

Awards Presentation Transcript 7-23.22

JANE FORBES CLARK: We are here to celebrate our 2022 award winners at the internationally renowned Glimmerglass Opera Theatre, Cooperstown.

Perry Smith, representing her late grandfather, Jack Graney, who became a legendary broadcaster that pioneered the trend of players-turn-broadcasters and made him the winner of the 2022 Ford C. Frick Award. He is joined by Tim Kurkjian, the recipient of the 2022 BBWAA's Career Excellence Award, whose work as a baseball writer has become a part of the fabric of the game with generations of fans.

We begin today with the Frick Award, which is presented annually to a broadcaster to honor their major contributions to baseball. The award is named after the late broadcaster, National League President and Commissioner of Baseball, Hall of Fame Class of 1970, Ford Frick. This award has been presented annually since 1978. Frick was also the driving force with my grandfather for the creation of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, and he helped foster the relationship between radio and the game throughout his career in baseball. At this time, I would like to draw your attention to video monitor for presentation 2022 Ford C Frick Award, Jack Graney.

Jack Graney was known for many firsts. He was the first player to set a number on his uniform, and he was the first big leaguer to transition to the broadcast booth after his playing days, drawing from his experiences to educate fans across the region. More in Canada are you enjoying a 14-year playing career in Cleveland, he went on to assume his place as the voice of Cleveland baseball, offering a successful era in the team's history at a time when radio waves were the only way to be a fan outside of attending games. Graney called the action for all but one season from 1932 through 1953 and is already enshrined in the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

Jack began his journey in baseball as a pitcher in 1908 before transitioning from the mound to the outfield, where he played 13 more seasons as a talented left fielder for the Cleveland Indians. He reigned over 1400 Major League games, leading the American Navy to the 1920 World Series championship before playing his last game in 1942. After several years of baseball, he was hired in 1932. For 22 years, Graney's voice was heard throughout Northeast Ohio, as radio's popularity soared, along with that of the national pastime. He quickly became one of the game's signature masters as he brought the robots future Hall of Famers for April. Feller, Lou Boudreau I agree totally and Satchel Paige in the homes throughout the Midwest. Graney also provided the soundtrack to the Indians World Series championship in 1948. And five years later, we retire influenced how does broadcasters while establishing the blueprint for future players to find new careers within the game they love. Ladies and gentlemen, to accept this honor on behalf of Jack Graney is his granddaughter, Perry Smith. Please honor her as she comes up to accept her grandfather's award.

Perry Smith: To Josh Rawitch, the Chairman of the Board and the President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, for making this possible and our sincere thanks to members of the board secret committee for choosing him for this wonderful honor. Thanks also to our family and friends who are here from seven states from Canada to the US today. We have some special guests here today.

An important person is not here today, and she would have loved this special day. That's my mom. My mom passed away two years ago at the age of 98. She still had a sharp mind. And of course, she had a great sense of humor. So I'd like to tell you a little bit about Jack's life, his career and how I remember

him this wonderful grandfather. Finally, as we get to careers, and personal life as you heard about his playing days. He began in 1908. And he says, you actually hear the sound of it at a level back in his hometown of St. Thomas. He sees a young man starting with the club. It was called the Paper Maps. It was named for Napoleon Raj, right. So if you see that name change for Cleveland, it's nothing new. As young ballplayer, he was laid off, so we had many firsts. His first player comes in play for any number on his jersey. Try that out at 16 is Ben's no first was the first player to her to a group that he started as a pitcher. And later years when he was asked about that experience, he said there's nothing special he's just somebody can catch this friend is really on the road. And the best man and my grandparents wedding was Ray Chapman. Some of you baseball fans may have heard that name. Ray Johnson was the only major league player to be killed by pitched ball. The team played their hearts out to a championship that year, and that's where they won the 1920 World Series. But the reason we're here today is to honor his second career, and really what's most important first. They call them the voice of the Cleveland Indians and what a voice it was. He didn't have that delivery of a radio announcer, but he did have what's kind of a high pitch staccato voice, but it was a sincere voice of a ball player. In those early days of radio, the broadcasters didn't travel to away games. So, it was up to them to recreate it as though they were there in person. And that's where Jack excelled. He played on every field. He faced every team, and he knew how far back that outfield fence was to run to it many times. Broadcasting with his early partner Pinky Kinder, another Ford Frick Award Jack was so much fun to work with because of his nature that he was invited to broadcast the World Series upstairs.

I grew up with interested in my grandfather. To me he was always telling jokes. He was very much in demand as a speaker. He would never tell you about his accomplishments. He was such an honorable man And I hope I guess you'd say to me, that grace and legacy in Cleveland is summed up this way. They say on a warm summer's day, you can walk down any street in Cleveland, and you hear Jack Graney's voice coming from every house on the block.

