

# One for the Books: On Rhetoric, Community, and Memory

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Todd F. McDorman

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The 34<sup>th</sup> LaFollette Lecture  
October 10, 2013

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## The Charles D. LaFollette Lecture Series

*One for the Books: On Rhetoric, Community, and Memory*<sup>1</sup>  
Todd F. McDorman

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### EXCERPT

Classical liberal arts teaching and learning at its best is potent in helping us engage and interrogate the economies and ecologies of life-with-the-dead precisely because it serves as one of those few educational refuges, or haunts if you will, from the insistent pressures to reduce prudential teaching and learning to myopic, present-day utility, which in my mind equates with living alone and with no past. From classics to chemistry, music to mathematics, English to economics, the liberal arts bear witness to the enormous landscape of human experience and the potential for those who have passed on to continue to address vital present-day questions and truths, and, oh yes, to call us to account.

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*The LaFollette Lecture Series* was established by the Wabash College Board of Trustees to honor Charles D. LaFollette, their longtime colleague on the Board. The lecture is given each year by a Wabash College Faculty member who is charged to address the relation of his or her special discipline to the humanities broadly conceived.

For more information, contact Dwight Watson, LaFollette Professor of Humanities, Professor of Theater, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN 47933. Phone (765) 361-6342. E-mail: [watsond@wabash.edu](mailto:watsond@wabash.edu). Website: [www.wabash.edu/lafollette](http://www.wabash.edu/lafollette)

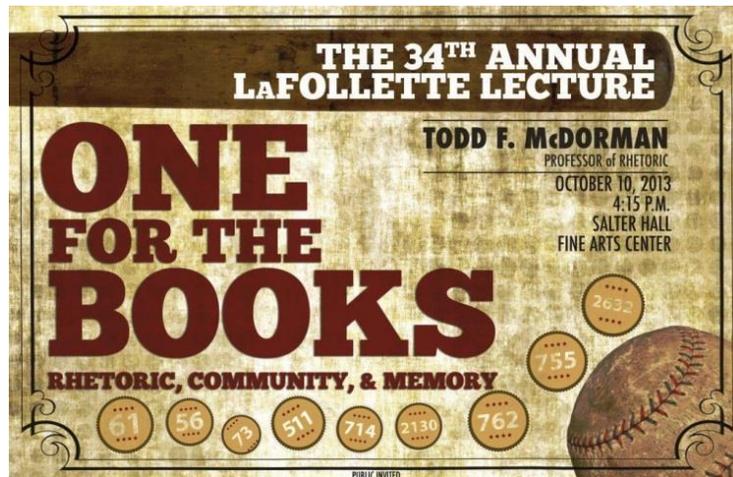
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The Charles D. LaFollette Lecture Series

*One for the Books: On Rhetoric, Community, and Memory*<sup>1</sup>

Todd F. McDorman  
Department of Rhetoric



Good afternoon. It is an honor to be here. It is also a bit overwhelming and, I admit, rather intimidating. That sense of intimidation was only heightened by Jeremy Hartnett's excellent lecture from last year, an eloquent and sophisticated reading of ancient portraits and the work of social history.

I sincerely thank Dwight Watson, Distinguished LaFollette Professor in the Humanities, for this invitation. I also thank the LaFollette family for their support of the College, this lecture, and, most of all, the humanities. Thanks, too, to Jeremy for his generous introduction. I also extend my thanks and appreciation to all of you—trustees, faculty, staff, visitors, and, most of all, students of

Wabash College—for being here today. Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank my family—my wife Kelly, my children Dana, Lily, and Carter, and my parents Frank and Liz McDorman. It has been a big week in the McDorman household, and not necessarily because of this lecture. You see, on the two preceding days it has been Carter's and Kelly's birthdays.

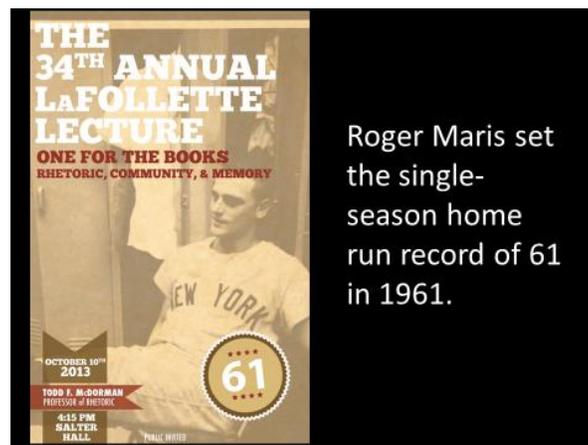
After Dwight invited me to give this lecture, I puzzled over what I might say and how to say it. Judging by the remarks of past lecturers, that reaction is something of a trope in contemplating this assignment. I had an idea for the lecture, two ideas actually, but was concerned about whether one of them—the one I did ultimately select—would be perceived as fitting and appropriately academic. In my struggle to develop my topic I can identify with Robert O. Petty, the second

LaFollette Lecturer, who said on the occasion of his address, “I was struck by the quaint fact that accepting such an honor is really quite delightful; composing a suitable lecture for the occasion is something altogether different.”<sup>2</sup> Likewise, I feel at one with our late friend Bill Placher, who, when reflecting on the purpose of the lecture—to explore the relationship of one’s discipline to the humanities—said in 1990, “I have brooded on that charge with a rising sense of panic.”<sup>3</sup> Panic. That word has proven apropos in recent weeks as I’ve had second thoughts about my topic, as well as how my approach and style fit with the tradition of this lecture.

Dwight encouraged me to address a topic I would find meaningful and motivating. I also sought counsel from my wife Kelly, and friend and former colleague David Timmerman. I looked at the Forewords that Eric Dean, Raymond Williams, Bill Placher, and Dwight Watson wrote for the four published volumes of LaFollette Lectures. In reading his Foreword to “The Margins of the Humanities” I noted how Professor Dean provided an informal set of criteria that typify LaFollette Lectures: they address human values, they use obscure titles, and they end in moral reflection and raise serious questions.<sup>4</sup> Finally, I spent a little time considering the lectures themselves. This process of investigation says something about me, but more than that it speaks to how rhetoric operates. Rhetoric is situated—it is based on occasion, purpose, constraints, audience. If one way of conceiving the humanities is the study of human culture, then rhetorical studies is interested in the development of expectations and norms for what constitutes appropriate discourse in culture and the analysis of that discourse.

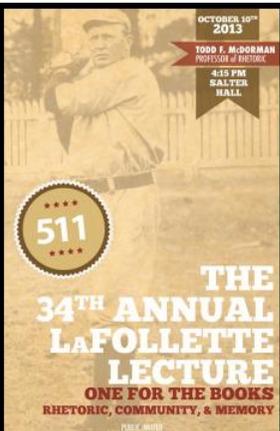
As for my title, “One for the Books,” rest assured that is *not* a boast about how I anticipate this lecture—the first LaFollette Lecture from Rhetoric—to be a prodigious success of unsurpassed quality. Nor is it a reference to the momentous presidency of Greg Hess, although I extend to President Hess every good wish and look forward to his inaugural address. I also add that my first conversations with President Hess emboldened me in the selection of my subject matter.

Those “books” referenced in my title contain iconic numbers that are embedded in childhood memories and serve as cultural anchors, numbers like 61,



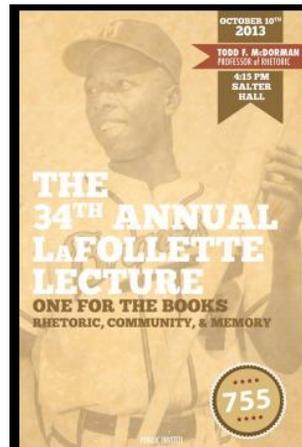
511,

Cy Young holds the major league record with 511 career wins.



The poster features a black and white photograph of Cy Young in a baseball uniform, holding a bat. The text on the poster includes: "OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013", "TODD F. MCGORMAN PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC", "4:15 PM SALTER HALL", "511", "THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE", "ONE FOR THE BOOKS", and "RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY".

755,

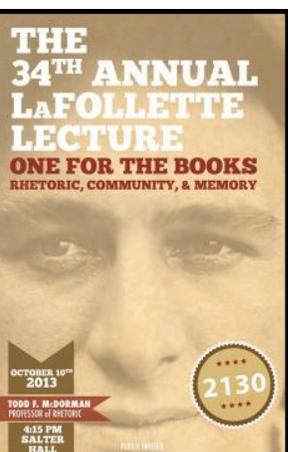


The poster features a black and white photograph of Hank Aaron in a baseball uniform. The text on the poster includes: "OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013", "TODD F. MCGORMAN PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC", "4:15 PM SALTER HALL", "THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE", "ONE FOR THE BOOKS", "RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY", and "755".

In 1974, Hank Aaron passed Babe Ruth's record for career home runs. Aaron finished his career with a total of 755.

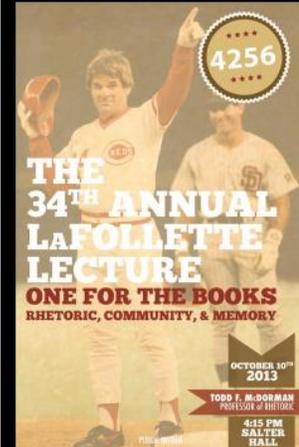
2,130,

Lou Gehrig's consecutive games played streak of 2130 ended in 1939.



The poster features a black and white close-up photograph of Lou Gehrig's face. The text on the poster includes: "OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013", "TODD F. MCGORMAN PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC", "4:15 PM SALTER HALL", "THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE", "ONE FOR THE BOOKS", "RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY", and "2130".

and 4,256.<sup>5</sup>



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4256  
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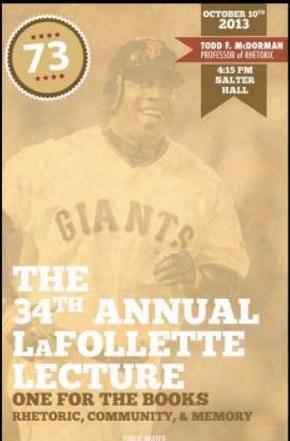
**THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE**  
**ONE FOR THE BOOKS**  
RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY

OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013  
TODD F. McDORMAN  
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC  
4:15 PM  
SALTER HALL

Pete Rose holds the major league record with 4256 career hits.

In recent years, many of those numbers have been rewritten with less recognized figures like 73,

In 2001 Barry Bonds established a new record by hitting 73 home runs in a single season.



