

KATHY STEINAUER

Idols' exits alter game's image

We all have idols. Isn't it human nature to look up to someone and think that person is practically God himself and admire how totally cool that person is and wonder what it must be like to be that person?



Dave and I went to our last Royals game together in May 1990. After that, we just couldn't get our schedules coordinated enough to go.

My idol is leaving the game of baseball. I'll never see him play again. OK, I'm not really that melodramatic about the whole thing. But I just can't help but feel sad about George Brett leaving baseball. Never again will I see him in a Royals uniform.

Of course, it's not like he's gone forever. He'll be vice president of baseball operations for the Royals. He isn't falling off the face of the Earth.

Maybe it's strange for me to be reacting like this. I don't know many women who would be sad at the end of a sports season.

I used to have no real interest in baseball. I rooted for the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1985 World Series because my mom was a Cards fan. If only a good friend of mine who has always been a Royals freak would have shown me the error of my ways back then, I wouldn't have missed all those years of George Brett glory.

I didn't even get to know George Brett until 1987. I never saw George play third base. To a lot of people, that probably means I don't really count as a fan. If you didn't know and love George as a third baseman, then by God, you didn't really know and love George.

Anyway, my brother introduced me to George when we went to Kansas City in the summer of '87. My brother thought we should go over to the stadium and see if the Royals were home. They were. We bought some tickets from a scalper. I was thrilled, but hey, it was better than fighting 10-year-olds for space in the hotel swimming pool.

I decided it was really pretty neat. The stadium was beautiful; the music was cool, and it was fun when someone did something good and everyone got excited. Otherwise, it was a pretty laid-back, relaxing good time. The drunks behind us were annoying, but the atmosphere was too cool for them

to really bother us.

Later I went to the concession stand to get those sundaes in the miniature major-league baseball caps. I stopped by one of those souvenir stands and thought about buying something. I spotted a postcard with George Brett, sweaty and rugged, on the front.

I bought it. I admit that at first, my teenage hormones didn't like George Brett because of his baseball accomplishments. He just looked really good on that postcard.

I didn't even know all his heroic deeds. I didn't know he'd hit .390 in 1980 or won the AL West Championship for the Royals by hitting a home run against Rich "Goose" Gossage the same year.

I just thought he was really cute. I went back to my seat and asked my brother about him. Dave was a baseball fanatic. He told me about George's baseball greats. He told me about what a legacy George Brett was.

I was hooked. For seven years, I watched George and shared some of his accomplishments, like his 3,000th hit and his third batting title. I attended as many games as I could. Dave and I even saw George play outfield once. I can't remember why he was out there, but everyone was playing weird positions. Dave told me then that was something I would never see again.

Dave and I went to our last Royals game together in May 1990. After that, we just couldn't get our schedules coordinated enough to go.

But Dave didn't forget my passion for George. He bought me an autographed 8x10 glossy of George in

the spring of 1992. He got it at a baseball memorabilia shop and wouldn't tell me how much he paid for it.

Shortly after that, Dave died suddenly.

So George retiring from playing baseball has an added meaning for me. This was the first full season of baseball without Dave. It just wasn't the same, and now without George, it definitely can never be the same. The two men who introduced me to the national pastime and taught me to love it are gone.

Of course I understand George's need to move on. I understand his desire to watch his son grow up and be with his wife. I agree with him that, as he said, the same roller coaster gets old after riding it 162 times a year for 20 years.

But the game will never be the same for me or for thousands of his fans. I'm not sure I want to watch baseball any more.

Dave used to tease me a lot. He teased me about everything. He used to tease me about George Brett, but I knew deep down, Dave was a George Brett fan, too.

George affected the lives of many, including my brother and me. For that I am grateful, and I'm sure Dave was, too. I wish George the best of luck in his life after the game. It will be a big change for him, I'm sure, but he'll get used to it. We all have to adapt to a lot of things.

