

# Ted Simmons Media Availability 2021-09-02

## **Jon Shestakofsky**

Well hello and welcome to today's media availability with class of 2020 Hall of Fame inductee Ted Simmons. My name is Jon Shestakofsky. I'm Vice President of Communications and Education at National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. On this coming Wednesday, September 8th, Ted will be inducted into the Hall of Fame at long last. The Induction Ceremony begins at 1:30pm and will be free and open to the public, as well as broadcast live on MLB Network. Following this availability with Ted the Hall of Fame will host separate media availabilities with Derek Jeter today at 2:30pm Eastern Time, and Larry Walker today at 3:30pm Eastern time. Please note that these sessions are being recorded, and transcripts will become available to media within the next 48 hours at the Hall of Fame's website, [baseballhall.org](http://baseballhall.org). Ted, thank you for joining us on this call. And we are now ready to take questions from call participants. We ask if you'd like to ask a question of Ted Simmons, please click reactions at the bottom of your screen and then click the raise hand button. Ultimately want to see a raised hand button. As soon as we see some questions pop up, we will ask you to unmute yourself at that time. So we will start first question from Tom Haudricourt. You can unmute yourself.

## **Tom Haudricourt**

Can you hear me?

## **Jon Shestakofsky**

Yes.

## **Tom Haudricourt**

Hey, Teddy.

## **Ted Simmons**

Tom, how you doing?

## **Tom Haudricourt**

Good, man. Good. Sorry, I can't be there next week. We got these red hot Brewers we got to cover.

## **Ted Simmons**

I don't blame you stay right there, man. You don't wanna miss anything right now.

## **Tom Haudricourt**

Yeah.

## **Ted Simmons**

They're playing great.

## **Tom Haudricourt**

I have two things I want ask you. First, could you just say what it's been like what the one year wait's been like and what interaction you've had with Hall of Famers during that time?

**Ted Simmons**

Well, the way it has been, you know, good and bad. Bad in that you've had to wait an extra year for this thing to kind of come to a head. But good in that it's extended an additional year. So it's like, nothing's really going away. You know, so you walk in, and you think you're kind of going to turn around and walk out. And it's been, you know, for a really pleasure to have walked in and been able to stay really twice as long in the room. But next week, I'll finally get in and eventually walk up, but it's been good and bad in that respect.

**Tom Haudricourt**

Okay, then, and then my follow up question Teddy is, so the Brewers went 30 over 500 last night, the all time record is 31 over the year of the bruiser. That was that 82 team where Ned Yost hit that home run in Boston.

**Ted Simmons**

Yes.

**Tom Haudricourt**

I think you guys lost your next four games going to Baltimore. But what do you remember about that time, and we've never heard the end from that about hitting that home run in Boston.

**Ted Simmons**

Well you know, that was a very exciting home run he hit, very dramatic. But quite frankly, in all the wonderful memories that whole year season, you know, left us all with, I'm hoping that they break the record, like as soon as it can possibly happen in Milwaukee here this week. I hope it happens tonight. Or if not tonight, tomorrow, because records are there to be broken. And there's nothing like you know, NBA championships and a possible Major League Baseball championship in a city like Milwaukee. That would be dramatic and that would be just incredible. I hope it happens.

**Jon Shestakofsky**

The next question will come from Bruce Levine. Bruce, you can unmute yourself.

**Bruce Levine**

Teddy, congratulations. Really excited for you and your family. Great to see you.

**Ted Simmons**

Thanks Bruce. Appreciate it. Thank you.

**Bruce Levine**

A Midwest kid growing up in Michigan and then playing the majority of your career in the Midwest. How great was that? How great are the fans in Middle America and what joy did you take out of that?