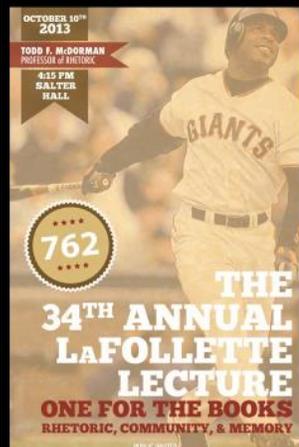
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73  
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OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013  
TODD F. McDORMAN  
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC  
4:15 PM  
SALTER HALL

**THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE**  
**ONE FOR THE BOOKS**  
RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY

GIANTS

762,



OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2013  
TODD F. McDORMAN  
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC  
4:15 PM  
SALTER HALL

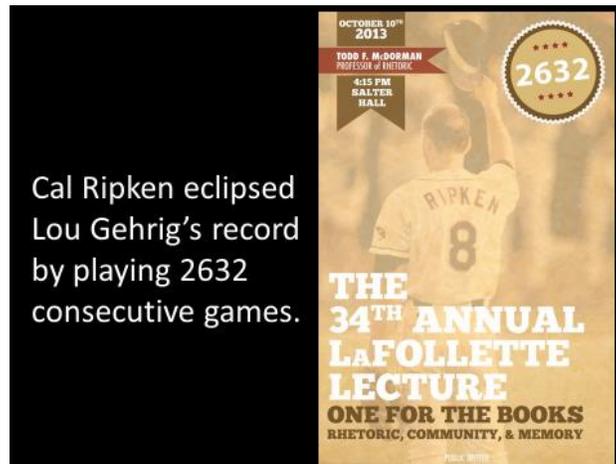
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**THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LAFOLLETTE LECTURE**  
**ONE FOR THE BOOKS**  
RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, & MEMORY

GIANTS

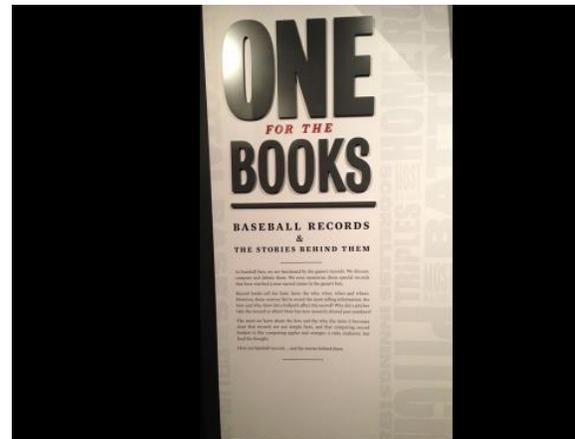
In 2007 Barry Bonds established a new career record of 762 home runs.

and 2,632.<sup>6</sup>



Cal Ripken eclipsed Lou Gehrig's record by playing 2632 consecutive games.

Those “books” also record incredible feats, praise remarkable persistence, and tell stories of novel occurrences. Of what am I speaking? “



“One for the Books” is the name of a recently developed permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum that focuses on baseball records and the stories behind them. The sprawling 1,537 square foot exhibit, which cost \$1.25 million to produce, spotlights more than 200 historic artifacts and accomplishments across 36 display cases.<sup>7</sup>

I've been fascinated by the exhibit since it debuted in May 2011, and today I will use it as a means to discuss the work of rhetorical studies and rhetoric's relationship to the humanities. In doing so, yes, I will talk about baseball, and how the story of baseball records are being retold in ways that begin to address the issue of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs)—a vexing issue that raises serious questions about human values.

But, more than that, my talk is about rhetoric, community, and memory, for those are the themes I will tease out as I proceed. More precisely, it is about the power of rhetoric to make, disrupt, remake, and remember communities. And, it is about rhetorical studies and its role in exploring *how* this is done.

I want to begin with a discussion of the humanities, rhetoric, and baseball. Then, I will use as my illustration a reading of “One for the Books: Baseball Records and the Stories Behind Them.” In exploring the exhibit, I consider how its rhetoric remakes community in baseball by reshaping public memory of baseball records in order to protect the integrity of the game while beginning the process of coming to terms with players’ use of performance-enhancing drugs.

## **PART I: THE HUMANITIES, RHETORIC, AND BASEBALL**

Before turning to my case study, I want to consider the meaning of rhetoric, how I approach its study, and why baseball is a meaningful vehicle for discussing rhetoric and the humanities.

As Vic Powell said in his 1992 Brigrance Forum Lecture, “Even a cursory survey of the definitions that have been offered [of rhetoric] reveals no consensus on what the subject is.”<sup>8</sup> Vic’s observation is important because it underscores that the claims I make today about rhetoric are necessarily partial and reflect my own interests and filters. For my own part, I would like to suggest that one useful definition of rhetoric is the one we developed for our public speaking textbook: rhetoric is a civic art devoted to the ethical study and use of verbal and nonverbal symbols in addressing contingent issues.<sup>9</sup>

As for “humanities,” I think Cheryl Hughes, in the 22nd LaFollette Lecture, offered a compelling explanation of the term. In 2001, Cheryl said:

I understand the humanities to be concerned with human values and expressions of the human spirit. Humanistic studies give us insight into ourselves, our values and ideals, and our development over time. ... [E]ducation in the humanities should lead us to become mature, humane, and wise citizens of the world, skilled in the art of solving human problems.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps I am drawn to Cheryl’s description because I can imagine substituting the terms “rhetoric” and “rhetorical studies” and arriving at a persuasive explanation of what rhetoric does. In this regard, Cheryl’s definition of the humanities might also be seen as a working explanation of rhetoric’s relationship to it—rhetoric as a field of study that provides insight into ourselves, our values, and our ideals; a discipline that is central to our development as participants in a democracy who are working in concert to solve societal challenges.

Along these lines, my work generally considers how rhetoric is used to shape and define communities. This has included scholarship focused on how the law defines our political community, as well as how marginalized groups and others denied legal protections have

advocated for change. For example, I have examined the right-to-die debate and how individuals and groups have sought legal recognition of choice-in-dying. Similarly, my essays on *Dred Scott* have considered Chief Justice Taney's effort to validate reconstructed history as law, and how African Americans challenged this history with competing memories of their service and citizenship in the early republic. Much of my study of sport and society also has involved issues of community and, most extensively, I have examined baseball icon Pete Rose's many image repair efforts in seeking reentry into the baseball community.

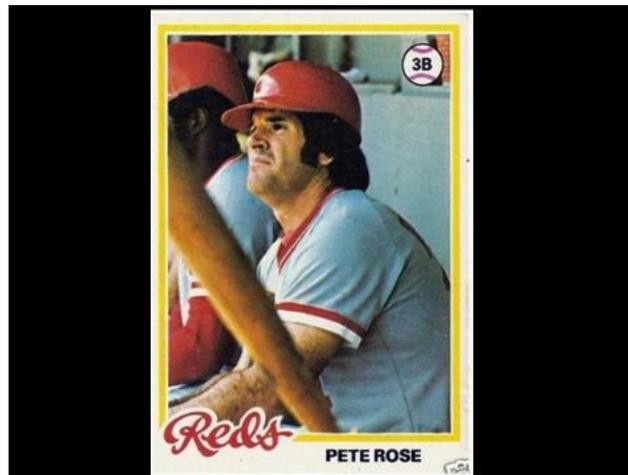
I offer this as an explanation of what I do and what rhetoric can do, but also as a preliminary for another investigation into how rhetoric makes and remakes community, as well as our memories of it. But before turning to that study, I want to say something more about the meaning and role of baseball.

One of the ideas I am advancing today is that the rhetorical study of baseball is a humanistic study. Baseball can be understood as integral to values, our struggle over them, and their evolution. The implicated values include those such as fair play or justice, democracy, and equality, while the sport has been upheld as a symbol of American spirit. In 1888, poet and humanist Walt Whitman said of baseball, "it's our game ... it has the snap, go, fling of the American atmosphere; it belongs as much to our institutions, fits into them as significantly as our Constitution's laws; [it] is just as important in the sum total of our historic life."<sup>11</sup> Another American poet and essayist, Donald Hall, has said that "because of its continuity over the space of America and the time of America, [baseball] is a place where memory gathers."<sup>12</sup>



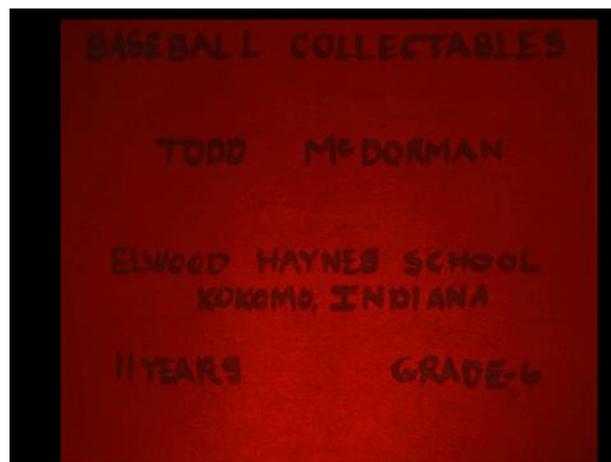
Part of baseball's appeal is its origin story, a myth constructed to support American exceptionalism. The story begins with the fanciful notion that Abner Doubleday, later a Union General, created the game in the quaint village of Cooperstown, New York, in 1839. The origin story and the way it was carefully crafted and promoted in the early 1900s is an example of how rhetoric is used to construct community. The story built the relationship of baseball and America—a game invented in and by America, the National Pastime, the game that represents the country. While it lacks truth, the story is used to fortify community and allows us to memorialize time past.<sup>13</sup>

While I'm talking about origin stories, I want to share a little of one more, baseball as my first research subject. When I was eight, my father and I began listening to Cincinnati Reds games, and we began collecting baseball cards. As I remember it, and I grant this memory may be as inaccurate as baseball's own origin myth, the card at the bottom of the first pack I opened, the one with the bubblegum and white residue stuck to it (this was back when bubblegum was included with baseball cards), was number 20 of the 1978 Topps set—Pete Rose.



In that summer, perhaps in that moment, a Pete Rose fan was born.

Baseball transported me into a different world, and I began devouring information about it, both its numbers and its stories. In the days long before *Baseball-Reference.com*, I spent hours compiling baseball statistics. I developed a system for evaluating players and my own baseball universe, playing seasons of “fantasy baseball” before I knew the meaning of that term. It was a rich, if imaginary, world.



