

# John Lowe and Pat Hughes Media Availability

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## **John Lowe**

Well, this is my sixth Induction Weekend here. I've loved every one of them. I have extra reasons to love this one. I'm really looking forward to the ceremony coming up, getting to speak. And my favorite thing of all is just seeing how much everybody here is having such a good time. And the root of that good time is baseball, and it just emphasizes to me how special baseball is.

## **Pat Hughes**

Craig, thank you. It's a pleasure to be here with you and with John Lowe and it's an absolute dream come true. I don't want to use any of the phrases I'm going to use in the speech here in a couple of hours. But suffice to say I am extremely proud and happy to be here and still kind of feels a little bit surreal as if it's almost happening to somebody else and I'm just kind of watching the thing. But happy to be here. Happy to answer any questions you might have.

## **John Lowe**

Wow, I was privileged to have so many of them. One that stands out though because the man's time was so valuable. I was covering the Dodgers when Orel Hershiser first came up. I left the Dodger beat early in his career. Four years later at the 1988 World Series Orel Hershiser is the biggest story in sports. He's had the shutout streak. He's pitched the Dodgers into the World Series. And so in the madhouse of the Dodger clubhouse on the day before the World Series opened, I asked Orel if there was any chance we might be able to talk for about 10 minutes on the phone that night. And he said sure, and we got on the phone about nine o'clock. And we wrapped it up about an hour and 20 minutes later. And that someone of that magnitude in his moment, in the biggest moment of his career at the peak of his career would give me that much time. Well, it's still something that stays with me 35 years later.

## **Pat Hughes**

I would have to say and it's a fairly easy response, because game seven of the World Series in 2016 was momentous and historic. And the fact that I got to be the first Cubs broadcaster ever to say the Chicago Cubs win the World Series because the previous time they won 1908, long before there was radio, and long before there was television, therefore, no announcers had a chance to say it. So that was the biggest moment I would say. This ranks right up there though because this is a much more individual honor. And they're similar I would say but very distinct in a way.

## **John Lowe**

I would say I was fortunate to have a lot of terrific examples early in my career that that was not one way to do the job but that was the only way to do the job. The great reward of covering baseball is the

access but you have to be there to take advantage of the access. And whenever that locker room door opens before the game you have got to be totally prepared. And the only way to be prepared is to put in the hours. I found that actually the most important hours were the hours away from the ballpark for both doing the homework, getting enough sleep, eating right, exercising, being fully ready to go when that clubhouse door opened at 3:30 or whatever time it opened. But then of course the reward of all this and what keeps you going is you see what tremendous stories you're able to get when you're on time and prepared. And I love the saying from sports, early is on time, on time is late.

### **Pat Hughes**

I have loved reading about baseball in the morning virtually my whole life. I think I learned how to spell by collecting baseball cards. And I learned about the stats and the history and the performances of ballplayers by looking at the back of the baseball cards. In the morning, I mean literally every day since I've been about 10, I love looking at the box scores and reading about games. So no matter what time I get to the ballpark for either a home game at Wrigley or a road game, I've done a homework starting from the moment I woke up and had some coffee and you know went through the scores of last night's games and I found not only do I love the game, but I love the preparation also. For example, I have great partners and Ron Coomer and Zach Zaidman. We like to laugh a lot on Cubs radio. I think in a three-hour game or two-and-a-half-hour game, yes you want to cover the ballgame and be as descriptive and have the background information all ready to go. But I think you should have fun because I've always equated being at the ballpark with having fun and playing as a kid. You know, if you don't laugh out loud four or five times every single day at the ballpark, I think you're missing the point. So getting back to the homework aspect regarding fun. I found now that I'll read something, maybe a silly play happened in Baltimore or something bizarre happened in an argument in Seattle the night before. And if I'm reading it, I'm already thinking how I can get Ron Coomer and Zack Zaidman involved in a humorous discussion about that particular anecdote. So I enjoy it. It's not work if you really enjoy the topic matter. It is work but it's very good work and it's work that I never mind doing.

