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[July 1989]

(Smith/Blessey)
May 25, 1989
Draft Two
BASE

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LITTLE LEAGUE
ROSE GARDEN
JUNE 1989

See
... with the girls,
~~Commissioner Giamatti, Bobby Brown, Peter O'Malley,~~
President Hale, friends and fellow fans.

Let me welcome you to the White House, and say how pleased I am to help celebrate this 50th anniversary of Little League Baseball. And amid the many special people here, let me point out two in particular.

The first is my dear friend Bill Shea. Bill, of course, is the man who helped found the Amazin' Mets. Shea Stadium in New York is named in his honor. And for the past 20 years, he has served as President of the Little League Foundation.

But what you may not know is that Bill was my catcher when I threw out the first pitch at the 1980 Little League championship game in Williamsport. Fact is, Bill's knees still have scars from blocking what Casey Stengel used to call a "55-foot curveball."

Then, there's Bobby Brown. As you know, Bobby is now President of the American League. But before that, he was a fine player for the New York Yankees. And his roommate was that master linguist and my favorite philosopher, Yogi Berra.

Once, the story goes, Bobby and Yogi were reading late at night in their hotel room. Bobby was reading a medical journal. Yogi was reading a comic book. Finally, Yogi put the magazine down, turned off the light, and said, "Bobby, my book had a happy ending. How did yours come out?"

Well, Bobby went on to become a doctor, and Yogi, a national treasure. And the treasure we honor here -- Little League Baseball, now half-a-century old -- went on to become a reflection of America's love affair with baseball.

You know, I love the game. Played it when I was a kid -- often, if not always well. And my favorite player was Lou Gehrig -- a good and quiet man, a hero. When I was a boy, my father often took me to Yankee Stadium, and I would dream of playing first base one day.

Some time later, in college, where I batted eighth -- or, as I put it, second clean-up hitter -- another Yankee hero paid a visit to Yale University. Babe Ruth came to present his papers. And since I was team captain, I received his papers on Yale's behalf.

I'll never forget that day. Nor the day, _____ months _____, when the Bambino, now dying of cancer, told the crowd at Yankee Stadium: "

My friends, those very qualities -- " " and " " and " " -- have helped Little League Baseball become an American --

Amesbury Mass.
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indeed, international -- institution. My four boys played it. I coached it. And Barbara -- well, back then there were some Americans playing Little League. And I'll confess: There were times when I thought Barbara Bush was car-pooling them all.

And the thing is: We're not unusual. For millions of families have been touched by the magic of Little League -- the reward of learning, the thrill of competing, the beauty of helping people help themselves. It all started with 36 players, and a handful of adult volunteers, in Williamsport. And it's grown, like Topsy, into the largest organized youth sports program in the world.

Little League, for example, is the only youth sports program chartered by the Congress. And the only one to have a week set aside to be annually observed by Presidential Proclamation -- 30 years ago, by President Eisenhower [PAUSE] . . . You know, Ike would often go out to see the Senators play [PAUSE] . . . Keep in mind, Bart: I'd like to do the same.

Today, more than 2,500,000 youngsters in 30 Nations participate in Little League. And they're helped by 750,000 adult volunteers. They enrich a program which combines sportsmanship, self-discipline, generosity, and teamwork. And they reflect the principles of America at her best: Helping, tending, and caring for our neighbors.

I have said that any definition of a successful life must include serving others. Little League embodies that definition. I look at these youngsters here. You know what I see? I see successful lives -- lives now in the making.

On the field, some of you dream of becoming another Andre Dawson. Others may dazzle 'em with their glove work -- good-field, no-hit [PAUSE] . . . believe me, I'm an expert. Or your hope might be to become a big-league pitcher. If so, remember Lefty Gomez's secret of success: "It's easy -- clean living and a fast outfield."

Yes, dreams are the essence of America, and of baseball. And your volunteers can propel those dreams. But in the end, what matters is how we conduct ourselves, not batting averages or win-loss totals. And that's where Little League really connects: By building successful lives, it belts a grand-slam home run.

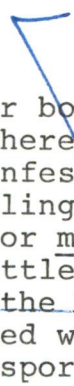
It was in 1939 that the late, great Yankees manager Joe McCarthy observed: "Give a boy a bat and a ball and a place to play, and he'll be a good citizen."

My friends, Little League is America's Ambassador of Goodwill. And that's why I'm so delighted to salute its golden anniversary. Thank you for coming, God bless you, and God bless America. And let me leave you with two of the most beautiful words in any language: "Play ball."

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Bush
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9 or 10

with clean living and hard work

(Smith/Blessey)
July 6, 1989
Draft Six
BASE

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: LITTLE LEAGUE
SOUTH LAWN
FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1989

Carry Carry,

Dr. Hale, Mr. Keene, Bill Shea, Stan Musial, Mike Schmidt,
Brooks Robinson, Jim Palmer, Little League players, coaches, and
officials, Fellow fans.