As for that first research endeavor, it was a sixth-grade media fair project on baseball cards, an old-school slideshow with narration on cassette tape. My father introduced me to baseball cards, but

my mother was my partner in the research project. I didn't realize the meaning of what I was doing until I was in graduate school. Studying speeches, legal decisions, and newspapers from the 19th century replaced analyzing lines of statistics on the backs of baseball cards. Writing essays replaced the notebooks with fictional seasons and teams. These were different pursuits, and yet quite similar too. What I am speaking of here, returning to Cheryl's definition of the humanities, is an early exploration I had into the values and ideals of American culture as seen through baseball.

## **PART II: ONE FOR THE BOOKS: (RE)CONSTRUCTING MEMORIES OF BASEBALL HISTORY TO RENEW COMMUNITY**

In examining "One for the Books," I seek to illustrate one perspective on rhetoric's relationship to the humanities by providing a rhetorical analysis of discursive and visual forms that I interpret as strategically organized to comment on moral values and confront human problems faced by a community. Here, I am interested in how the story of baseball records has been rhetorically (re)constructed to explain PEDs in the context of the sport's larger history. I contend that in the exhibit, public memory is redefined, reaffirming collective identity nourished in the National Pastime while celebrating the traditions of the sport and seeking to protect baseball's future.

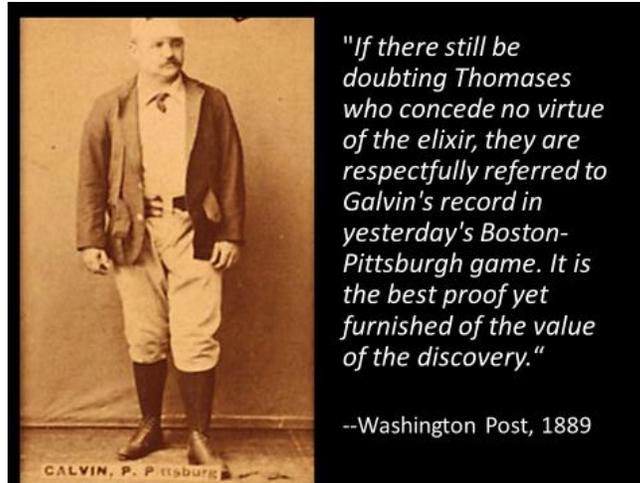
As Annenberg School of Communication Professor Barbie Zelizer argues, memories "help us fabricate, rearrange, or omit details from the past as we thought we knew it" in order to assist "the establishment of social identity, authority, [and] solidarity."<sup>14</sup> In this instance, the rhetoric of the exhibit can be understood as cultivating a particular *collective memory* of the steroids era, a shared understanding by the community comprised of baseball fans that allows for a re-arrangement of baseball records and their meaning.

In proceeding, I explain how a perceived crisis over PEDs created conditions that symbolically called forth the idea of the exhibit, and then provide a reading of three of its elements that (re)construct baseball history while evaluating the value and place of baseball records.

### Baseball and PEDs

Crises, philosopher of history Louis O. Mink argued, give "each generation ... its own reason for rewriting its own history."<sup>15</sup> Allan Megill and Diedre McCloskey similarly remark that it is "[p]roblems in the present [that] impel the writing of history."<sup>16</sup> In the present case, alarm over PEDs forced the development of rhetorical strategies that explain their place within the greater history of the game. Rhetorical studies, in turn, is interested in understanding the conditions within a culture that prompt such public response, and providing analysis of what these responses say about the culture.

Various forms of cheating have long been part of baseball—of all sports, really. Baseball has a history of stolen signs, doctored balls, corked bats, and other tactics that have had various levels of acceptance and rejection. In fact, as long ago as



1889, future Hall of Fame pitcher Pud Galvin, an eventual winner of 364 games, used something called Elixir of Brown-Sequard—animal testosterone. The *Washington Post* actually praised Galvin for his ingenuity.<sup>17</sup>



One hundred and nine years later, on September 8, 1998, Mark McGwire of the St. Louis Cardinals broke Roger Maris's 37-year-old single-season home-run record, an event I watched in Rogge Lounge with an excited crowd that included Cardinals fan Stephen Morillo, David Timmerman, and members of the Wabash College Parliamentary Union. McGwire didn't just break the record, he shattered it by hitting 70 home runs while

Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs also bested the old mark with a total of 66.<sup>18</sup> At the time, most rationalized the record-setting performances as the product of smaller ballparks, pitching diluted by expansion, and better player health and conditioning. There were even suggestions that the balls, not the batters, were juiced.



While there have been many attention-garnering events in the intervening years,<sup>19</sup> the high point—or low point, depending on your perspective—of scrutiny of baseball’s drug problems came on March 17, 2005, during hearings held by the House Committee on Government Reform.<sup>20</sup> In addressing the committee, Mark McGwire said he was not there to talk about the past; Sammy Sosa denied wrongdoing through his interpreter; and

Rafael Palmeiro, one of only four players to have more than 500 home runs and 3,000 hits, provided a finger-pointing denial of having ever used steroids—only to fail a drug test weeks later.



It was clear to the public that baseball had a problem—and the sport responded by adopting a revised testing regimen and stiffer penalties. Perceptually, steroids challenge what baseball represents, undermining faith in fair play and the purity associated with a child’s game.<sup>21</sup> If baseball has stood for an idyllic Eden, then steroids are like the Apple that corrupts its innocence.

As well-known baseball records fell, outrage over what steroids were perceived as doing to the game intensified. This is because, as historian Lyle Spatz explains, “Numbers, as in statistics and records, resonate powerfully with baseball fans in a way unique in sports. Only in baseball have specific season and career records become ingrained in American culture.”<sup>22</sup>

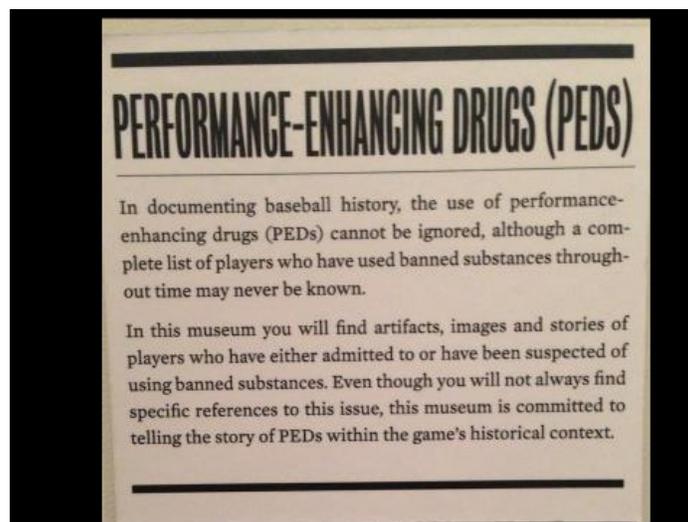
If we mark time with baseball’s greatest numbers, what happens if those numbers are perceived as compromised? The popular feeling has been that if the numbers are “tainted,” so is the game, and our memory of it. Thus, changes in the record books achieved in an era of PEDs, including new marks for single-season and lifetime home runs, present difficult challenges.<sup>23</sup> It is to these challenges that “One for the Books” can be read as offering a preliminary response.

### Reconstructing History and Renewing Community

Rhetorical criticism seeks to uncover meaning by interrogating symbols. The practice is designed to yield insight into how messages work, their motives, and their implications. As such, rhetorical criticism is a valuable practice amongst the many valuable perspectives found in the humanities. In the present case, I contend that, despite only three direct references to PEDs, the rhetoric of “One for the Books” renews baseball community while cultivating a public memory that protects the integrity of baseball by distinguishing between truly historic records and those that must be read with special attention to their context. The exhibit does this by, first, reconstructing baseball history as evolving rather than static. Second, the exhibit offers an evaluation of the value of records, suggesting that records of high character are the true records of baseball. Finally, in recognizing a range of distinct records and their unique contexts, the exhibit flattens memory in an egalitarian fashion that obscures and overwhelms PED use. Collectively, the exhibit provides insights into our aspirations for baseball, the values it represents, and one artful way to begin to address its challenges.

#### *History as Evolving and Subject to Revision*

At the entrance to “One for the Books” is a small sign explaining the Hall of Fame’s stance on PEDs.



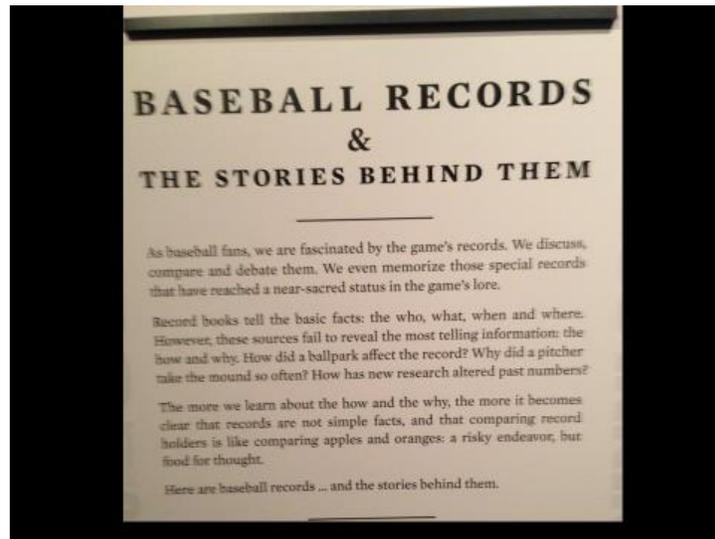
It reads:

In documenting baseball history, the use of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) cannot be ignored, although a complete list of players who have used banned substances throughout time may never be known.

