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June 29, 1981

Dear Bob:

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I particularly enjoyed receiving your thoughtful letter following the luncheon for the Baseball Hall of Famers. Believe me, Bob, it was all my pleasure to have you and so many greats at the White House. I especially appreciate knowing of your prayers and your warm words of concern for my well-being. It means a lot that so many people really care. Thanks, too, for the copies of Super Stars of Baseball and ~~We Saw Stars~~ which you left for me at the luncheon. I've set them aside for my special reading pleasure. It was also good of you to send along the copies of The Pilot Light and the Gas House Gang and Football Greats. I'm sure your books are going to bring back many fond memories, and I look forward to enjoying them at an early opportunity. Again, many thanks for your kindness.

With warm best wishes,

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

A

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Mr. Bob Broeg
Assistant to Publisher/
Sports Editor
Saint Louis Post-Dispatch
900 North 12th Boulevard
Saint Louis, Missouri 63101

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With warm best wishes,

Sincerely,

RR

Mr. Bob Broeg
Assistant to Publisher / Sports Editor
St. Louis Post - Dispatch
900 North 12th Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

THE PULITZER PUBLISHING COMPANY

March 31, 1981

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20025

My dear Mr. President:

I had intended this date to write to thank you not only for the honor of having been your guest in the White House, but, also, mainly to thank you for the wonderful thoughtfulness you displayed in having members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame for lunch.

Now, because of the shocking news, the thank-you becomes mostly a note of sorrow and regret that you and others were hurt. I pray for you and for them, thankful that you appear to be on the mend and hopeful that you will have enough private recuperation time to be able to return to your monumental job fit and without recurrence of trouble.

*There is likely
not in
computer* } When we met briefly at lunch, I gave you a copy of "Super Stars of Baseball" that included a lead-off profile about Grover Cleveland Alexander. (Aimee Alexander, whom I met when she advanced your movie in 1952, wrote that she liked it.) And I also gave you the "We Saw Stars," pointing out the photograph of you with Bob Lemon, for whom you just had autographed a baseball.

Speaking of the photo of you and Lemon, you will note that we used it in the Post-Dispatch in the enclosed column I did for the Sunday paper after the splendid occasion. Hope you will like it.

I am also enclosing a copy of the account I wrote for the Sporting News.

If you have occasion to look at the book with the Alexander piece, Mr. President, you might be interested in the photo on Page 126 that shows one of I am sure is your favorite Cubs, Gabby Hartnett, autographing for Al Capone at Wrigley Field. That's the photo that prompted Judge Landis to insist for years that players not even speak to spectators.

When you spoke so fondly of the 1935 Cubs, I thought you might be interested in seeing the enclosed Gas House Gang book, written mostly about my boyhood favorite, Frankie Frisch,

Mary--Mr. Broeg is not on the personal friend list, but there is the one record of his being invited to the Hall of Famers luncheon. Because of his nice long friendly letter, his position, the President's interest in baseball, etc., I think "Dear Bob" might be in order.

Charles

Reagan Reminisces With Famers

by BOB BROEG

WASHINGTON—Joe DiMaggio probably put it best for a second collection of 32 baseball Hall of Famers honored by resident Ronald Reagan with a luncheon at the White House March 27. Said DiMaggio, "I'm glad I delayed a New York-to-San Francisco trip for this stop, but, you know, think the President enjoyed this visit even more than we did."

Seated between Willie Mays and Duke Snider at one of the tables of 10 in the East Room, the President recalled mostly episodes of his youth, including four years broadcasting games of his boyhood favorites (the Chicago Cubs) at Davenport and Des Moines, Ia., radio stations.

At a brief, humor-filled talk before he lined up in a White House corridor to shake hands briefly with each guest, the President set the mood when he said:

"Nostalgia bubbles within me and I might have to be gagged away."

He recalled with pride how the 1935 Cubs, managed by Harley Grimm, had put together an end-of-the-season drive of 21 straight victories to nip St. Louis' defending champion Gas House Gang for the National League pennant. Almost foolishly, he recalled, like trying not to jinx a hitter by mentioning it, he said he had avoided telling out the length of the victory skein in the broadcasts that re-created off Western Union ticker tapes.