I want to welcome you to the White House, where today we
celebrate the 50th anniversary of Little League Baseball. And in
that spirit, let me recall a story about a baseball great.

Forty-two years ago, the City of St. Louis held a "Yogi
Berra Day" for its native son and Yankees catcher. And as usual,
the noted philosopher proved equal to the occasion.

Yogi began his remarks by saying, "My friends, I want to
thank all the people who made this night necessary." Well, my
friends, I want to thank all of you for making this day
necessary.

First, let me salute the more than 4,000 Little Leaguers who
are with us this afternoon. And thanks, too, to the seven
busloads of Pennsylvanians who came down here today. I hear
they've renamed Routes 15 and 83 "The Williamsport Express."

I also want to thank Creighton Hale, the President of Little
League Baseball. And my friend Bill Shea, the President of the
Little League Foundation. And such veteran officials as Luke
LaPorta [La POR ta], Beverly Gray, John Lindenmuth, and Fred

Crabtree. And a special tip of the cap to Jack Lundy [LUN dee]. Fifty years ago, Jack sponsored the very first Little League team. And today, he's still contributing to America's love affair with baseball.

For me, this affair has been a lifelong pastime. For like these Little Leaguers, I played baseball when I was a kid. Followed the game -- memorized the box scores. And my favorite player was Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees.

Some time later, I went to college. Batted eighth -- you know -- second clean-up hitter. And it was there -- at Yale University -- that another Yankee hero had an impact on my life. One day in 1948, Babe Ruth came to present his papers. And I received his papers on Yale's behalf.

I'll never forget that moment. Nor the day, one year earlier, when the Babe, now dying of cancer, told the crowd at Yankee Stadium: "You know, the only real game in the world, I think, is baseball . . . 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."

My friends, in that unforgettable speech, surrounded by the kids he loved, Babe Ruth defined why Little League Baseball has become an American -- indeed, international -- institution.

It all started -- Jack, you'll remember this -- with barely three dozen players, and a handful of adult volunteers, in Williamsport. Uniforms for all three teams cost \$35 at the local store. And that first diamond had bases made of old feed bags stuffed with straw.

Well, since then Little League Baseball has grown into the world's largest organized youth sports program.

At last count, more than 20 million youngsters have played in Little League. And countless other Americans have served as adult volunteer helpers -- among them several people who now live in this house. My four boys played it. I coached it. And Barbara -- well, back then there were tens of thousands of Texas kids in Little League. And I'll confess: There were times when I thought Barbara Bush was car-pooling them all. Not many non-baseball players could properly score a baseball game. Well, Barbara Bush did that to perfection, inning after inning.

So, you see: Like you, I know what makes Little League so special. It's a feeling of sportsmanship. And generosity. And teamwork. A feeling of family -- fathers and daughters, mothers and sons.

Around the globe, this feeling is bringing kids of all ages together -- this year alone, more than 2,500,000 players in 33 Nations, and 750,000 adult volunteers. They're learning -- or relearning -- the values of "Doing unto others," and doing your best. And in the process, learning why perhaps nothing is more American than Little League Baseball.

Over the next week, I'm going to be in several of those countries for the annual Economic Summit. And while there, I'm going to have the pleasure of officially helping import to Poland the program which helped produce such Americans as Bill Bradley, Tom Selleck, and Discovery astronaut George Nelson.

Little League came to Poland only earlier this year. But already, it has more than 1,000 players. And I know thousands more will come to love the game of champions. Champions like two Polish-Americans I'd like to salute today: Stan Musial, who is here in the audience -- one of the greatest hitters who ever lived. And let me also mention my friend Carl Yastrzemski. Number Eight. Boston Red Sox. And who 16 days from now will become the first former Little Leaguer inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame.

Let me consult my handy pocket-size book of statistics [PAUSE] . . . Musial, Stan [PAUSE] . . . Let's see, Yastrzemski, Carl [PAUSE] . . .

Yaz knew -- so did Stan The Man -- and so will the kids in Poland -- how baseball is that most democratic of sports [PAUSE] . . . Of course, it's also the most republican. For in baseball -- in Little League -- all that matters is the size of your heart, and of your dreams.

Ask these youngsters here. On the field, some dream of becoming another Mike Schmidt or ~~George Brett~~, former Little Leaguers. Others may dazzle 'em with their glove work -- good-field, no-hit [PAUSE] . . . believe me, I'm an expert. Still others dream of being a big-league pitcher like Little League alumni Jim Palmer and Nolan Ryan. If so, remember Lefty Gomez's secret of pitching success: "It's easy -- clean living and a fast outfield." Of course, a great infield also helps: Ask