### **Ted Simmons**

Well, when I left Detroit, and came to St. Louis, I went from absolutely spectacular summers to, you know, heat and humidity that I had never seen in my lifetime. But the fan base in both Detroit and St. Louis was dynamite, they're going to follow their Tigers, they're going to follow their Cardinals, you know, win, lose or draw. But when I then left St. Louis and went to Milwaukee, I saw the same kind of fan base, hard-working, you know, labor-type folks that, you know, call it, like they see it and love it with all their worth, in Milwaukee, and I was lucky to play it in those three places, Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee is the heart land, essentially, of the Midwest. And the people, you know, expect, you know, hard work. And they're willing to do whatever they have to, to appreciate that, well, when it comes to their sports, these three, you know, places where, you know, almost a luxury for me, I had the, you know, one, you know, stop in St. Louis, that, you know, on that AstroTurf was just miserable in the summer. But then I, you know, went up to Milwaukee and got to play in, you know, virtual air conditioning outdoors, for the remainder of my career up there. But the Midwest is a very, very special place. And when they got winning teams, they just go berserk for them.

### **Jon Shestakofsky**

Next up, we'll have Jon Morosi. Hey, John, you can unmute yourself.

### **Jon Morosi**

Thanks, Jon. Thanks, Ted, for all your time today and leading up to today as well. Wanted to ask a couple questions, if it's okay. Number one, what does it mean to you to be entering the Hall with Marvin Miller, someone who obviously was a leader in the Union during the course of your career?

### **Ted Simmons**

Well, you know, Marvin is a little bit like me in that it took forever, kind of, for each of us to get in there. But during the time that I spent, in my career aligned with the Players Association, and that really was aligned with Marvin Miller, because he was the Players Association. You know, not to slight Dick Moss, and, you know, Don Fehr, and, you know, the others, because they play an important role too, but Marvin was, you know, the real deal. And, you know, to have, you know, in my own circumstance waited many, many years for this inclusion. Marvin, and his family had made way, many, many, many years in the same way. So I'm bittersweet, of course, for you know, his family. And lucky for me that, you know, you know, I can, you know, you know, arrive in the flesh. But Marvin is an incredible, incredible man. And there's no question that going in with him in this class, together with him, is very, very, very special, honored, and very special to me specifically, for sure.

### **Jon Morosi**

Great, thanks, Ted. And the other one I was gonna ask is, you come into baseball in the major leagues, and the Cardinal staff includes Gibson and Carlton and then your last year as the player you're catching Smoltz and Glavine and I wonder, all fellow Hall of Famers. Now if you can just reflect on that journey and the pitching that you saw as a catcher and as a hitter during your career?

### **Ted Simmons**

Well, you know, I was really so very lucky to catch those, those pitchers. I also caught Carlton when he was in St. Louis, also caught Sutton when he came to help in Milwaukee in 82. What the thing that's

noteworthy about these types is that they literally stand out, you know, so dramatically from the others. I mean, you know, they do it in various ways. Certainly Gibson did it one way and Glavine did it another, the others kind of fit somewhere in the middle of all that. But there's one keynote about them all is their, their skill set is just superior. And when you're a catcher like I was for all those years, and then catch people like that, and then see how dramatic the fall off is, even at the major league level compared to those types. People really have no idea how special those guys those types, those pitchers really are when they're at their peak. Because, you know, people ask me about Gibson often. People asked me a little bit about Glavine and a little bit about Smoltz, but I was a contemporary with Sutton and I faced and caught him and this is a remarkable, remarkable pitcher. And then of course, Carlton. Carlton had a great career, which really took off when he went to Philadelphia. He won 20 games, he lost 20 games with the St. Louis before he was traded. So I saw on both ends of that, but he primarily was a fastball curveball type pitcher superior, but I mean just fastball curve. In Philadelphia, he developed the slider. And then it was like a massive, you know, atom bomb going off. He just took off and facing and catching him. You realize you literally realize how dramatically special these guy guys are compared to the others.

### **Jon Shestakofsky**

And our next question will come from Jerry Beach.

### **Jerry Beach**

Hey Ted, congratulations. Two quick ones for me as well. One I wonder, have you been in touch with any of your fellow Inductees, or Marvin's family at all throughout this year plus, and if you had a chance to talk about this unique wait that you guys have all endured together.

### **Ted Simmons**

Larry Walker, I've run into on two or three occasions, In the very first couple of weeks or months, I heard from a handful of players, Lee Smith, Johnny Bench, people all, you know, wishing me well. And, you know, very pleased that I was finally elected. So the fun, the Hall of Fame membership has been really special. Ever since this has happened to me, it's like they've been kind of pulling for me all along too and are really glad this has finally happened. So, you know, I've known so many of them and played with and against numerous of them. And, you know, you know, it's it truly is kind of a club fraternity kind of thing, once you're in, everybody kind of reaches out and extends their hand of welcome. So, Ozzie Smith, I mean, all these people, you know, I've known for a long, long time now that this has really happened, they've all pretty much reached out.