The re-creations reached a humorous point, the President recalled happily, on a day when he announced that a pitch was on its way to Billy Jurges, Chicago shortstop, as the telegrapher signaled that the wire had gone bad.

"So I knew Wheaties (his radio sponsor) wouldn't stand in silence," Reagan said. "So, desperately, I had Jurges pull off the pitch. Still no report, so I had Billy foul off another one, this time killing time by 'describing' a fight by

two kid spectators for the foul ball. I even had Jurges just missing a home run with another long, loud foul."

The President paused, his smile widening. "The telegrapher nodded. The play-by-play was back: Jurges had popped up on the first pitch."

Reagan's chuckling audience, ranging in age from Bob Gibson at 45 to Waite Hoyt at 81, represented the largest assemblage anywhere of the 49 living Hall of Fame members.

Alphabetically, Hall of Famers included Luke Appling, Earl Averill, Ernie Banks, Lou Boudreau, Roy Campanella, Jocko Conlan, Joe Cronin, Bill Dickey, Bob Feller, Charley Gehring, Billy Herman, Judy Johnson, Monte Irvin, Al Kaline, Ralph Kiner, Sandy Koufax, Bob Lemon, Buck Leonard, Al Lopez, Eddie Mathews, Johnny Mize, Stan Musial, Robin Roberts, Red Ruffing, Joe Sewell, Warren Spahn and Early Wynn.

Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn thanked Reagan for his "kindness" to baseball—the President had already agreed to throw out the season's first ball at Cincinnati and Ed Stack, president of the Hall of Fame at Coopers-town, N.Y., presented gifts to the Chief Executive, including a gold lifetime pass to the shrine.

When Stack originally sought to arrange to have a couple of Hall of Famers photographed with the President signing a ball that had been signed by every President since William Howard Taft in 1910, the former athlete-announcer-actor pulled a surprise by inviting all living Hall of Famers to lunch.

Oakland Manager Billy Martin sent a green A's jacket and green-and-gold cap, which the President stuck on his head and quipped, "Look, Ma, I made the team."

Also the president received a copy of the "Super Stars of Baseball," published by THE SPORTING NEWS. The book includes a profile of Grover Cleveland Alexander, the pitcher portrayed by Reagan in a 1952 movie, "The Winning

Team." Reagan also received the Hall of Fame's color sketch of Alexander.

Reagan recounted briefly Alexander's stirring World Series stardom with the 1926 Cardinals and sympathized with the epilepsy he said often had been mistaken for drunkenness in the pitcher who died at age 63 in 1950.

Hoyt, longtime New York Yankees pitcher who himself was a radio announcer, noted that he had been victimized by three unearned runs in the 3-2 loss to Alexander in the decisive game in 1926.

"The President," said old Waite, "is a very nice man, but I have to say that Old Pete (Alexander) had one Kelluva hangover. Drunk or sober he was great."

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PRO TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

Angels—Sent catchers Mike Bishop and Brian Harper, pitchers Jim Ryce, Dave Schuler and Ralph Botting and infielders Daryl Sconiers and Jeff Bertoni to minor league camp for reassignment.

Yankees—Assigned pitcher Keith Atherton, infielder Jeff Cox and outfielder Bob Grandas to Tacoma; assigned catcher Scott Meyer and pitcher Bob Moore to West Haven.

Astros—Asked waivers on infielder Julio Gonzalez for purpose of giving him unconditional release.

Blue Jays—Sent catchers Brian Milner and Gene Petralli, pitcher Arlie Puleo and infielder Pedro Hernandez to minor league base for assignment.

Canucks—Assigned goaltender Ken Ellacott to Dallas; acquired defenseman Mike Christie from same club.

Capitals—Assigned left wing Paul Mulvey to Hershey.

Flames—Acquired right wing Dave Hindmarch from Rochester.

Jets—Acquired goaltender Ron Loustel from Saskatoon, left wing Sandy Beadle from Northeastern University and defenseman Bill Whelton from Boston University.