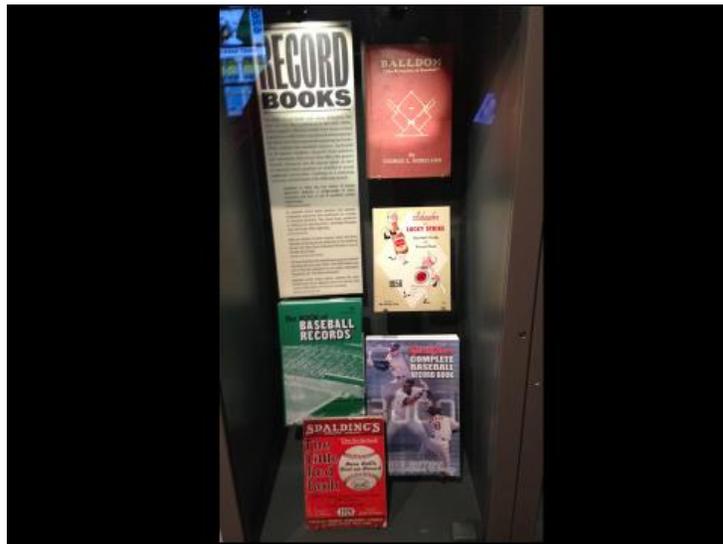
In this museum you will find artifacts, images and stories of players who have either admitted to or have been suspected of using banned substances. Even though you will not always find specific references to this issue, this museum is committed to telling the story of PEDs within the game's historical context.

The placard represents a first indication that history may not always be what it seems because “a complete list of players who have used banned substances throughout time may never be known.” The sign—which also functions as a disclaimer about the meaning of records—signals to visitors that there may be more to the story (“Even though you will not always find specific references to the issue”) and intimates that history itself may continue to change as more information becomes available.

Furthermore, the introduction to the exhibit complexifies statistical achievement and hints at the reconfiguration of meaning that can come with contextual knowledge.



The exhibit introduction states, “Record books tell the basic facts: the who, what, when and where. However, these sources fail to reveal the most telling information: the how and the why.” When combined with the PEDs placard, the message seems clear: an accomplishment may appear impressive but, divorced from its context, it lacks significance and, potentially, validity. The introduction concludes by implicitly admitting that the project has the potential to alter the meaning of our memories, saying: “The more we learn about the how and the why, the more it becomes clear that records are not simple facts, and that comparing record holders is like comparing apples and oranges: a risky endeavor, but food for thought.”



Following a display case that holds five record books from different eras, spanning from 1914 to 2000, books that document disagreements over both “how to interpret” baseball statistics and what numbers should be “accepted”—the next several cases in the exhibit address what are identified as “batting” records.

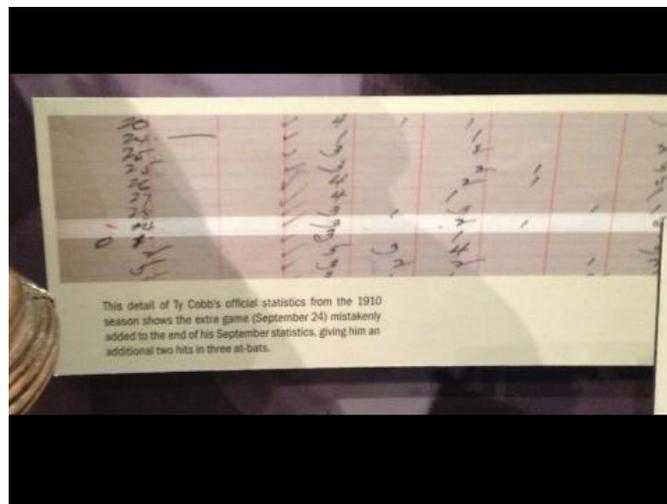


This panoramic view of the first ten cases provides a preliminary sense of the layout. Following attention to record books is a case addressing the batting average and batting crowns of legends Ty Cobb and Rogers Hornsby, then two display cases addressing games played, a case on runs batted in and runs scored, and then five additional displays that explore batting averages and hits. It is notable that none of these first ten cases addresses the quintessential baseball accomplishment—the one at the center of metaphorical references to the game and popularized by Babe Ruth. I am, of course, talking about the vaunted home run—the long ball, big fly, round tripper, going yard, and

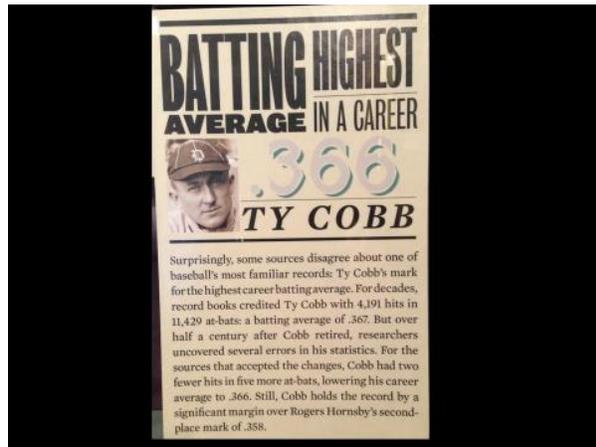
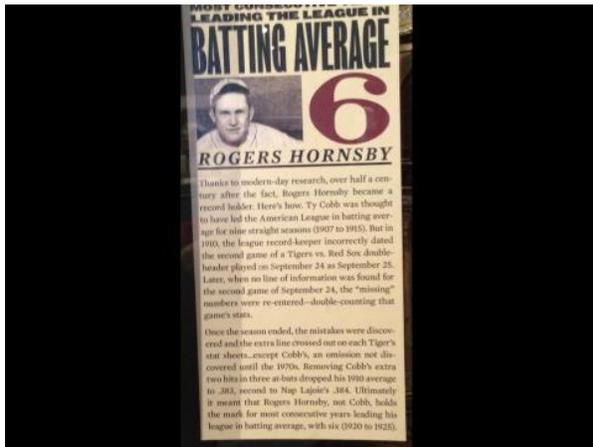
more. In our everyday talk, we speak of swinging for the fences, knocking it out of the park, and, of course, the highest success, a grand slam. Home runs made baseball popular in Ruth's time and redeemed it in Mark McGwire's. But the exhibit doesn't start with home runs because they are not only baseball's most recognized achievement, but also the symbol for the prevalence of PEDs.



Instead, the first game artifacts contain information on Rogers Hornsby, who mainly played for St. Louis in a career that spanned from 1915 to 1937, and Ty Cobb, the “Georgia Peach,” who was well known for his aggressive style during a career that ranged from 1905 to 1928, nearly all with the Detroit Tigers. The display destabilizes history, showing it is subject to revision with the acquisition of new knowledge.



The exhibit does this by explaining the findings of researchers who, 60 years after the fact, discovered statistical errors in baseball box scores from 1910 that incorrectly credited Cobb with two additional hits. Removing those two hits from Cobb's total has four effects.



First, it means that Nap Lajoie was actually the American League batting champion for 1910, interrupting what was long considered a record nine-year batting title streak for Cobb. Second, it means that Rogers Hornsby's six consecutive years as National League batting champ (1920-1925) is actually the longest streak of consecutive batting titles. Third, the subtraction of two hits means that Cobb's record lifetime batting average is only .366 rather than the well-known .367. And, finally, with Cobb's record-setting hit total reduced to 4,189, it means that Pete Rose, who is celebrated for breaking Cobb's all-time hits record with a first-inning single on September 11, 1985, actually broke the record for career hits three days earlier in Chicago.

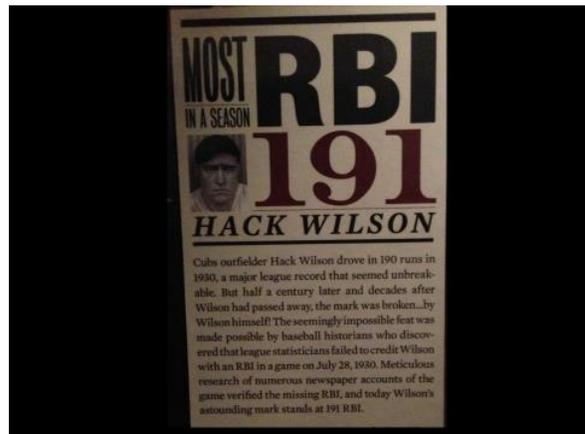
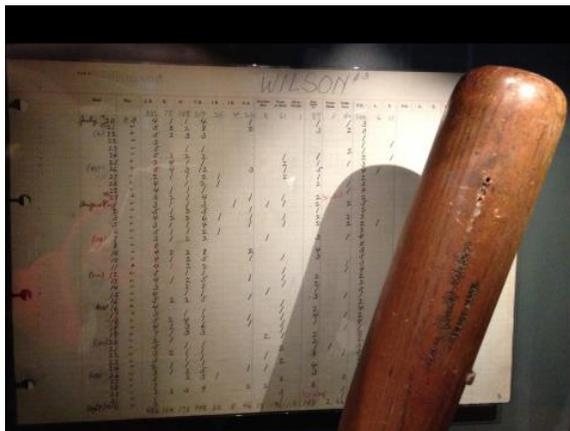


At first glance, this may seem like so much trivia, but it is more than that for even a casual member of the baseball community. Some of the numbers that changed—lifetime batting average and career hits in particular—are well known and nearly iconic. By drawing attention to the discovery of the

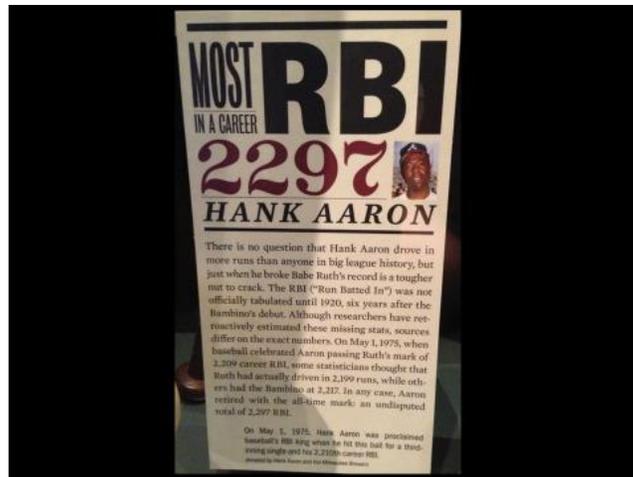
discrepancy and explaining its ramifications in the first game artifacts displayed, the exhibit has at its outset engaged in historical revisionism that remakes memory. In the process, we are told that records once thought definitive can be reconsidered. Here we are talking about hits and batting averages from a century ago, but tomorrow we might be talking about home runs accumulated during the steroids era.<sup>24</sup>



The fifth display case in the exhibit addresses a collection of records associated with runs batted in and runs scored. The display underscores the idea established in the Hornsby-Cobb batting average case: history is less stable than we believe and is subject to revision with the acquisition of new knowledge. In 1930, Hack Wilson of the Chicago Cubs had a remarkable season in which he established the single-season record for runs batted in (RBI).<sup>25</sup>



However, much as was the case with Cobb's hit totals from 1910, more than a half century later researchers discovered that Wilson was not properly credited with another RBI from July 28, 1930. Now, in "One for the Books," the error is corrected, understanding of history is changed, and the new single-season RBI record is 191. In celebrating Hank Aaron as the career leader in RBI, the exhibit tells another story that problematizes historical fact and our memory of it.