### **Jerry Beach**

You probably asked this back in January of 2020. But do you think or sorry, December 2019? But do you think your election result in more attention being paid to the candidacies of other Hall caliber players who might have gotten overlooked either while on the ballot initially, or maybe during their time on the ballot?

### **Ted Simmons**

I'd like for you to ask that question again. So I understand it. Sorry. I'm not sure. Go ahead. Ask your question again.

**Jerry Beach**

Obviously, your election was a long time coming. But you had a really good case for a long time, you think your election will result in more attention being paid to some players whose candidacies either might have been overlooked initially, or who might currently be on the ballot, and not necessarily getting the traction, that maybe their careers weren't?

**Ted Simmons**

I see it now, I think the most important thing to point out, in response has to do with the various committees, that their role and responsibility is essentially to do exactly what you suggested. Over the many years that, you know, since it first began in 1939 I with the initial induction, I mean, guys have always kind of been on the cusp, whether it's people like myself or, or others. And, you know, they've always said the Hall of Fame is a very difficult place to get into, and that it should be. Well over the passage of time, more and more people like myself, end up surfacing, and now they got a real dilemma. You know, what did they do about that when the comparison start, you know, running wild, and pretty soon, everyone kind of scratches their head and say, you know, something's got to be done about this. So what they did was essentially expand the process, so that rather than just you know, Baseball Writers of America having the say-so they included additional types, which then broadened the process, which then enabled over time, people who may have fallen through the cracks, whether it's someone like myself or others, they then you know, have an opportunity to maybe join the group eventually. So one on one was fairly draconian. And I think people eventually recognize that and wanted to rectify it. And luckily for me, and gratefully from me, they did alter and change things. One on one was rough.

**Jon Shestakofsky**

Thanks Ted. Next is Adam Backovie. You can unmute.

**Adam McCalvy**

Hey Simba, congratulations.

**Ted Simmons**

Thank you. Oh, by the way, that's one and done. One on one is a different issue. I don't want to go there. One and done.

**Adam McCalvy**

Teddy, we, we know you for such a long time as a thoughtful such a thoughtful man, how big a challenge has it been to craft a speech that will live forever live for posterity?

**Ted Simmons**

How difficult was it? I don't think it was difficult at all. I mean, I got right after it. After I, you know, was elected, I said, I'm not going to let this sit out there and angst over this for the next however long I'm gonna get right after, which I did. And in a fairly short period of time, I feel confident that I was going to get to say, what I wanted to say. And, you know, they had given us, you know, fairly liberal instructions, somewhere between eight to 10, possibly 12 minutes, but, you know, you know, you know, then, and

with that kind of help, I was able to condense lots of the thoughts into the most essential things that I felt was necessary to say, so I caught it down to, you know, to fit in that format, so that I've been at it for quite a while, at this point, where I'm glad I'm reading it, because I don't trust myself with that kind of memory, especially at my age. But, you know, I've gotten to the point now, where, you know, if there's there, I shouldn't mess this up. I'm telling you, I've done it enough that I've got it down, and I feel confident that I'm gonna be able to do this thing, right. And, and it's at a place where I don't feel like I'm going to be putting people to sleep. I've got I've got a few things. I want to say I'm going to get them out there. It should be over and done. So people aren't, you know, you know, won't end up, you know, staring back at me with giant yawns. I don't want to I don't want to have that happen. In fact. I won't make that happen.

### **Jon Shestakofsky**

Next up we'll have Lynn Henning. Lynn, go ahead.

### **Lynn Henning**

Yeah, you were born in Highland Park. You moved out to Southfield in the summer you got out of high school, of course, was the awful reality of the Detroit Riot that year.

### **Ted Simmons**

Yeah.

### **Lynn Henning**

What was your sense of the urban suburban lines of demarcation then? And how did it affect your baseball experience at that point?