Kings—Acquired goaltender Doug Keans from Oklahoma City.

Oilers—Acquired goaltender Andy Moog from Wichita.

Penguins—Acquired defenseman Marc Chorney from Binghamton.

Red Wings—Acquired goaltender Claude Legris from Kalamazoo.

Packies—Acquired defenseman Craig Macdonald from Pittsburgh.

Nostalgia On Menu In White House

WASHINGTON — Grover Cleveland Alexander, named for a president and portrayed by one, was the toast (and ghost) of a Baseball Hall of Fame luncheon at which the host was the nation's No. 1 sports-announcing alumnus — Ronald Reagan.

President Reagan, turning a modest request into a major triumph for baseball as well as the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y., was asked if he would mind signing a precious athletic keepsake, a baseball autographed by every president since an old Yale pitcher (William Howard Taft) eased his ample derriere into a box seat for the Washington Senators' opening game in 1910.

Asked if he'd sign, for photographic purposes, with a member or two of the Hall of Fame present, Reagan, who broadcast baseball before he became an actor and then a politician, blinked eyes that already ought to be strained from modern-day salaries. He asked all living Hall of Famers to come to lunch.

Thirty-two, a record gathering among the 49 the living members, showed up Friday on foot or, as in the case of Roy Campanella and Red Ruffing, in wheelchairs. Their ages ranged from Bob Gibson's 45 to Waite Hoyt's 81.

Present also were Luke Appling, Earl Averill, Ernie Banks, Lou Boudreau, Jocko Conlan, Joe Cronin, Joe DiMaggio, Bill Dickey, Bob Feller, Charley Gehring, Billy Herman, Judy Johnson, Monte Irvin, Al Kaline, Ralph Kiner, Sandy Koufax, Bob Lemon, Buck Leonard, Al Lopez, Eddie Mathews, Willie Mays, Johnny Mize, Stan Musial, Robin Roberts, Joe Sewell, Warren Spahn, Duke Snider and Early Wynn.

Reagan, seated between Mays and Snider at one of the tables of 10 in the East Room of the White House, radiated what he described as "nostalgia bubbling over within me to the point I might have to be dragged away."

Before lining up to shake hands with the Hall of Famers and members of the big leagues' executive council who attended with Vice President George Bush, a few politicians and a handful of selected youngsters, the White House staff served a luncheon of lobster bisque with cheese straws, beef tenderloin with tomatoes and broccoll, chocolate mousse and a light red wine, but no jelly beans.

The president, dressed in a window-pane blue suit with a two-toned blue tie, appeared younger than he does on television. Trim at about 6 feet and 175 pounds, he displayed that handsome head of reportedly undyed

bob broeg
sports editor



hair and a sense of humor.

Reflecting on the four years in which he broadcast sports on Davenport's WOC and Des Moines' WHO in Iowa, the Chicago Cubs fan who grew up above a store in Dixon, Ill., and played football at Eureka College reflected happily on the 21-game winning streak by which his baseball favorites nipped the Cardinals in the 1935 National League race. His humor was reflected in a sign of his broadcasting time.

Until after World War II, even major-league cities used Western Union ticker-tape accounts, fleshed out by imaginative announcers, for road games. Reagan related his most embarrassing moment. He had en route to the plate a pitch against Billy Jurgens, Chicago shortstop, when the telegrapher with whom he was

working signaled silently the bad news. The ticker tape had failed.

"I knew that Wheaties (his breakfast-food sponsor) wouldn't settle for silence," recalled the president, "and there I was, prematurely, with the ball headed for the plate. So, desperately, I had Jurgens foul off the pitch."

"Now, with the wire still dead, I had him foul off another pitch into the stands and 'described' in detail a fight between two kids for a ball, stalling for time. I even had Billy missing a home run with another long, loud foul before my telegrapher nodded and gave me the word that all was OK."

"On the first pitch, Jurgens had popped out."