Larry Stone: My best friend at ESPN is being recognized in Cooperstown this weekend for his work, and his losses are generally seen as trying to Baseball Writers' Association of America Excellence Award during holiday weekend. You will be among the game's all-time greatest players and will take its rightful place among the best ever fellows in the game. In my opinion, Tim stands alone. No one provides history at different points in his life. This is understandable as a slogan, empathy to poker player, any player and Tim will dazzle you with a contextualized story, loaded with as much detail and well painted. He is the living, breathing version of the baseball encyclopedia. No one takes the term teammate more seriously. His loved ones, his wife Catherine, daughter, Kelly's son, and grandson Carson are given the attention, effort, treatment and love most humans can only imagine.

On July 11 of last year, Tim received the call he was being honored. The very next day his brother received a diagnosis of ALS. Life is a cool game. And because of that we cherish those memories, and no one laughs themselves like Tim. Notoriously egregiously early in the airport, take a selfie 1000 times traveling is a violation. Someone said he would often load up his car with his copilot, a six pack of Diet Mountain Dew and then drive the six hour ride to and from to be home afterwards. Regardless of heights to approach and stance above everyone else, but more self-deprecating smartest and best teammates anyone could offer from your friends and colleagues. Congratulations on your induction into Cooperstown.

Along the way, Kurkjian became a beloved fan favorite after honing his skills at Walter Johnson High School, and the University of Maryland. He began his career at the Washington Star. Three years later, he was on the Texas Rangers team for the Dallas Morning News before returning home because of the Orioles, Baltimore Sun joining Sports Illustrated as magazine senior baseball writer. He flourished with a larger campus, crafting stories with the care and compassion that we have his trademark. He cemented his reputation as a tireless reporter with an accurate number of the human side just subjects. Christian followed him on an emerging trail when joining ESPN in 1998. Combining his affection for baseball with his talent as a storyteller, purchase style yield for games tourists, as well as a new crop of fans growing up in the age of the internet. Across several ESPN platforms, Tim's narratives exhibited his behind the scenes knowledge and thirst for the games never ending supply of fascinating facts. The self-effacing humor often channel flies, a tenacious spirit that fuel is pursued the latest news and produce multiple Emmy Awards. Kurkjian had never flown reverse source material, but those statistics were often overshadowed by Phillips, both on paper and on screen.

Tim Kurkjian: First off, I'm so sorry that you had to watch me dance. The worst answer ever. Thank you. So much. Larry is an old baseball. Just like me. Those are among my favorite people in the whole world. Such an honor to be here. This has been the most overwhelming, overpowering experience of my life. I know that I won this war. I was hitting the grocery store. I was at the self service checkout. At the Harris Teeter. I was dragging a rotisserie chicken scanner, which will accommodate the baseball records call me and gave me great news. And I started to cry. So, the next morning at 8:30 Johnny Bench and said, "Congratulations, welcome to the club." Let's be clear. I'm not one of them.

Thank you to the baseball Writers Association, especially the Baltimore-Washington chapter Dan Connolly on Zimmerman and Ken Rosenthal, thank you to all my baseball writer friends, Dan Shaughnessy. My mentor taught me how to do this job. And Jayson star taught me where to look for it to find great stats. Thank you to all my hundreds of friends at ESPN for culling and referencing them. And thank you everyone at ESPN over the last 25 years dance talent cluster only and my dear friends Tom Rawitch and Eduardo Berends gratulations. And of course congratulations to David Ortiz. Big Papi. I checked with the Elias Sports Bureau which I do on virtually everything and we've established that is the largest ceremony in size with a player being inducted right away. I love baseball, all my love and that love for the game. I'm a sort of great talent as carry my career baseball was the primary language spoken in my house growing up my dad was a really good player. And he taught us three boys have played the game. have loved the game they gave us a great feel for the game that you brought up brothers to play baseball at Temple University there in the Hall of Fame there. And all three of us went to Walter Johnson High School, named after the greatest pitcher of all time. I worked for the school paper which is called *The Pitch*. A teacher once came up to me and said Tim, that might be a horror story. I haven't read the paper I hope you're not depending on maybe this place. Move on to see I did a long way. January 1982. Just take the job to the Dallas Morning News. And we got a tip that Ron Meyer football coach so if you can see the next football coach for the New England Patriots, so this is a really big story in town. But all our football writers are travelers of high entropy disorder. So, I called him on the phone 50 times clearly the phone was up. So, I'm not saying you have to go to his house. I didn't know how to get to my house, let alone his house. And I didn't know her Iris roster. I think I get into the door. It's 10 o'clock at night. Remember this is 1980 to look a lot younger than I do today. It's possible. I was even smaller than that. I said door.

He comes to the door they say "Hi, I'm Tim Kurkjian of the Dallas Morning News." I'm not actually Paperboy, actually a real reporter. So, eventually I got that story in.

And two months later, I was being covered the Texas Rangers for the Dallas Morning News. So, the Reign of Terror won the last 11 games in a row in May. I'm the one with all the worries. So I quit complaining and recognized how lucky you are to be covering Major League Baseball. It was a privilege to cover the game four years ago and now 40 years later. It's the best game of all time. It's the hardest game in the world to play. It is a beautiful game and the number of people I have met with this game over the years who will be my friends for the rest of my life.