### **Ted Simmons**

What everyone knew in the Detroit area in 1967-68, on top of Vietnam, and everything else that was raging at the time, the people in Detroit knew and understood that the city of Detroit was in stress. The black community there was having difficulty with housing, they were having difficulty with their interactions with the police. And the place was in a volatile state, complicated, as I say, by Vietnam, where, you know, the black male in the Detroit community was headed to one place that was Fort Lewis, and then Vietnam. So the place was in a lot of stress. If you are an athlete in the Detroit area, at that point in time, you almost had an insight or an advantage. Because as an athlete, you were literally in a position to interact with minorities, and you had to come face to face with that reality. You may have thought out Northwest Detroit that you were the best athlete out there. And everybody ought to come and have a look at you. And then you'd go play in the inner city of Detroit in the summertime. And you'd see athletes like John Mayberry, or Willie Horton, and people like that, and you'd say, you know, you know, maybe I'm not the best thing that ever came out of Detroit metropolitan area. This group over here, they're thrown out some pretty, pretty special folks. And so you're forced to deal with that reality. And it's what impacted any kid growing up in that area, in that volatile time with so many various stresses that were affecting people. And I considered myself lucky, because I came face to face with racial reality real quick. That fastball that John Mayberry was throwing in at me was really gone and that ball he hit over Grand River Detroit Northwestern High School, opened my eyes up to realities that unless you're in sports, you don't get to see quite so handily.

**Lynn Henning**

One more question about that University of Michigan recruited you. You had an interest intellectually as well as athletically, I think, in perhaps going to college. But you've got a Hall of Fame career that you needed to embark on, in your estimation. At that point, is there ever been any second thought about the university experience, given your time arc here?

**Ted Simmons**

No, it was just part of the juggling act. I wanted to go to college, I was able to do that I wanted to be a major league baseball player, I wanted to do that. And I had to deal with my military commitment, which forced me literally to choose the option, which was a six year commitment, you know, the Army Reserve Program. And so when I talk about my military commitment, at that time, my major league pursuit at that time, and my college education at that time, I thought in and, and dealt with it in in keeping those three balls thrown up in the air and juggling them, which I was able to do. And over time, I was able to get get them all, certainly not in a four year period, they didn't all come but my college education. I got two years, I you know, two years about, you know, after I started college, I was in the majors. And then I was nearly half, well, two years into my military commitment of the six that I enlisted for. So by the time I was, you know, 27-28 years old, I had them all, or nearly all, I went back and got my education at age 40-45. So it's like a juggling act. And that's how I dealt with all three of them.

**Jon Shestakofsky**

Next up, we'll have Barry Bloom. Go ahead.

**Barry Bloom**

Hey, Teddy, how are you?

**Ted Simmons**

Great, how you doing?

**Barry Bloom**

Congratulations once again. So the one and done you're talking about is the fact that you didn't make the 5% on the ballot the first time you were on it?

**Ted Simmons**

Right.

**Barry Bloom**

The same thing happened to Posada a couple of years ago.

**Ted Simmons**

Yeah. So as I say, you know, back then, you were you were literally off the ballot. And you know, there was really no vehicle at that time that I knew of or heard of, that has enabled you to come back,

**Barry Bloom**

There was always a Veterans Committee of some kind. I mean, it's just, they've changed the, you know, the evolution, the evolution of that has been, you know, tremendous over the course of the decades too. So, the, what I wanted to ask you is on top of piggybacking off that mean, there's only been like four catchers have been elected to the Hall of Fame since Gary Carter in 2003. It's Piazza, Pudge, and now you. It's a tough position, I guess, to evaluate to get guys in. And you look at the current class of players who have either retired or on their way at the end of their career. Who do you project as being guys who should be Hall of Famers in the future?