### **John Lowe**

Detroit, which is where I spent most of my career, so much history so much caring by the fans that if I put Ty Cobbs' name in a story, I didn't ever say Ty Cobb a Tigers outfielder from 1905 to 1926 who had the most hits in history when he retired. No, people know who Ty Cobb is. So what that tells me is I kept the train going. I didn't let the people down. They expect excellent coverage, and I at least didn't harm that standard.

### **Pat Hughes**

The Cubs have a long history of great broadcasters, and I was lucky enough to get here in the final two years of Harry Caray's life, and Jack Brickhouse, I'd never worked with him, but I was familiar with him and he was around until August of 1998 when he passed. They both treated me wonderfully well. Harry went out of his way to welcome me to Chicago, and he gave me great advice. In fact, I'm going to share, this is one little thing I'm going to say in the speech today. Harry gave me some solid practical advice about baseball announcing. He says, whenever you sign up as a baseball announcer, you don't just sign up for the winning games and the exciting seasons, you sign up for everything. And that has kept me going and kept me thinking the right way in my career. He's absolutely right. You're not going to have an exciting season every single year. Sometimes your team is going to lose 10 games in a row,

you still got a ballgame to do that day. But getting back to Harry and Jack. Harry treated me so well when I got here and so did Ron Santo, who I worked with the first 15 years in Chicago. Ronnie went out of his way and Harry actually left the television booth about three weeks into the season, comes over to Cubs Radio to go and does some small talk with Santo and me for a minute or two. And then he says the real reason I came over Pat, I just want you to know everyone loves the work you're doing. And you just keep on going because you're on the right path. He didn't have to do that. This is Harry Caray. I knew he had a reputation of being kind of tough with other people. I found it to be just the opposite. He was a sweetheart to me. And I will always remember that day. And it's almost a fact of the audience saying, well if this new guy is okay with Harry Caray, I'm gonna give him a chance. He might be okay. And the same thing with Ron Santo, if they embrace you, they're saying, well, Santo seems to like him. Maybe I'll like him too. And that was something I'll never forget and always be grateful for

### **Pat Hughes**

It's a paradox. It really is. Because you're absolutely right. When you open a broadcast, the Chicago Cubs are on the air, whatever it is. You have no idea what you're going to say because you have no idea what's going to transpire in the ballgame. So you're winging it, the entire two or three or four hours or whatever it is, and you get used to it sort of, but that's the job and you just keep it going. You're right. This is something different. This is very structured. As John can tell you, there are time limitations for how long we can go with our Hall of Fame induction speech, which is coming up in a couple of hours. I can't even believe I just said that sentence by the way. And it is pretty much scripted out. I don't want to read word for word, but because of the time limitations, I want to stay pretty close to the written words that I have. And I want to keep it fun. I'll have a story about Santo in there. And maybe Harry Caray and Bob Uecker. I've worked with him for 12 years. And Cub fans are certainly going to be part of it. And my family. And it's an emotional thing. Getting up there and and speaking at the Hall of Fame, just that concept alone, speaking at the Hall of Fame is enough to kind of make your hand shake just a little bit. But I've been a trained broadcaster for a long time. I speak for a living. I'm just hoping that today is kind of like the final out in game seven of the World Series where you hope that the words tumble out of your mouth in the proper order. There is no guarantee for that by the way.

### **John Lowe**

I really hesitate to pick out one person because there were so many. Going back to fifth grade. Okay, maybe I'll just tell that story. Is that alright? I hope it's okay that it's a hockey story. It's not a baseball story. But I was a kid in St. Louis in the late 60s and early 70s when hockey really took off. And in the fifth-grade classroom, we had a bulletin board that was always about some kind of topic. And we'd be up for a couple of weeks and the teacher announced well now we're going to have a hockey bulletin board for a couple of weeks because hockey was so big. And she must have already knew I like to write and I like sports, so she asked me to write a weekly hockey column to put up on the hockey bulletin board. This is my first writing assignment. And so I did it and I loved it. But I knew this was a very short-term assignment. And so a couple of weeks later, two or three weeks, she gets up in front of the class. And she says, okay, you know, today we're going to change the bulletin board to forests, something, and I'm thinking well, this might be the end of my sports writing career. And then she adds, but John's column is so popular, I'm going to ask him to keep on writing it. And that was so valuable. That was the first adult feedback I ever got, like that encouragement. And so I kept writing it every

week. I brought it in. I taped it up on the supply cabinet. And it was Mrs. Witten in fifth grade at Weber Elementary.

