

The Fearless Spectator

By

Charles McCabe, Esquire



I see where Stan Musial, one of the indisputable gents of the sporting world, has cheapened himself just a bit.

Stan recently accepted a degree of Doctor of Humanities from a jerkwater Illinois college.

I doubt not this particular college, Monmouth, can use Stan the Man. Does The Man need Monmouth? I give to doubt.

Monmouth and its cultural elite apparently are gasping for ink, as the press agents call the space they feloniously grab for clients in our complaisant journals of news and opinion.

The prexy of this here fact factory said Stan got the degree for "highest type excellence in his profession."

Stan's profession is roaming the outfield for the St. Louis Cardinals, and hitting thereafter. There is no doubt of his excellence.

Let us grant that commercial institutions like churches and universities help their particular grift when they pollinate themselves with an exotic figure blessed with mountainous approval. Like, say, a good baseball player.

In the publicity business this bit of baloney is called "the old school tie-in." Nothing bad happened to "Cleopatra" and the \$30 million nut of Mr. Spyros Skouras, for instance, when "a Vatican source" accused the leading lady of "erotic vagrancy." (Which is far too nifty a phrase for most Vatican sources I know or can think of.)

Walter Winchell, to cite a vaguely analogous thing, laundered a decidedly gray reputation by rapping cancer and siding with organized healing and the late Damon Runyon (at the same time), when he fronted for the Runyon Cancer Fund. While Mr. Runyon's spirit, I presume, writhed.

I hate to see baseball prostituted to the uses of culture.

Baseball is too decent, too pure, too inspiring a thing for our youth to be exploited by a lot of frustrated experts on Phoenician Maritime History or the sprung rhythm of Gerard Unmanly Hopkins. Ask any owner.

This trend, if not nipped, could lead to such ethical distortions as Harvard or Stanford getting a little undeserved importance by tossing a Ph.D. or two the way of Reger Maris or Sonny Liston.

Normal institutional growth, through hard work and dedication to maybe an ideal or two, is no longer the American way.

A foundering factory of truth can always get a bit of the action by humoring some vain and unlettered old collector of money by making him a Doctor of Humane Letters, or of Literature; or of Law, yet.

I've seen Tammany Hall contractors balancing the mortarboard of learning on their splendid pates while some college president, reading a Latin-inscribed scroll as he reached for a blank check, told them they were pretty smart Tammany Hall contractors indeed (Cum Laude).

This sort of thing should stop, eh? I should think the establishment of baseball, led by Mr. J. G. Taylor Spink of The Sporting News and the various nafs who own the clubs, would get to work on the matter. Pronto.

I have no doubt that the building fund for the new gym at that joint which ennobled Stan Musial last week was swelled by this singularly dextrous bit of serving God and Mammon. At the same time, again, what did Mr. Musial get out of it?

No, baseball is being suckered in these deals. I am certain the Commissioner of Baseball, Mr. Ford Frick, would see the wisdom of taking most stringent action to prevent a recurrence of l'Affaire Musial.

Like an obligatory \$250 fine for anyone in organized baseball who is caught accepting an honorary degree again. Unless he's an owner, of course.

This fine would be about equal to that levied on a player for belting an umpire, or smoking opium in the clubhouse.

RAMS BEGIN ACCEPTING SEASON TICKET ORDERS

Applications for renewals have been processed and the Los Angeles Rams now are accepting new orders for season tickets to their 1962 games, it was announced today by the club's business manager William H. John. Season tickets in all three seating areas and in all three

season plans still are available, John added. Further information on each plan may be obtained at the Rams office, 7813 Beverly Blvd. or by calling WEBster 3-8291.

The Rams open their season with a night game against the Washington Redskins on Aug. 11.

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