

Eulogy for Wayne “The Governor” Boyd

(Panama City, FL...February 24, 2007)

“Life is not important, except for the impact it has on others’ lives.”

-Jackie Robinson’s epitaph on his tombstone

This past September, my good friend, Wayne “The Governor” Boyd called me...his medical challenge (cancer) had returned for the third time, and (that...”if I don’t make it through this time”) he asked me to speak at his funeral. I immediately said, “Of course, ‘Governor’, I’d be most honored.”

“Let’s make ‘em laugh...talk some baseball...I don’t want people to feel sad” were his words to me. You see, Wayne knew that this third time around with his medical condition worsening, was going to be his ultimate challenge for life here on this earth...he faced mortality with the same sense of humor and spirit that he faced life, with that great smile and that infectious Wayne Boyd giggle that we all know so well.

Pat, Wayne’s wonderful wife and soulmate of 35+ years, reminded me three weeks ago that she would like me to offer a eulogy for Wayne, as his condition continued to weaken him further...again, deeply humbled, I assured her that I would be ever so proud to do so.

BASEBALL

I first met Coach Wayne Boyd in late October, 1995 in Winter Haven, FL at the very first tournament that the BOYS OF BASEBALL – NATIONAL TRAVEL TEAM ever participated in. It was a 12 & under tournament hosted by Doyle Baseball. Looking through a chain-link fence, “Coach Steve, Wayne Boyd here...let’s talk baseball!” were his first words to me.

We struck up a conversation that resulted in my 10+ year great friendship with Wayne through baseball. The BOB-NTT played first with Coach Wayne and his Bay County Amateur Baseball organization in Panama City Beach, FL, the fall of 1996 at the old Frank Brown Baseball Complex on Back Beach Road...our second age-group tournament. To date, we have participated in 274, with more than 20 with “The Governor”. It was at that first tournament that I labeled him such, as everyone in the panhandle of Florida knew him...EVERYONE!

Did he ever love baseball!?

Just look around at this celebration of his life...fellow coaches, umpires, former players, tournament hosts, facilities people...all here to pay their respect for a man who touched their lives...OUR LIVES...meaningfully, positively, lovingly, and ENTHUSIASTICALLY through the great game of baseball.

If Wayne Boyd touched your life in any fashion through baseball, please stand up. Look around...what you see is but a fraction of The Governor’s meaningful impact on his fellow man.

GOD's BASEBALL TEAM

Jimmy Kolaitis and the Wayne “The Governor” Boyd stood by to observe a baseball game. The Governor’s team was playing Satan’s team. With Satan’s team ahead 3-0, in the bottom of the 9th inning with two outs, the Governor’s team was at bat.

They continued to watch as a batter stepped up to the plate whose name was Love. Love swung at the first pitch and hit a single, because Love never fails. The next batter was named Faith, who also got a single because Faith works with Love. The next batter up was named Godly Wisdom. Satan wound up and threw the first pitch. Godly Wisdom looked it over and let it pass: ball one. Three more pitches and Godly Wisdom walked, because Godly Wisdom never swings at what Satan throws.

The bases were loaded. Wayne then turned to Jimmy and told him he was now going to bring in his ace player. Up to the plate stepped The Lord’s Grace.

Jimmy said, “He sure doesn’t look like much to me. I think you’re in deep trouble, Governor!” Satan’s whole team relaxed when they saw The Lord’s Grace. Thinking he had won the game, Satan wound up and fired his first pitch, a blazing fastball (cheese...aspirin...a BB!). To the amazement of everyone, Grace crushed the ball harder than anyone had ever seen, a hard line shot up the middle. But, Satan was not worried, as his star center fielder let very few get by. He went up for the ball, but it went right through his glove, hit him on the head and sent him crashing on the ground; then, it continued over the fence for a home run! The Governor’s team won 4-3 with this dramatic walk-off grand slam, coming with two outs in the bottom of the 9th.

The Governor then asked Jimmy if he knew why Love, Faith, and Godly Wisdom could get on base, but could not win the game. Jimmy answered that he did not know why (to everyone’s recollection, this was the first time Jimmy Kolaitis seemed stumped by any baseball question!). The Governor explained, “If your love, faith, and wisdom had won the game, you would think you had done it by yourself. **Love, faith and wisdom will get you on base, but only The Lord’s Grace can get you home. You see, Jimmy, The Lord’s Grace is the one thing Satan cannot steal.**”

[Original version on website, www.boysofbaseball.com]

The names have been changed to protect the innocent!

BASEBALL cont’d.

Wayne coached kids for 40+ years...all ages...the impact of his love and mentorship will last well beyond the span of The Governor’s life...and, way beyond his players’ playing days. **Players, former players, fellow coaches...Wayne The Governor Boyd may not always be by you, but, HE WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU.** He will always be a memory in your mind and a feeling in your heart.

He loved certain baseball jersey #'s...and, talking about them.

