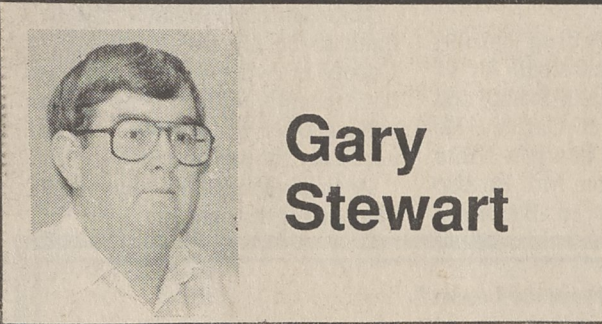


Opinion



Gary Stewart

It Will Be Like A Carolina Reunion

Leftovers from the recent Kings Mountain Hall of Fame Sports Banquet:

It'll be like a big Carolina reunion June 23 in Mars Hill when former Tar Heel guard Buzz Peterson ties the knot. Several former Tar Heel athletes will be in the ceremony, including Peterson's college roommate, Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls. Others involved will be Brad Daugherty of the Cleveland Cavaliers, former Tar Heel golfer Davis Love III and ex-Tar Heel grinder Tyrone Anthony.

Peterson, who recently accepted an assistant basketball position at N.C. State, said he was advised by Tar Heel Coach Dean Smith to move with Les Robinson to Raleigh. He said Robinson hopes to build the same type of "family atmosphere" at State that has been so successful for Smith at Chapel Hill.

"We're going to try to clean up the image and get good student athletes," Peterson said. "It will take a while."

The Wolfpack's new basketball staff would do well to copy the formula of success of State football coach Dick Sheridan. Sheridan recruits quality athletes who are also good people.

Wolfpack assistant Ken Pettus had nothing but praise for Sheridan, whose program has as high a graduation rate as any in the country.

"Coach Sheridan always conducts himself as a gentleman and expects his players to do the same," he said. "We think we can become champions and do it in the right manner. We daily do things that are wrong but we do our best to influence the kids positively, not only in football but academically, socially and spiritually."

Former Kings Mountain Mayor John Henry Moss, who saw many outstanding baseball players come and go during many years as a minor league general manager and president of the Western Carolinas and South Atlantic leagues, said KM's Charlie Ballard had the potential to be a "major league superstar" had a military injury not ended his pitching career. Ballard had just gone through a brilliant high school career at KMHHS and had pitched one year of college baseball at Lenoir Rhyne before being drafted into the Army. He fell off the back of a truck and injured his pitching arm. After World War II, he returned to Lenoir-Rhyne as a first baseman and also had several good years in the Western Carolinas League, compiling a .348 lifetime batting average.

Former KMHHS football coach Bill Bates praised Don Parker for his 24 years as a coach, but said one of his fondest memories of Parker was when he was director of the Exceptional Children's Program at old Compact School.

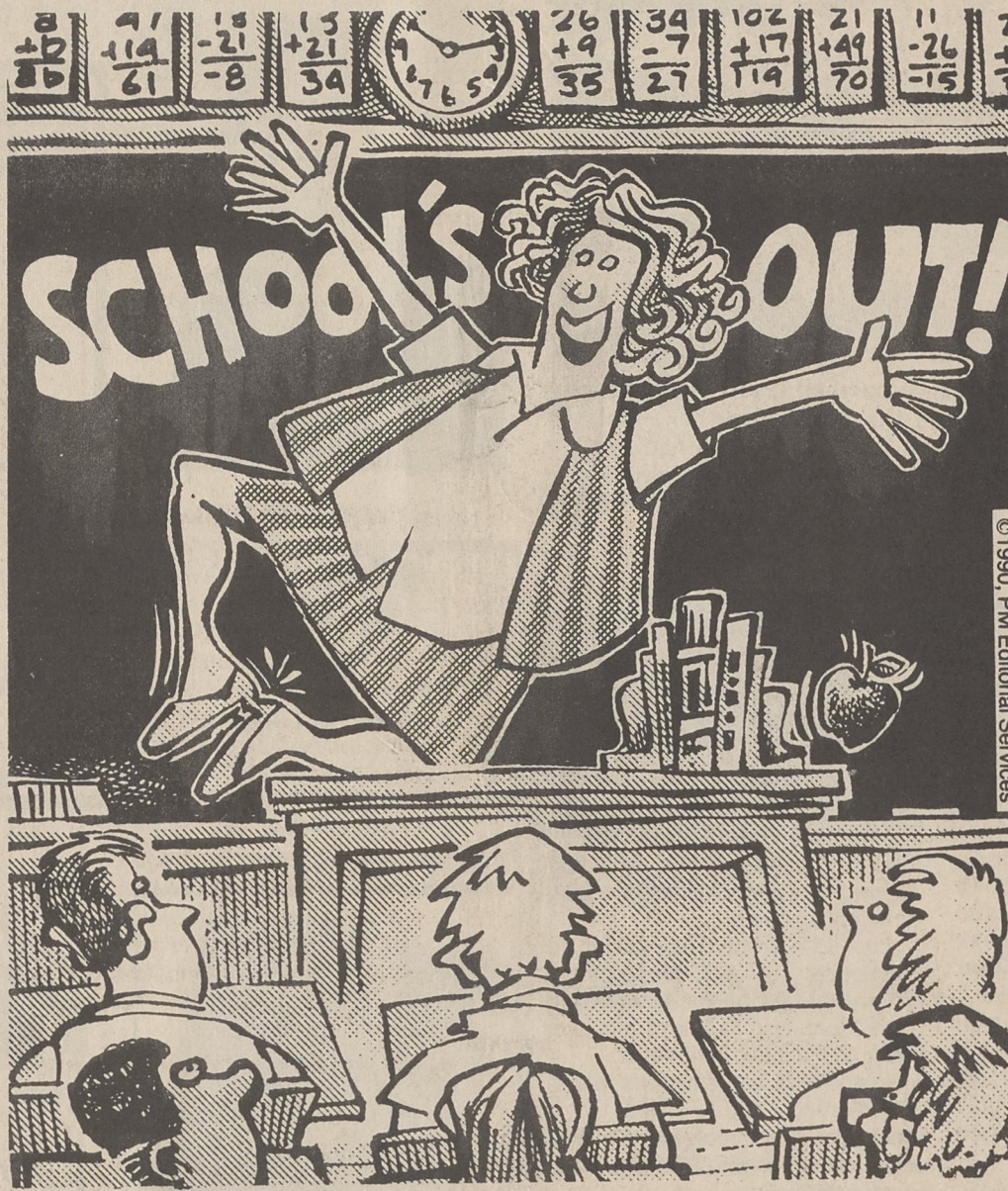
"That was back in the sixties and it was very trying times for young black children," Bates said. "I still remember seeing Coach Parker pick those little children up and set them on his knee and tell them stories. He gave disadvantaged children an advantage."

