



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Senator DeFrancisco Remembers a Friend

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO September 26, 2012



A blog entry by Herm Card

In 1968, three young men sat on a park bench in Easton, PA and talked about – no – mimicked old men sitting on such a bench. Young, athletic men do such things. They disregard the future as it applies to the march of time. They think more about yesterday's card games, their season, their upcoming game – about the things that young athletic men think about.

That they lost that day, a game they should have won but for an ironic twist of baseball fate, would become inconsequential in time. Most of the things that such young men do at that age become inconsequential – but some, like friendship, do not.

Friendships form in strange ways – people find themselves sharing space with each other – in a locker room, in a dugout, on a bus – and on a park bench in Easton, PA.

The common denominator, playing college baseball in this case, was merely the catalyst to what followed. Their talent as players was subjective – generally such things are. They were good, but not great. They were as good as they needed to be, and that's a pretty good thing to be able to say. The things that made them good on the field would make them good in life. The three men aimed at providing for the greater good, and all succeeded.

The second baseman became a state senator, the pitcher became a surgeon, the third baseman became a teacher – divergent paths, diverse lives. Yet, the common bond among essentially common men remained, a bond that allowed conversations to pick up where they had left off, allowed moments to last far longer than their 'use-by' date, allowed old stories to retain their luster.

The trip back to that bench was the second baseman's idea – ostensibly a trip to attend the Little League World Series, but, in fact, a chance to remember the pitcher with the kind of gesture he would have understood and enjoyed. The kind of gesture that only true friends could understand – the subtlety of great friendship reflected in a seemingly simple moment. Something unexplainable. Something that just *is*.

Two men in their mid 60s sat on a bench in Easton, PA, with what appeared to passersby to be an empty spot between them – two men sensing the significance of a nearly 45-year-old moment that still lingered, knowing that the spot between them was not, and never would be, empty.

Posted by Herm Card at 10:35 AM