In this case, the question is *when* did Aaron become the all-time leader in the category? He was recognized as becoming the record holder on May 1, 1975, when he knocked in his 2,210th run. However, historical accounts differ on the previous record set by Babe Ruth—2,109, 2,199, or 2,217. The story is that we do not know when Aaron set the record because we are unsure of what the old record really was. One can draw a similar conclusion that today we are uncertain of the real home run records because we lack the information needed to determine what is a valid total. By beginning the exhibit with attention to historical records for batting average, career hits, batting crowns, runs batted in, and runs scored, records that implicate seven different Hall of Fame players, memory is rearranged and visitors learn that history may yet be rewritten in ways that revise our understanding of records set in the steroids era.

#### *Worthy Baseball Records Reflect the Highest Character*

While the exhibit reorganizes memory through revision of baseball records, it is also made clear that some records are beyond reproach. Here we see the relationship of rhetoric to the humanities through how rhetorical studies encourages examination of the *ordering* of values in a culture's efforts to address its problems. More specifically, in this respect the exhibit can be understood as reflecting social critic Kenneth Burke's idea of identification and division whereby visitors are encouraged to identify with some records and reject or symbolically divide from others.<sup>26</sup> Most prominently, the moral value of records set by Lou Gehrig, Cal Ripken, Jr., and Hank Aaron are exalted via their privileged placement while certain PED-associated home run accomplishments are diminished. Thus, the exhibit advocates for the inclusion and acceptance of some records as sacred and, one can argue, communicates others are less worthy. The construction is nostalgic in its affirmation of treasured achievements while projecting and protecting the aspired-to values of not only the game, but the desired purity of the broader culture.<sup>27</sup>

Following the display that addresses Cobb and Hornsby, the third display case of artifacts in the exhibit are dedicated to Lou Gehrig and Cal Ripken, paragons of baseball virtue.



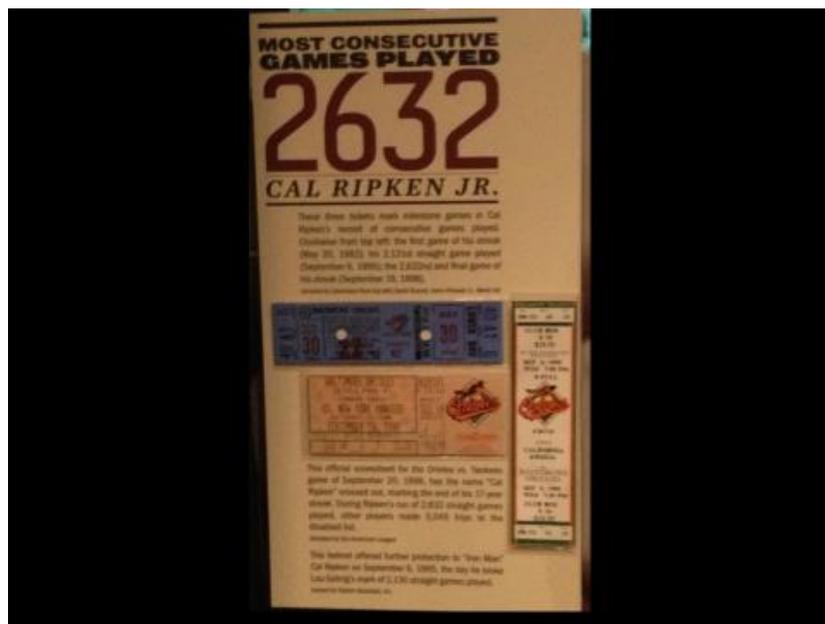
The display celebrates their consecutive games played records, and also acknowledges Sachio Kinugasa as the Japanese league record holder. While interesting, such records signal perseverance more than batting accomplishment, making the recognition rather out of place at this point in the exhibit. However, the central recognition of Gehrig and Ripken underscores an observation from George Will in *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball* more than twenty years ago: “The connection between character and achievement is one of the fundamental fascinations of sport.”<sup>28</sup>

While Ripken holds the current record—2,632 consecutive games—Gehrig dominates the display with his visage in the background along with his uniform, cap, and a trophy given to him in recognition of his accomplishment. The accompanying text refers to Gehrig’s playing streak as “one of baseball’s most ‘sacred’ records.” Gehrig, who set the consecutive games played record at 2,130 (that is, he played every game for 13 years), is upheld inside and outside baseball as being of the highest character. The “Iron Horse,” immortalized by Gary Cooper in *Pride of the Yankees*, is widely known for his courage in the face of an illness, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), that came to be identified with his name. Gehrig’s “Luckiest man on the face of the earth” speech from July 4, 1939, has reverberated for decades.<sup>29</sup> The point is that for all of his impressive statistical accomplishments, it is what Gehrig *represented* that is most admired.<sup>30</sup> This is also symbolized at the entrance to the Hall of Fame, where just inside the front doors is the “Character and Courage” exhibit featuring sculptures of Gehrig, Jackie Robinson, and Roberto Clemente.



As Jerel Taylor '15 explained in research he developed as part of an immersion experience at the Hall of Fame in my freshman tutorial class, the positioning of the statues is significant, identifying character and courage as on par with accomplishment, and underscoring baseball's desire to be closely associated with such values.<sup>31</sup>

If any contemporary player is to be identified as Gehrig's successor, it is Cal Ripken. In 1995, Ripken broke Gehrig's once thought unbreakable record, and when his streak was over he had played in every game for nearly 17 seasons. Beyond referencing Ripken's "Iron Man" nickname, which links Ripken to Gehrig, Ripken's story lacks the compelling elements that dominate Gehrig's, a point easily seen in the exhibit's muted explanation of his record. Ripken, however, is recognizable to even casual baseball fans and is revered for his record, which was set the year after a labor dispute wiped out the World Series. In 2007, he was elected to the Hall of Fame with the third-highest voting percentage in history (98.5%).<sup>32</sup>



In contrast to many accomplishments in the exhibit, there isn't any statistical correction or identification of circumstance that makes one question the achievements of Gehrig and Ripken. Instead, they hold a position of prominence as attaining unblemished and true records, records beyond question and, as such, in contrast to others, most notably those frequently associated with steroids which, perhaps not coincidentally, sit across the entry way to the exhibit.

Sitting at a diagonal from the Ty Cobb statistical correction and the Gehrig and Ripken records is the area of the exhibit dedicated to home runs.



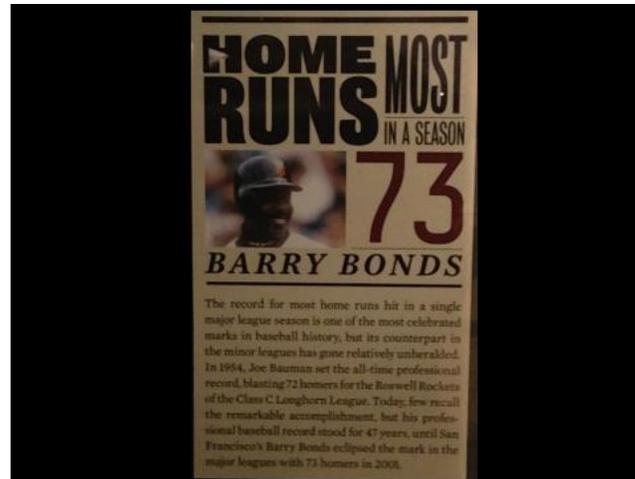
Here one can see a rhetorical choice in the exhibit's physical layout that encourages an ordering of public memory that marginalizes PED-associated achievements. The exhibit's introductory wall text addressing PEDs and the text explaining the concept of the exhibit physically and visually steer one away from the home run records and toward the baseball record books and batting records. The layout and information flow thus has a way of segregating the home run records; the records perceived as most influenced or tainted by PEDs are symbolically quarantined.



When one turns toward the display cases featuring home runs, the first text and artifact a visitor encounters denotes Mark McGwire's one-time record of 70 home runs in a season. The text sitting alongside McGwire's jersey notes he surpassed Roger Maris's previous record of 61, and then quickly turns to the issue of PEDs. The text, in part, reads:

Soon, however, rumors surfaced that performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) played a part in breaking the hallowed mark, leading many to question the record achievement. In 2010, Mark McGwire admitted to using steroids, but allegations have been leveled against other players as well. Some have admitted to using PEDs, while others remain under a cloud of suspicion that may never be dispelled.

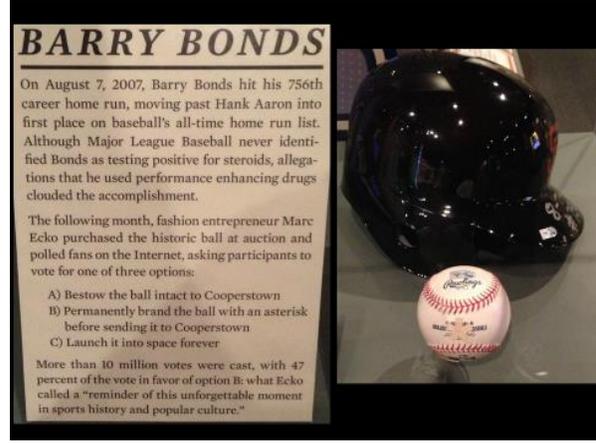
The display recognizes McGwire's achievement but challenges observers to think about its authenticity and purity. Moreover, the questions raised do not implicate McGwire alone, but seemingly all contemporary home run totals. The message is that a record is more *or less* than what it might seem and it encourages conclusions that are heavily slanted toward the rejection of McGwire's mark as authentic, particularly positioned in view of other displays that have told us how to read baseball history and in sight of Gehrig and Ripken.



In the first three display cases devoted to home runs, the only PED reference involves McGwire. The text denoting Bonds's single-season record total of 73 home runs makes no mention of PEDs. Likewise, artifacts honoring home runs by player position and those players with more than 500 career home runs, including items from David Ortiz and Alex Rodriguez, are presented without any reference to PEDs, although one imagines in the case of Rodriguez that may soon change.