### **Pat Hughes**

It's a great question, by the way, and as soon as you said it, immediately, I thought about my parents, and I wish they were still alive for this event today because they were both educators. Mom was an elementary school teacher. My dad was a college professor. They stressed learning and reading and speaking properly and, not that I always do that, but that's what they wanted me to do. So I would say that would be the first thing that comes to mind. Now, I've been influenced by a lot of other broadcasters. And there's an old saying that I kind of laughingly share with other people I say, if you copy from one person, it's called plagiarism. If you borrow from a lot of people, it's called research. Right? So I think I've probably done a lot of research but I certainly don't want to try to copy anyone else. I think being yourself is a very important element whenever you're a live broadcaster. I just think that's the smart way to go. I'm not criticizing others who have tried to emulate other announcers. But that was my choice. So I don't think there's any one announcer. I'm gonna by the way talk during the speech today about some of the people who have influenced me and there's quite a few starting with the people I've worked directly with guys like Al McGuire in basketball and Bob Uecker and Harry Caray and Ron Santo. And I don't think there's time to tell the Al McGuire story, but I'm going to tell it here because I'm dying to tell somebody this story. Al taught me how to hitchhike. Alright. We did a game at Louisville, Marquette against Louisville. It's a Saturday afternoon. And I said Al let's go out and get a cab and go back to the airport. No. Save your money. Somebody will recognize me, we'll hitchhike and we'll go to the airport and save the cash. I said well, Al, I've never really hitchhiked before. Let me tell you, it's real complicated. Stick out your thumb and start shaking it. All right. So that's what I did. And exactly as he said, the second car. Somebody recognized the great Al McGuire, that guy rolls down his window. Hey, Al, you need a lift? Yeah, me and my buddy are going to the airport. Next thing I know I'm in the backseat of a total stranger's vehicle. Al McGuire is engaging these two young guys in stories about getting technical fouls and working referees and coaching in the NCAA championship and just all kinds of funny stories. And you know these two kids today, every Thanksgiving and Christmas, they're retelling this story and they will for the rest of their lives. And I'm just sitting there listening, thinking I can't believe what I'm experiencing. We get to the airport. And I said Al, that was truly amazing. You're probably still going to turn this in on your expenses, aren't you? Nahh, I don't cheat the small stuff. I got enough big scams going. So I was influenced by Al, mainly because of his attitude, and how much fun he had and how much he loved being at the game. Good question. Thank you.

### **John Lowe**

One part of the answer, Tyler, is covering the Tigers for the Detroit Free Press. I'm covering an institution for an institution. Free Press is the oldest business in Detroit. It was founded in 1837. There is a standard that is expected regardless of how the team is doing on the field. And if somebody is reading my story, they deserve the same effort. If the team lost 10 nothing as if they're in first place. And like Pat said, you sign up to cover baseball. You know, automatically the team's gonna lose a third of their games. The Big Red Machine lost a third of their games. Okay. But I would tell myself, the Tigers are not great, but baseball still is. And almost every day there was something distinctive about baseball to write about. And then there's something that all of you who have covered this game know about which is the company of the game. Especially every three days there's a new team to play, which

means you're going to be seeing friends who are covering that team. You're going to see people you know on that team. Tigers had 12 straight losing seasons while I was on the beat, but I never went into a press room or a locker room and somebody said, John, I'm not talking to you because your team's not playing well. Okay, so so much of what makes baseball wonderful to cover is the same whether your team is up or down. If your enjoyment of the beat is pegged to how your team is doing, you're not going to probably last on the beat very long. I said this in my job interview with the Free Press in 1986. My favorite moment of every day is when that pitcher goes into the windup for the first pitch of the game because you have no idea about what is about to transpire.

### **John Lowe**

To answer the second one first, which is a classic maneuver in a media setting. I didn't have any thought about what it would grow into. I just wanted to give the fans something to understand how baseball was played. As Casey would say, you could look it up. It was not unanimously received with approval. But I never wavered. I always believed that it told something that no other statistics did which was simply how often does the starting pitcher go out there and do his job, which is to give his team a decent chance to win the game.