too." Campy knew, like all baseball fans, why two of the most beautiful words in any language are, simply, "Play ball."

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