Former KMHHS football coach Shu Carlton still likes to talk about "the play" in 1955 when quarterback George Harris faked out everybody in the stadium, including the referees.

KM was playing Lincolnton in a game which would decide the conference championship and the score was 0-0. Harris, known for his passing and bootleg running ability, faked a handoff to fullback Ken Baiy but kept the ball on a bootleg and rolled around end for an apparent 60-yard touchdown. But Harris had done such a remarkable job of faking that when Baiy was tackled, the officials blew their whistles and called the play back.

"The referees brought the ball back and charged us with a down," Carlton recalled. "But it must have fired us up because we went on to win 27-7. One referee told me after the game that they huddled and said 'whenever Harris runs, don't blow the whistle.' Another referee told me he put his whistle in his back pocket and didn't take it out again the rest of the night."

Cartoonatorial



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Jim Heafner

A String Bean Catcher Who Was A Prankster

As I have stated many times before, I love baseball. I also am drawn to unusual stories of any type. With that in mind, here is an unusual baseball story--and it's absolutely true.

Odell Barbary was a string bean country boy from South Carolina. He was a catcher for the old Charlotte Hornets of the Piedmont League, who was known for an outstanding throwing arm and an offbeat sense of humor. Barbary had a reputation around the league as an expert needler. He could dish it out, but he could also take it. Consequently, everybody liked Odell.

The prankster didn't reserve his barbs for the opposition. His teammates came in for their fair share as well, especially the pitchers.

"Why, I could pitch better than that when I was in High school," he'd say, with an impish gleam in his eye.

The pitching staff, handled by Barbary so expertly, would tell him, "Oh yeah, big shot, then why aren't you in the big leagues?"

"I will be," he'd say. And he was. He played in one game with the Washington Senators.

As it happened, for the last game of the 1942 season, the Charlotte manager decided, as a lark, to let his players choose their position. Asheville was the opponent this night.

Barbary took the mound at Griffith Park in Charlotte, saying, "OK, you guys are going to see a real pitcher tonight."

"You won't last an inning," they told him, and they all settled back to watch Odell get his comeuppance.

But the catcher-turned-pitcher fooled them. He got out of the first inning without any trouble, probably because his form was so terrible. Asheville scored three runs in the second inning.

Barbary wasn't fazed. He marched confidently to the mound and shut them out for the next two innings. His teammates tied the score in the fourth, then a strange thing happened. Odell Barbary's pitching form started to improve.

In the tenth, it appeared the game was over. Asheville got a runner to third with one out, but he was gunned down by the centerfielder trying to score on a fly ball.

Four more innings went by the boards, and Barbary was still pitching, only now he was beginning to look as though he had pitched all his life. He seemed stronger as each frame rolled by.

Finally, in the bottom of the twenty-second inning, the Charlotte shortstop, Charlie Roberts doubled off the left-field wall. Then third baseman, Smut Aderholt, who had been to the plate nine times without a hit, drove him in with another double, and Odell Barbary was a winning pitcher.