**Ted Simmons**

Well, I mean, you know, I don't want to presume anything that people are waiting to hear from Ted Simmons and what his projections are for the next Hall of Fame's people should be, I'll answer your question, because, you know, I'm not very good at dodging straightforward questions like that. And what I'll say is, there are people out there, like, of course, Molina, of course. Posey, there are two candidates that if when people want to look at, you know, down the road, and say, you know, you know, who are the next catchers coming in? Who should they be? They would have to be in that conversation. I think there's no question in my mind, whether they get in or whether they get in quickly, or whether they get in down the road. is, you know, not a question I'm prepared to deal with or, or address, because it won't be up to me. And two, whether I think they're Hall of Famers, or they're not really is of no consequence at this at this point in time. But you want a couple of names who got a shot at it. I mean, you know, I was told a long time ago, never state the obvious, just shows, it tells people how little you know, but there's two obvious candidates and maybe I don't know quite as much as people think I do.

**Jon Shestakofsky**

And we have time for just one or two more questions. Next up will be Jay Jaffe.

**Jay Jaffe**

Hi, Ted, congratulations.

**Ted Simmons**

Thank you.

**Jay Jaffe**

I wanted to ask you, looking back at your career, you are already an established star in St. Louis, when Whitey Herzog joined the organization and the two of you didn't I guess judging by the reports didn't quite see eye to eye, and you eventually got traded away? Do you think that helped your career in the long run? And the fact that that Herzog turned up on the on some of the committees that you were being considered by for the Hall of Fame? Do you think that had an impact as well? Do you think your relationship had an impact?

**Ted Simmons**

I have no idea whether it had any impact or not. Whether or not people know or understand what happened over that period, is also of no consequence, because people have speculated about it for the



last however many years, and it's not a discussion, I can win, or elaborate in a way that people will accept. I have known Whitey for however many years now. I respect him. He respects me. We both know and understand what happened during that period. And people have specifically made an effort at making some controversy and antagonism toward each other, front and center. It's not something that in my perspective exists, should or ever did exist. We both knew and understood what happened at the time. And both he and I would do exactly what each of us did, if it were happening today, we would do it again. So if there's antagonism that you're looking for, you go ahead and have that there's about 30 or 40 years of speculation about that now, which means nothing to me, is, frankly, in terms of what I've seen over the years and read. Unless it's something I have said, I perceive is ridiculous. But Whitey is welcome at my house anytime he wants to come over. I suspect I'd be welcome at his.

### **Jon Shestakofsky**

And our last question will come from David Edelstein. David, go ahead.

### **David Edelstein**

Ted, how are you? It's been a while since February of 2020. When you had that tour, right, right before everything seemed to have fallen apart.

### **Ted Simmons**

Yeah.

### **David Edelstein**

I wanted to ask you, I think if there's anything not that we didn't already know this, but if there's anything we learned in baseball for the past year and a half, it's how having fans at games and events really makes a difference and wondering what your emotions and thoughts are at this point, knowing that your induction had originally been cancelled, and it was going to just be broadcast. And now there's a chance next week for there to be a potentially unlimited number of fans, as many as can fit there to support you and your induction what that means to you to have that in person event surrounded by fans?

### **Ted Simmons**

Well, it's no question that, you know, it was such a difficult thing to try and work through for the Hall of Fame and everybody in Major League Baseball, not just the decision to, you know, cancel last year, allow it to go forward this year in the way that it has, it's been such a difficult time for everybody here in the last two years. all over the country, in the workforce, you know, in society in general, with this pandemic, it's been a it's been a tough go for everybody. The fact that it's now going to happen, okay, just brings us closer to some normalcy, which we're all hoping for, that everyone can eventually get back to when this pandemic is eventually all behind us. I think what Major League Baseball wants, specifically, what Hall of Fame wants, specifically, what all of us want specifically is to get back to some normal operation of our lives. And that's the thing that's really special about being able to come. However, in whatever condensed form three days to two or whoever can come or who can't. At least it's a stride in the right direction that says, okay, we're going to try this. We're going to see if we can get back to some sense of normalcy. And I'm really all for that in every conceivable way. It's what it means to me, let's get back to normal.

**Jon Shestakofsky**

Well, thank you, Ted. Really appreciate you spending the time with us today and we look forward to celebrating your career next week. Thanks to all the media members for joining us on this call. As a reminder, the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony takes place Wednesday, September 8th right here in Cooperstown and we will continue our conference call schedule next with class of 2020 Inductee Derek Jeter. That will be on a separate Zoom link beginning at 2:30pm Eastern time. Thanks again, everyone.

**Ted Simmons**

Thank you.