Ignored in the exhibit (beyond a listing of players to achieve more than 500 career home runs), are other record-holding performers associated with PEDs (e.g., Sammy Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro, and Jose Canseco). To an extent these performances and these players are omitted from baseball history. The problem of steroids acknowledged, the perpetrators have largely been removed from view rather than commemorated. An evaluation of the value of records has been offered, one that addresses the problems of PEDs without encouraging additional attention to the achievements.

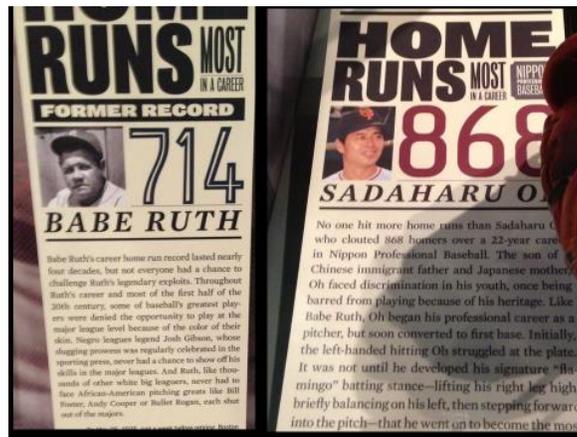
Not all known and suspected PED users are removed from view, however, as there was little way to avoid attention to Barry Bonds. A display case with just two artifacts, Bonds's record-setting home run ball—number 756—and his batting helmet, is the other location in the exhibit that directly addresses PEDs.



As these are displayed in a separate case, one that is shorter in stature and literally allows visitors to look down upon Bonds's accomplishments, one might imagine that the artifacts have been separated so as to not contaminate other records. The text accompanying the artifacts reads in part:

“Although Major League Baseball never identified Bonds as testing positive for steroids, allegations that he used performance enhancing drugs clouded the accomplishment.” The rest of the text doesn't speak to Bonds's quest or his career, but rather the public debate over the fate of the ball. After purchasing the ball, fashion designer Marc Ecko polled the public over whether he should donate the ball to the Hall of Fame, send it to the Hall of Fame but with an asterisk attached, or launch it into space. Nearly half of the more than ten million internet votes opted for the asterisk.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, Bonds has been recognized as the record holder, but the display is such that it undercuts the legitimacy and significance of his accomplishment, distancing him from the baseball community.

Such a conclusion is further strengthened by how the exhibit honors other career home run records.

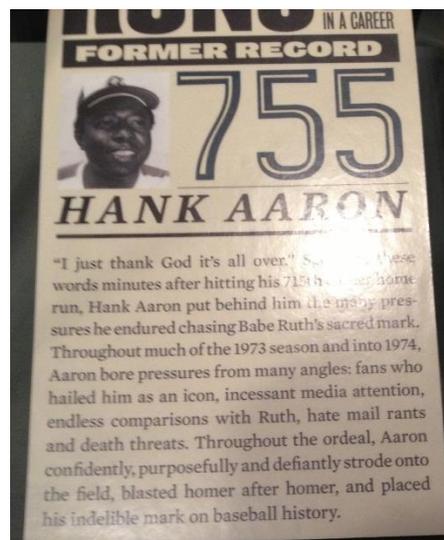


A separate display case contains artifacts from former major league record holders Roger Connor and Babe Ruth, as well as Sadaharu Oh, the Japanese league career leader. Hank Aaron, the career

home run leader prior to Bonds and likely the most revered living player, is honored at the Hall of Fame with his own individual exhibit, “Hank Aaron: Chasing the Dream.”



That exhibit physically intersects with “One for the Books” so that the Bonds artifacts are next to a display case featuring Aaron’s uniform from when he set the career home run record in 1974. Aaron’s jersey is positioned so as to have its back turned on Bonds, and literally looms over the Bonds display in a manner that can be read as signifying the superiority of Aaron and his home run total.



Furthermore, the text accompanying Aaron’s record tells a story of heroism, of how he persevered in the face of racism as he sought to establish a new career home run record. In total, Aaron’s accomplishment is celebrated while Bonds’s accomplishment is questioned, making it clear which record we are to embrace.

This rhetorical construction of the value of records demonstrates that how a community remembers and memorializes the past reveals much about that community’s anxieties and concerns in the present.<sup>34</sup> The concern over the potential for PEDs to undermine the spirit

attributed to baseball and its importance in society seemingly drive this construction of baseball records, one that affirms sacred achievements and marginalizes those deemed tainted. A more concerning element of this strategy is the way, to again call upon Kenneth Burke, it can be read as attempting guilt-redemption through the scapegoating of particular individuals, purging baseball's transgressions through its treatment of Bonds and McGwire alone.<sup>35</sup> The construction becomes problematic in not only the omission of other PED-associated home run hitters, but the lack of PED references for some who are present, most notably pitchers Roger Clemens and Eric Gagne.



The former vehemently denies taking PEDs while the latter has admitted to it.<sup>36</sup> The result is that the exhibit might be read as sacrificing Bonds and McGwire so that PEDs will be perceived as isolated to home run records without impacting other baseball achievements.

#### *Flattening Memory, Celebrating Community*



The final, briefer observation I offer concerns how the exhibit rhetorically flattens memory, casting most records in an egalitarian light that equalizes accomplishment and thus obscures PED use amongst so many other achievements. While some record holders are singled out through a unitary focusor example, Hank Aaron, Joe DiMaggio, and Cy Young—most achievements are classified among large groupings of accomplishments that diminish their individual worth while emphasizing the collective value of baseball.



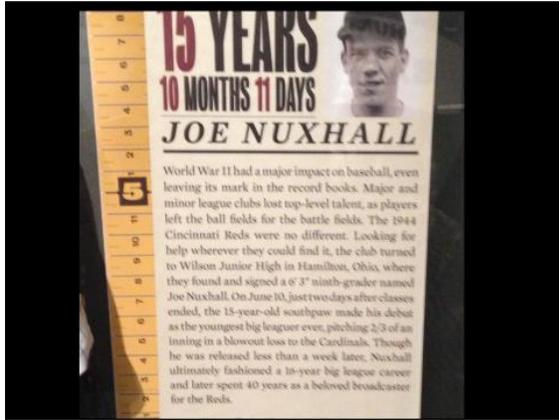
In this scheme, possible PED use is no more than a minor blemish and, at that, one that nearly disappears in the rich history of the sport. For example, there is a display case that recognizes 24 no-hitters that have various unique elements, another that denotes nine different team records, and a third that contains ten different home run feats.



Working in concert with this arrangement are two other elements that obscure and diminish PED use—the range of records recognized is expansive and inclusive, and the records are presented in a context that can rationalize ignoring certain achievements.

The inclusivity of the exhibit expands the reach of baseball while almost trivializing individual records. The exhibit recognizes the youngest player to appear in a major league game—15-year-old Joe Nuxhall in 1944; the shortest player to appear in a contest—3-foot-7-inch Eddie Gaedel; the unfortunate fate of Armando Galarraga, who narrowly missed pitching a perfect game due to an umpire's mistaken call; and left-handed pitcher Jim Abbott's unique accomplishment of throwing a no-hitter despite being born without a right hand. In three displays, Japanese league record holders are recognized. And in two instances, females are identified —Katie Brownell's feat of striking out all 18 batters in a six-inning little league contest, and the single-season stolen base

record of Sophie Kurys, who stole 201 bases in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.<sup>37</sup>



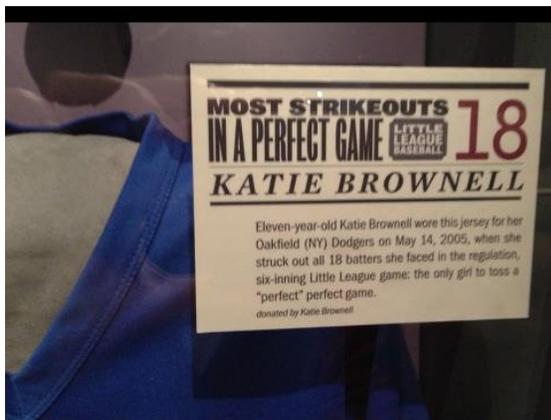
Joe Nuxhall



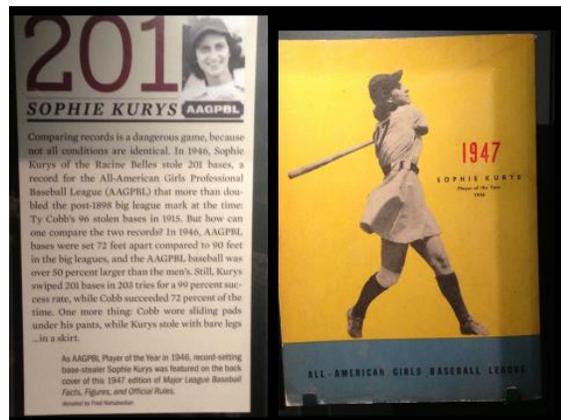
Eddie Gaedel



Armando Galarraga



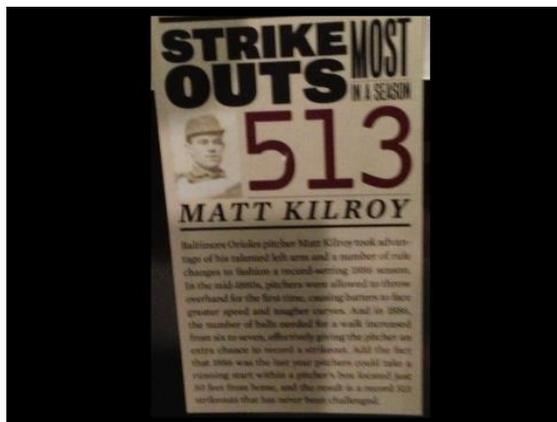
Katie Brownell



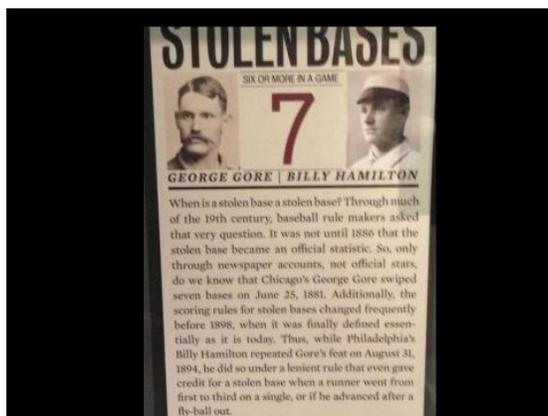
Sophie Kurys

The point I'm making is that by celebrating *so many* records the exhibit lessens the emphasis on individual accomplishments, allowing PED suspicions to be submerged in the totality of baseball history.