The Charlotte catcher had pitched the longest game in Piedmont League history. He gave up eleven hits and struck out two, the only two strikeouts of the game. Unfortunately, Barbary ruined his good throwing arm and a budding career.

Odell had been told before the game that he would report to the Senators in 1943. He did, and as previously mentioned, got into just a single major league game.

After his pitching gem, Barbary sheepishly told his teammates, "boys, I'll have to be honest with you. Before tonight, I'd never pitched a game in my life."

Odell Barbary still lives in lower South Carolina, Anderson I think. He continues to follow baseball and attends several Atlanta Braves games each year.

I think most of you will agree this is an unusual baseball story.

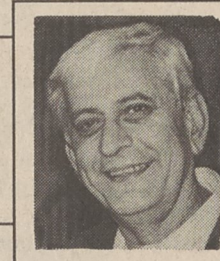
COMMON SENSE

If you haven't grace, the Lord can give it to you. If you haven't learning, I'll help you to get it. But if you haven't common sense, neither I, nor the Lord can give it to you.

John Brown (of Haddington)

Dwight Frady

The Best Things In Life Are Free



My dream started with sand castles. In the distance I saw a boat with its sails colored red by the setting sun. And I saw the ocean. And I thought what a beautiful world it was.

But then I heard a voice, almost a whisper, say, "dream on."

And so I did. And I was suddenly transported to a huge building with monuments and baseball memorabilia.

And I heard the same voice, as if to beckon me, say, "recapture your youth."

And I looked in a mirror and saw a 12-year-old boy wearing overalls. He wore no shoes because it was summertime. It was his favorite time of the year. He had an oversized glove on his left hand. In his right hand he held a cottonseed baseball. But the baseball was new and looked like the real thing.

There was no mistaking the fact that the 12-year-old was me. And the voice almost whispered in my ear, "Talk To Them."

And the statues and pictures came alive. Ty Cobb was wearing a Detroit Tiger uniform. He looked at me, smiled, and said, "Hiya kid."

"Hello, Mr. Cobb," I said in awe. "Do you think you'll hit .400 this year?"

"No sweat," he replied. "I'm at my peak here in the Baseball Hall of Fame."

And I saw my true idol, Stan Musial, sitting beside a water cooler. "Mr. Musial," I said, "you were always a credit to the game. You were my all-time favorite player and my Dad loved you too."

"You're mighty kind," said Stan The Man. "The next one I hit out of the park will be just for you." And I was thrilled. And I knew that Stan The Man was a man of his word.

And I saw Walter Johnson warming up down in the bullpen. I waved at him and he waved back. Then Bob Feller, who was sitting next to Ted Williams, said as I passed by, "In my prime, kid, I could throw 'em harder than the Big Train." And I didn't dare doubt Mr. Feller's word.

And I saw Jackie Robinson playing a game of pepper with Willie Mays. "Say hey, kid," said Willie as he caught one behind his back.

And I saw all of the greats, including an infielder with huge hands. It was Honus Wagner, the great shortstop. "My Dad thought you were a great hitter," I said to Mr. Wagner.

"I know," said Mr. Wagner. "He comes to the day games and sits in the box seats." And I peered into the distance, searching for Dad's familiar face, but I couldn't find him.

Then I saw someone wearing a modern day uniform. He was signing baseballs and baseball bats and collecting money. He signed an 8-by-10 picture of himself and got \$20 from some kid my age. Some grownup handed him \$40 when he signed a bat.

"Who is that?" I asked Christy Mathewson.

"That's Pete Rose," said the New York Giant immortal.

"Wasn't he banned from baseball for gambling," I asked.

"Yeah, and now he makes a living at selling his name," Mathewson said. "At least 1,200 fools have gone by his locker today."

And the familiar voice said, "listen to him." And I heard Mr. Rose say, "I used to give my autographs away and baseballs and bats, too. But I wasn't very smart back then. I made the Hall of Fame despite my problems. I deserved it because I was one of the greats. They couldn't keep me out."

And I felt a tear roll down my cheek. I told Mr. Mathewson I couldn't pay for it, but I would love for him to autograph my cottonseed baseball.

And Mr. Mathewson did. And he had his friend, Mr. John McGraw, autograph my glove. They didn't charge a cent.

The voice whispered, "time to go." And I woke up to find that I was growing old and my back hurt. In my right hand I clutched a cottonseed baseball.

Mr. Mathewson had also written, above his autographed name, "The best things in life are free."

SIDEWALK SURVEY

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE SUPREME COURT RULING THAT PERMITS FLAG BURNING?



LINDA BELL

"I feel the flag is sacred. It's part of our heritage and the younger people of today don't have the respect for it and for the people who fought for it."

OTIS FALLS

"I don't think the flag should be burned without someone going to jail. I am strong about the flag."

LINDA WARD

"Well, if they bought it themselves it should be okay. If it is their personal property."

BILL GRISSOM

"I think it's terrible. I feel we shouldn't be able to burn our own flag. It takes away from our freedom."

DIANE BUSH

"I don't like it. I think it should be stopped."

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