The president was at a loss only after entering to a standing ovation when he signed three baseballs for a spectacled, prominent-proboscised Hall of Famer. The man who lives on Pennsylvania Avenue smiled, obviously unaware of the other's identity. Shown a book containing a photograph of himself with Bob Lemon in 1952, he was startled.

"Why, that was Bob Lemon," gasped Reagan, with whom the former Cleveland Indians pitcher had

been a bit player in the 1952 movie "The Winning Team" in which Reagan played Alexander, accompanied by actress Doris Day as film wife Aimee.

The president called out to Lemon, who nodded cheerfully. Lem understood.

The president, better known, perhaps, for his role as Notre Dame's famed George Gipp in a film about football coach Knute Rockne, said he had enjoyed playing the legendary National League pitching leader (373 victories) who at nearly 40 starred for the Cardinals in their first World Series (1926).

Reagan remembered, happily, having to pitch to a player who caught the ball out of the camera's view. Debunking his own athletic ability, he said he had remembered that when supposed to throw the ball past the camera to its left, he threw without direction to the right. There, a former National League pitcher, Al Lyons, reached out with a bare hand to make the catch.

Said Reagan to his audience's chuckles, "Al walked out to the mound with the ball, handed it to me and said, 'Sorry, Alex, I had to catch your blazer barehanded.'"

The president, thanked by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, received from Hall of Fame president Ed Stack a package from Billy Martin, manager of the Oakland A's. It contained a green jacket and green-and-gold cap of the ballclub. Reagan put the cap on and quipped, "Look, Ma, I made the team."

He received also a colored portrait of Alexander, the pitching great who died in virtual poverty in 1950, aided then only by the Cardinals' owner, Fred Saigh, as he had been previously by Sam Breadon. The president noted that Alex's reputation for drunkenness had been caused in part by epilepsy, observing that Alexander preferred a drinking reputation to the stigma then of his illness.

Afterward, there was a mild dissent from Hoyt, a former pitcher for the New York Yankees. Said Hoyt, "The president is a nice man and, as Joe DiMaggio said, I think he had more fun than we did and probably hated to leave even more so, too."

"But as for Old Pete (Alexander), I lost that final game of the 1926 Series" — he was beaten on three unearned runs, 3-2 — "and I have to say that Pete had one helluva hangover. But, drunk or sober, he was great. Now, if Mr. Reagan only had had time to hear some stories about Alexander when he was so loaded before a game and pitched so well and so fast that he was still in his cups afterward..."



President Ronald Reagan (right), as he appeared in his role as Grover Cleveland Alexander, got pitching tips on the 1952 movie set from another member of the cast, Bob Lemon, who then was a real-life pitcher with the Cleveland Indians.

UPI

March 31, 1981
President Ronald Reagan
Page 2

because from Pages 145 to 149 there is a sequence dealing with the remarkable rally of the Chicago team, for whom you broadcast. I happened as a kid to see the Cardinals knock off the Cubs on July 4 that year at Wrigley Field and never dreamed that Chicago would win the pennant.

In connection with what might be occasional light reading for you when convalescing, I thought you might be interested in the pictures of people you might have known in a book I did a few years ago called "Football Greats."

Again, Mr. President, thanks and, above all, my warmest wishes for a swift and a sure recovery.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Broeg". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Bob Broeg
Asst. to Publisher/
Sports Editor

P.S.

Strangely, when tragedy struck you and your party I was talking about you to W. J. (Dukes) Duford, who coached football from 1931 through 1939 at St. Ambrose College, once winning 31 straight games. He said that you and he had met chiefly after he coached there, but he also felt as if you were acquainted with his friend and mine, Harold (Hod) Grams, former St. Ambrose end and Davenport announcer, who for years has run the Pulitzer radio-TV operation here and elsewhere. BB

March 31, 1981.

To President Reagan, with
appreciation of his kindness to
baseball's Hall of Famers as
his lunch guests and with my
vivid recollection, like him, of
1935 when the Cubs caught the
Say House Gang with 21 in a
row!

The very best Sincerely
Bob Procy

P.S. The date, Mr. President adds is
the 50th anniversary of the death
of the man featured in your other
sports film, Knute Rockne.