Of course PEDs are not easily forgotten, so the exhibit uses one other technique to diminish records achieved under their influence. The exhibit does this by supplying discursive context to records that influence how they are read. As an example, in the exhibit we learn that the single-season record for strikeouts isn't 383 by Nolan Ryan, the number commonly recognized as the modern record, but is actually 513 by Matt Kilroy from 1886.



The text noting Kilroy's accomplishment explains that his strikeout total was aided by the pitching mound being closer to the plate, the higher number of balls it took to walk a batter, and that he played in the National Association, which some deny as having major league status. The supporting story thus illustrates how context instructs interpretation, and encourages the conclusion that some records be deemed less worthy, no matter how big the number. A complementary account is given that explains why historic stolen base records can be similarly deceptive.



There were once discrepancies in how to count what qualified as a stolen base; therefore, there is room for interpretation for what a stolen base total means. Visitors are reassured that continuing research seeks to clarify these records. One can easily read this discussion as a proxy for home runs

in the steroids era with continuing investigation into *how* these totals were achieved. Ultimately, these framings lessen the significance of the accomplishments—whether they be for strikeouts, stolen bases, or home runs—while also acknowledging that they did happen. The net effect is that the community is instructed that *how* the records were achieved is as important as the records themselves in our construction of baseball memories.<sup>38</sup>

## CONCLUSION: ON RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, AND MEMORY

In this lecture, I have provided one perspective on the practice of rhetorical analysis and rhetoric's relationship to the humanities. As a field, rhetoric provides insights useful in the study of cultures and values, of ideals and aspirations, of collective efforts to address contingent issues faced by a community.

In the National Baseball Hall of Fame's exhibit "One for the Books: Baseball Records and the Stories Behind Them," we see how rhetoric has been used to reformulate public memory in the hopes of renewing and protecting a community. That baseball, as historian Spatz says, is "a game built to be explained by numbers" is why "One for the Books" is important to the identity of the sport: it helps to explain *how* we might understand what its numbers represent.

The exhibit has reconfigured baseball's past in ways that rearrange its details while diminishing some accomplishments and strategically omitting others in order to begin the process of coming to terms with players' use of PEDs. The result is an exhibit that reaffirms the collective identity forged in the National Pastime and seeks to protect its future via a re-imagining of its past and present. As I hope I have demonstrated, the exhibit does this by reconstructing baseball history as evolving rather than static, by offering an evaluation of the value of records, and by obscuring steroids-era achievements amongst a range of distinct records and their unique contexts. While my reading has largely endorsed the exhibit's approach, there are reasons to question the use of division and victimage, techniques that explain and protect through their isolation and blaming of select individuals and records as being the source of baseball's shortcomings. Such a construction comes with its own costs, and risks a form of myopia not so different from the one that caused PEDs to be ignored in the first place.

Baseball and its fans have important questions ahead—questions of identity and integrity as well as those of definition—in seeking to understand PEDs. In this respect, the exhibit does not represent the final word on the matter. One question yet to be resolved is how important PEDs truly are to what happens on the field. Another question: What is "performance enhancing?" I'm not completely sure of the answer to either question, but the simplest response is that the substances are against the rules so they should not be used. They also have health implications, particularly when taken without proper supervision, and their use by professional athletes influences adolescents.

But the lines are also blurrier than we might imagine. Why ban steroids and human growth hormone, particularly if used to return from injury, but not a procedure such as Tommy John

surgery—elbow ligament replacement—if it were to add miles to a pitcher’s fastball? Similarly, cortisone shots and various agents that mask pain, treatments that can allow players to take the field, are permissible. I am neither advocating nor defending these practices—I’m not that sort of doctor—but these types of questions hint that today’s definitions of what is “performance enhancing” will be discussed more tomorrow.

I hope what I have shared today has allowed you to see rhetoric and baseball in a somewhat different light, and possibly enhanced your understanding of, and appreciation for, both. However, the meaning, use, and implications of what I have shared today is broader than baseball, and I should comment on that in concluding. We constantly use rhetoric that makes and remakes the meaning of our own community. For example, the rhetoric of our curriculum says something about how we see our community—what is included and what isn’t, as well as how we explain it. The same goes for programs, initiatives, and efforts that we elect to pursue and those we do not. These decisions and choices—as well as how we go about making them—constitute our community and disclose what we value. How we speak about these concerns, the quality of those deliberations, and the compassion of our discussions help determine the character of our community. The point is extended to position descriptions, job searches, and our daily interactions. What we say and do defines and impacts our community, *our rhetoric matters*.

Writ more broadly, a presidential transition, an inaugural address, a strategic plan, a capital campaign—these are all opportunities for discourses that allow for re-making of community. They define who we are, re-establish identity, and say much about both the humanistic traditions we value and our aspirations for the future.

How Wabash College actively participates in the construction of memory in ways that constitute and reconstitute our identity is more obvious and the examples are plentiful. We love memory at Wabash, and what classroom, lobby, scholarship, or lecture does not evoke a person, time, and era from the past? We have portraits that line the chapel. We have recorded our memories in *Wabash on My Mind* and *These Fleeting Years*, and we participate in the broad distribution of these works (I recently saw a student wheeling a large cart of them along the mall). And of course we have our rituals, evolving though they may be, that link one generation to the next—whether it be chapel sing, homecoming, or not walking under the arch. These reflections are not criticisms, much the opposite actually. They are simply a pause to remind us of what is always present but, perhaps, sometimes unseen—that there is a constant rhetoric to the ritualistic expressions of memory all around us; a rhetoric that identifies what is meaningful in our culture, identifies our values, projects our aspirations, and at times is reformulated to address what we see as challenges faced by the community. Wabash is constantly recording its past, and pointing towards its future, through the ways in which the words and images of generations gone by are employed today.

So lest you think these enterprises—be they named lectures or inaugural addresses—as words and images alone—dismiss them as mere rhetoric—I urge you to remember what rhetoric and rhetorical criticism can do. They are central to the development and analysis of messages, provide a means to consider their implications and values, and contribute to the larger domain of humanistic studies,

be they about public memories of the community that comprises baseball or the rhetoric and memory that make, remake, and celebrate our own treasured Wabash community.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>. The intellectual foundation of this lecture is supported in part by a GLCA New Directions Grant I received in Spring 2013, “Nurturing Collective Memory in Museums: An Inquiry at the Intersection of Visual Rhetoric and History.” In that grant I identified my interest in gaining new knowledge in these areas, as well as the idea for a project that developed into this lecture. Subsequently, a variation on this lecture was presented on May 29, 2014 at the National Baseball Hall of Fame as part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture and published as “One for the Books’: (Re)Constructing Baseball History, Memory, and Community,” *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture 2013-2014*, ed. William M. Simons (McFarland & Company, 2015), 225-241.

2. Robert O. Petty, “The Margins of Knowledge” (2nd LaFollette Lecture, February 24, 1982), *The Margins of the Humanities*, ed. Eric Dean (Wabash College: Crawfordsville, IN, 1985), 17.

3. William C. Placher, “The Peasant’s Shoes and the Cross: Christian Theology as Subversive Humanism” (11th LaFollette Lecture, November 2, 1990), *The Community of the Humanities*, ed. Raymond Brady Williams (Wabash College: Crawfordsville, IN, 1992), 1.

<sup>4</sup>. Eric Dean, “Foreword,” *The Margins of the Humanities*, ed. Eric Dean (Wabash College: Crawfordsville, IN, 1985), xi.

<sup>5</sup>. Respectively, these numbers refer to Roger Maris’s record-setting single-season home run total from 1961, Cy Young’s record for career wins by a pitcher, Hank Aaron’s lifetime home run mark, Lou Gehrig’s consecutive games played streak, and Pete Rose’s record total for lifetime hits.

<sup>6</sup>. Respectively, these numbers refer to Barry Bonds’s current single-season record for home runs, Bonds’s lifetime record for home runs, and Cal Ripken Jr.’s more recent consecutive games played record.

<sup>7</sup>. “One for the Books: Baseball Records and the Stories Behind Them,” Commemorative Program, May 28, 2011. In a review of the exhibit conducted in October 2012, I counted 36 display cases and noted the following record recognitions: 43 records for batting, 63 records for pitching, 19 records for fielding, 17 notations for other records, 10 records for base running, and 40 records for home runs.

<sup>8</sup>. Victor M. Powell, “Our Rhetorical Heritage” (Brigance Forum Lecture, March 25, 1992), *How to Make a Dynamite Speech* (Canadian Speeches: Ontario, Canada, 1994), 64.

- <sup>9</sup>. This definition is a slight rephrasing of the one found in Jennifer Young Abbott, Todd F. McDorman, David M. Timmerman, and Jill Lamberton, *Public Speaking as Democratic Participation: Speech, Deliberation, and Analysis in the Civic Realm* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.
- <sup>10</sup>. Cheryl L. Hughes, “Integrity” (22nd LaFollette Lecture, October 26, 2001), *The Landscape of the Humanities*, ed. Dwight E. Watson (Wabash College: Crawfordsville, IN, 2013), 36.
- <sup>11</sup>. Whitman quoted in Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, “Preface: Where Memory Gathers,” *Baseball: An Illustrated History*, ed. Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1994), xvii.
- <sup>12</sup>. Hall quoted in Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, “Preface: Where Memory Gathers,” *Baseball: An Illustrated History*, ed. Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1994), xviii.
- <sup>13</sup>. John Thorn, *Baseball in the Garden of Eden: The Secret History of the Early Game* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2011). In particular see Chapter 1, “Anointing Abner,” pp. 1-23. Michael L. Butterworth, *Baseball and Rhetorics of Purity: The National Pastime and American Identity During the War on Terror* (University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, AL, 2010), 7-16.
- <sup>14</sup>. Barbie Zelizer, “Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995), 217.
15. Louis O. Mink, “On the Writing and Rewriting of History,” *Historical Understanding*, ed. Brian Fay, Eugene O. Golob, & Richard T. Vann (London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 89.
16. Allan Megill & Donald M. McCloskey, “The Rhetoric of History,” *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences*, ed. John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, & Donald M. McCloskey (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 223.
17. Luke Burbank, “Major League Baseball to Investigate Steroid Use,” *NPR*, March 31, 2006, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5314521>. The discovery itself comes from Northeastern University Professor of Law Roger Abrams.
18. At the time, few journalists were raising questions about PEDs. However, Steve Wilstein gained notoriety when in August 1998 he pointed out a bottle of Androstenedione in Mark McGwire’s locker. The supplement, which helps in the production of testosterone and is referred to as a steroid precursor, is an over-the-counter supplement that was legal in baseball at the time (but has since been banned in baseball and for sale at all under Congress’s Anabolic Steroid Control Act). Wilstein received both praise and criticism for his questioning. “McGwire Uses Nutritional Supplement Banned in NFL,” *CNN SportsIllustrated.com*, August 22, 1998, [http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/baseball/mlb/news/1998/08/22/mcgwire\\_supplement/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/baseball/mlb/news/1998/08/22/mcgwire_supplement/); Harvey Araton, “A Hall of Fame Find by a Sports Reporter,” *New York Times*, June 17, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/18/sports/baseball/18harvey.html?ref=sports>; Erik

Malinowski, "Steve Wilstein, The Reporter Who Launched the Steroid Era, is OK with what He's Wrought," *BuzzFeed*, August 5, 2013, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/erikmalinowski/steve-wilstein-the-reporter-who-launched-the-steroid-era-is>.