Steinauer is a senior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor and a columnist.

PATRICK HAMBRECHT

Writer's muse brings NU news

"The time has come!" I vowed with brass. "To rant and rave about! I'll write a column with hip relevance, a strong topic with clout. Like Hillary's Health Plan or National Coming-Out Day—maybe take sides with Bill Brady and shoot down the NRA?"



This is the story of the millenia, a bombshell of shocking truth! For Olympus has come to Earth, and Graham Spanier is Zeus!

But then I realized there was nothing I could say. What did I know? I was neither armed, sick nor gay.

"Damn my apathy!" I screamed. "Curse my Generation X! Everything I know is just grunge or drugs or sex!"

I cried myself to sleep, shook with fear and desperation. And then I woke to feel on my arm the hand of divine inspiration.

I turned to see my Muse, the goddess of all arts juvenile; her hair glistened like a comic cover, her eyes as black as record vinyl. Her face was from on high. Her shape was from on higher!

She gazed at me, and at last said, "God, Pat, you're such a whiner."

I nodded, feeling stupid and ashamed.

Till she said, "Cheer up! I've come to make your name. This column will be bigger than Tom Wolfe, trippier than Thompson! It'll hit readers like a pistol-whipping—from the hand of Charles Bronson!"

She winked and said, "What I'll tell you would even leave Deep Throat a-gasping in the dark! This is the story of the millenia, a bombshell of shocking truth! For Olympus has come to Earth, and Graham Spanier is Zeus!"

"Huh," I said, thinking my Muse a couple antlers short of a moose.

"Long ago," she said. "When Julius Caesar declared himself a god, the Olympians looked upon his deed and said, 'These mortals are all clods.'"

"So the Greco-Roman gods grew tired of torturing pompous Roman men; they desired a new pastime with

which to bicker and pretend. Zeus set Vulcan to the forge, to hammer out a cosmic Rubik's Cube. And for near two thousand years, the lame god snipped and glued.

"At last Vulcan cried, 'Gods and Goddesses, look upon my creation! Upon my wondrous puzzle, your minds will satiate! It is fun, ponderous and pointless! T'would boggle the mind of a Fate!'"

"Zeus giggled with anticipation and asked, 'Could it set a mortal mind to rot?'"

"Vulcan replied, 'That and more, Great Zeus! I call it "Grass and Parking Lots!"'"

"One team fights for plant life, the other side battles for granite and steel! The mineral team lob sculpture and pavement; every plant that is hit they will kill! The organic team fosters Gaic destruction, destroying all that mortals build!"

"Let's go back to Earth!" screamed the gods. "Begin the eternal game! If we couldn't squash mortals under our toes, it just wouldn't be the same!"

"As the Olympians entered Earth's orbit, St. Peter appeared, blocking their path with his holy staff and inspiring holy fear.

"Since you've been gone," the patriarch said, "Christ has taken rule over Men. He will not allow you to persecute their souls from without. They do such a fine job within!"

"The saint said, 'There is but one place despised enough from above. Play your "Parking Lots" in UNL!'"

"So the children of Cronus flew down to Nebraska, chortling with unholy glee. They seized Lincoln campus by possessing the flesh of administration and faculty.

"Athena threw down her giant hiderscraper in front of the Nebraska Union. The land shook, thunder cracked! Bright lightning pealed! Vulcan's malevolent game had begun.

"And so, ever since, Nebraska students have felt the Olympian blight. Until the giant hiderscraper is thrown into the sun, UNL will be the gods' site."

"So have I spoken," my fair-faced muse said. "And so thus shall your column be: six by eight inches of factual mythology.

"Now sleep, my sophomoric disciple, and know that when you wake, many will read your piece and say, 'Good God! This kid's a pretentious crank!'"

"For though the truth is on your side, the truth is ill and not unfunny. But now you know why Spanier says, 'Rock to grass and grass to rock! It's only mortal money!'"

Hambrecht is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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