2...Tommy Lasorda

4...Lou Gehrig

5...Joe DiMaggio

6...Stan The Man Musial

7...Mickey Mantle

8...Yogi Berra and Cal Ripken, Jr.

9...Ted Williams, but more often, Roger Maris and Minnie Minoso

12..Cy Young

19..Bob Feller

21..Roberto Clemente

24..Willie Mays...Wayne's favorite and well-recognized personal jersey #

42..Jackie Robinson

Note some key # coincidences:

9-19-42...Wayne's birthdate

4-19-71...Wayne and Pat married

2-12-07...The last time I talked with Wayne

 ("Take care, Steve" were his last words to me 12:42 pm CT)

2-21-07...Wayne is called home by The Good Lord 4:12 pm CT

2-24-07...Wayne's life is celebrated and he is laid to rest

Read John 12:24

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But, **its death will produce many new kernels, a potential harvest of new lives.** Even in The Bible, Wayne's influence is spoken about.

FAMILY

Pat

Met Wayne in 1970 while an intern at Greenville Elementary School, Greenville, FL and Wayne was Principal of Greenville HS

Married April 9, 1971

Stan

First-born, August 11, 1972...wife, Stephanie, granddaughter Emma Grace, born 6-09-05

Chris

Born October 12, 1979

Gerald

Wayne's younger brother

Sandra

Wayne's younger sister

MAN, DID WAYNE EVER LOVE HIS FAMILY!

Not one time did I ever talk with your loving Wayne, the beloved family man that he was (husband, father, granddad, brother), that he did not talk glowingly, proudly, and so caringly about each of you and his fine family. Always with that great smile!

Read Isaiah 40:31

But for those who trust in The Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

KEY WORDS AND MEMORIES

Cold weather

ABCA Annual Conventions (our driving trips to Chicago...TWICE!)

FCA breakfast at the ABCA meetings

Red gloves

Red cleats

Vitalis-combed hair

Laughter and smiles

Loud voice

Pepsi

Popeye's Chicken

Oak Ridge Boys

Bingo fundraisers

Teaching kids (30+ years)

Family

Baseball (60+ years)

The Good Lord

TESTIMONIALS

When I heard the news of the passing of Wayne, I couldn't help but think that God needed a special coach to lead one of His special teams in Heaven. He reached down and got a special coach, "The Governor". Please share my sympathy with Mrs. Pat, her fine family, and many friends.

–Terry Jinks
Childersburg, AL

Looking back, I always knew each encounter with Wayne would be a positive one. He always brought out my inner joy, and taught me how to live in the bright side of life. And, I'll always remember "The Governor" on the lawnmower, dragging the baseball infield!

–Coleman Cosgrove
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC

Throughout life, you meet great people, especially through the game of baseball. But, there are some people that you meet that are special people. Special, as in reaching kids, and making an impact on kids. Wayne "The Governor" Boyd was one of those people. He will be missed, and always loved.

-Jimmy Kolaitis
Director of Baseball Operations
Troy University
Troy, AL

As we suffer together the loss of our beloved companion, let us remember the beauty and honor that he gave each of our lives. I find myself reflecting upon so many memories of this fine distinguished man of God. My heart, my soul mourn for the loss of Wayne's earthly presence, but I must admit, I have discovered a peace knowing the place of rest where he now remains. I am convinced to be reverent for the memories I have shared with Wayne; it is truly only a matter of time before we all are joined together in a community of love and embrace. May peace be with you all on this day we come to share the memory of Wayne. Amen.

-Nicholas Hessman
Divinity Graduate Studies
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

I was always impressed with Wayne's sense of humor in all situations. And, with his passion for kids to have the opportunity to play baseball at all levels. I will always appreciate, value, and remember Wayne's friendship.

-Mark Fuller
Auburn, AL

CELEBRATING THE MAN, WAYNE AS:

- Person...Lived 64 years, 5 months, 2 days
- Family...Married 35 years, 10 months, 12 days
- Educator...30+ years
- Coach...40+ years, and never missed a season (not because of his illness or any reason)
- Citizen
- Friend
- Servant of God

Read Psalm 23:4

Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

CLOSING AND GOODBYE

As with Jackie Robinson's quotation, Wayne The Governor Boyd's life was important...IS IMPORTANT...and, does matter.

My Dad was my hero, my best friend...he would say to me many times, "Steve, we want to always leave the neighborhood in better shape than we found it." Wayne The Governor Boyd did just that and more. He left each dugout, each ball park, each tournament site, each community, each situation, each other, and the world in better shape than he found them.

The Good Lord loaned him to this world...64 years, 5 months, 2 days. Now, He called in the note and brought The Governor home for his eternal rest..."slid safely into eternity", as his good friend, Rick Vossen, so ably said. We will miss you, Wayne ...you will always be a memory in our mind and a feeling in our heart...and, we love you. Wayne The Governor Boyd.

-Steve Cosgrove
Auburn, AL