19. Those events include the BALCO (Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative) investigation, the advent of formal drug testing and penalties, the 2007 Mitchell Report, the legal problems of Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens, and 2013's Biogenesis scandal. For information on these "scandals" see: "BALCO Investigation Timeline," *USA Today*, November 27, 2007, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/balco-timeline.htm>.; Michael S. Schmidt, "Sosa is Said to Have Tested Positive in 2003," *New York Times*, June 16, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/sports/baseball/17doping.html?ref=sports>; "Drug Policy in Baseball: Event Timeline," *MLB.com*, n.d., [http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/news/drug\\_policy.jsp?content=timeline](http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/news/drug_policy.jsp?content=timeline); George J. Mitchell, "Report to the Commissioner of Baseball of an Independent Investigation into the Illegal Use of Steroids and Other Performance Enhancing Substances by Players in Major League Baseball," December 13, 2007. Posted on *MLB.com* at <http://files.mlb.com/mitchrpt.pdf>; "MLB Suspends 13, including A-Rod," *ESPN.com*, August 6, 2013, [http://espn.go.com/mlb/story/\\_/id/9540755/mlb-bans-13-including-alex-rodriguez-new-york-yankees-2014](http://espn.go.com/mlb/story/_/id/9540755/mlb-bans-13-including-alex-rodriguez-new-york-yankees-2014).

20. "ESPN.com's Steroid Hearing Scorecard," *ESPN.com*, March 17, 2005, <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=2014564>.

21. While athletes in other sports have also had their troubles with PEDs, Butterworth argues baseball's PED problems draw "disproportionate attention" due to baseball's deep "cultural mythology and its connection to American identity" (81). Butterworth goes on to make an interesting argument about the relationship between the effort to purge steroids from baseball—and the public uproar over them—and the government's effort to defeat terrorism—each consisting of a unified effort to cast out impurities seen as threatening the nation and national identity.

22. Lyle Spatz, "Birth of the Box Score," *One for the Books: Baseball Records & The Stories Behind Them* (Commemorative Program, National Baseball Hall of Fame, CURTIS 1000, May 28, 2011), 1.

23. Through 1998 only 15 players had hit at least 500 home runs. Between 1999 and August 2013, 10 more players joined that "club." Of the 10 who hit their 500th home run after 1998 only three—Ken Griffey Jr., Jim Thome, and Frank Thomas—have not been prominently linked to steroids.

24. Interestingly, these changes to the record book are contested—just as records that may have been enhanced by steroids are. The Hall of Fame exhibit indicates the numbers in the fashion described in this lecture, as does the *Baseball Encyclopedia* (since at least 2005), *Baseball-Reference.com* (except for not removing Cobb's 1910 batting title—they recognize both Cobb and Lajoie), and ESPN. However *MLB.com*, baseball's own website, still credits Cobb with 4191 hits and a batting average of .367. *Baseball-Reference.com* is the exhibit's statistical sponsor, according

to the commemorative program, and its numbers power the interactive media display, called the “Top Ten Tower,” that sits in the middle of the exhibit.

25. Wilson bested Lou Gehrig’s former record from 1927; Gehrig is still second on the single-season RBI list, but for another outstanding season in 1931.

26. See Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969/1950), 19-29, 55-59.

27. Ordering of the more noble records and record holders actually commenced with a sixteen-page commemorative program that introduced the exhibit. One page of the program identifies more than 100 players honored with donations on their behalf, and highlights the fifteen players who were most frequently honored by donors. Those fifteen, some of the most revered players in history based on statistics, character, and near mythical standing, are Cal Ripken, Jr., Nolan Ryan, Ted Williams, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Pete Rose, Stan Musial, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Roberto Clemente, Hank Aaron, Bob Feller, Tom Seaver, Willie Mays, and Sandy Koufax. Donors’ inclusion of Rose, who was banned from baseball for gambling on the game and is the only featured player who is not a Hall of Fame inductee, is interesting, but equally notable is the absence of any player associated with steroids. This, of course, reflects the will of the people, not something in the design of the exhibit, but it also warrants the omission of steroids-fueled records, which are all but absent from the program itself. The seven player photos used in the program include former career home run leaders Ruth and Aaron—and also Pete Rose again—but not the present holder of the career and single-season home run record, Barry Bonds. Similarly, of the more than 100 players listed as honored by a public gift, the only PED-associated name on that list is Bonds; Roger Clemens, Alex Rodriguez, Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire, and others are missing. Finally, the program is notable for what it elects as its visual focus. The first record that gains visual attention in the body of the program is for consecutive games played, with the cap of Lou Gehrig and the batting helmet of Cal Ripken featured. Consistent with my reading of the physical exhibit, this is offered as a record of character and deserving of our admiration, in seeming contrast to the omission of players associated with PEDs.

28. George F. Will, *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball* (Harper Perennial: New York, 1990), 5.

29. Larry Schwartz, “Isn’t it Ironic?” *ESPN.com*, May 31, 2006, [http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/classic/bio/news/story?page=Gehrig\\_Lou](http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/classic/bio/news/story?page=Gehrig_Lou); *The Official Website of Lou Gehrig*, 2013, <http://www.lougehrig.com/index.html>.

30. Gehrig is among the highest-achieving baseball players in history as he is fifth all-time in runs batted in with 1,992, holds the American League record of 184 RBI in a season, was .340 life-time hitter, and for decades held the record with 23 grand slam home runs (Alex Rodriguez broke this record late in the 2013 season).

31. I thank Jerel Taylor ’15 for drawing my attention to the function of the Character and Courage exhibit. Jerel addressed these monuments and others in his final essay for the Baseball

and American Identity freshman tutorial in 2012, “Baseball Memorials, Monuments, and American Values.” See also Kostya Kennedy, “Man with ‘Heart of Gold’ Creates Hall of Fame Legacy Cast in Bronze.” *SI.com.*, July 20, 2012, [http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2012/writers/kostya\\_kennedy/07/20/hall-of-fame-statues/index.html](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2012/writers/kostya_kennedy/07/20/hall-of-fame-statues/index.html).

32. “Gwynn, Ripken elected to Hall of Fame,” *ESPN.com*, January 10, 2007, <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/hof07/news/story?id=2725461>. Ripken has stayed in the public eye through promotional appearances on behalf of baseball, serving as a television broadcaster for post-season games, and by establishing “Ripken Baseball,” an organization with a mission of perseverance, integrity, character, and striving to do one’s best. Their events include the Cal Ripken World Series, a division of the historic Babe Ruth League, which serves as an international competition for youth. *Ripken Baseball*, <http://www.ripkenbaseball.com/>.

33. Jeff Idelson, at the time the Hall of Fame’s vice president for communications and education and now the Hall’s President, defended the Hall of Fame from criticism for accepting a defaced artifact, explaining that while the Hall of Fame doesn’t “believe in defacing artifacts .... In this one instance, we’re willing to look beyond it.” Idelson further said that the ball would help the Hall begin to “deal with the steroids era,” which I am suggesting they have in fact begun to do with their use of it. Jemele Hill, “Hall of Fame Needs to Rethink Accepting Asterisk Ball,” *ESPN.com*, November 13, 2007, <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/page2/story?page=hill/071112>; “Designer to Brand Asterisk on Ball; Hall of Fame to Accept It,” *ESPN.com*, September 26, 2007, <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=3036756>.

34. This idea and some of this language parallels observations offered by Michael Butterworth in “Militarism and Memorializing at the Pro Football Hall of Fame,” *Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies* 9 (2012), 244, 254-55.

35. Burke discusses these concepts in various places across his works including Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1954/1984), 278-294 in particular and Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), in particular see Part I.

36. Gabe Lacques, “Eric Gagne: 80% of Dodgers used Steroids, PEDs,” *USA Today*, September 26, 2012, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/dodgers/2012/09/25/eric-gagne-dodgers-80-percent-steroids/1593979/>; Bob Nightengale, Jorge L. Ortiz, and Paul White, “The ’07 Mitchell Report’s Effect: Five Active Players Reflect,” *USA Today*, March 3, 2010, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2010-03-01-mitchell-report\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2010-03-01-mitchell-report_N.htm).

37. Kurys’ record, like many others, is put in context by noting the shorter distance between bases (72 feet), but also that she had to slide in a skirt and without pads.

38. I’ve made a couple of references to one of my most prominent research subjects, Pete Rose, particularly in early endnotes, and I cannot resist a final observation related to him. While some

records are diminished in the exhibit because of their context, and questions are raised about PED-connected achievements, in some ways the exhibit can be interpreted as continuing the rehabilitation of Pete Rose. As noted already, Rose is among the 15 players singled out as most honored by donors, and one of seven players pictured in the exhibit's commemorative program. In all, there are five references to Rose in the exhibit, with Rose's record-setting hit featured prominently in the form of a video of the achievement played on a continuous loop. The exhibit allows us to remember Pete Rose—it even encourages us to remember Pete Rose—for his accomplishments as a player, and puts his gambling issues as something beyond what he did as a baseball player by omitting any reference to it. The other references to Pete Rose consist of a Montreal Expos hat marking Rose's record for career games played, his standing among players with at least 3,000 career hits noted in a leader list, the bat he used for his 3,000th hit, and a notation of his National League record 44-game hitting streak.