



JOE GARAGIOLA  
1926

Honored as a Historymaker 2008  
Major League Baseball Player,  
Broadcaster and Author



The following is an oral history interview with Joe Garagiola (**JG**) conducted by Pam Stevenson (**PS**) for Historical League, Inc. and video-graphed by Manny Garcia on June 5, 2007. The interview was continued on January 6, 2008 and conducted by David Strang (**DS**).

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.  
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park,  
Tempe, Arizona.*

**PS:** I always like for you to give us your name so we can pronounce it right.

**JG:** My name is Joe Garagiola. And it's been mangled quite a bit. But...some people insist it's Garage-iola. And that's not the way Papa said it. So, I have maintained Garagiola. Joe Garagiola.

**PS:** We'll try to get that right. And tell me when and where you were born.

**JG:** I don't remember too much about it, but I was born in St. Louis, February 2<sup>th</sup>, 1926. And I just want to add that...today's society has a fixation on age. And I am a firm believer and subscriber to the Satchel Paige theory, which is, how old would you be if you didn't know how old you were? I told Randy Johnson that the other day. Of the Diamondbacks. And he said I gotta use that, because that's the first question they ask you. See, my first question is how old you are and, and how, how long have you been bald? People are worried about that.

**PS:** I'm not worried about that.

**JG:** I'm not either! There's nothing I can do about it. It's not like it's a social disease of some kind. It just happened!

**PS:** I don't think I'd recognize you with hair.



**JG:** I wouldn't recognize myself.

**PS:** Let's get a little bit of family background. Tell me about your family. And growing up in St. Louis.

**JG:** Well, my father and mother were immigrants. My father came over here alone. Went to St. Louis because some of his friends from back in Italy, a little town called Inveruno. I-N-V-E-R-U-N-O. It's about 20 miles from Milan. I was blessed to where I visited, uh, Inveruno and met an aunt that I had never seen. They came here and, I think six or seven years later, my father sent for my mother. And they supposedly had other brothers. All boys. But, there's... I only had one brother. He's an older brother. We, we call him Mickey. His real name is Martin. And I don't think he likes that. And, my father was a, a laborer. That's the best I can say. He, he worked at a place called Lacrete (sp?)-Christie (sp??). And they made clay pipes. And Papa was a hard worker. Didn't speak English. 3 And I think it's a real tribute to this country that when you worry about language too much, you, you bog down. But, if you just keep trying. My father just kept trying. Memorized, uh, became a naturalized citizen. My sweet mother, God rest her soul, she, uh, she never did become a citizen. And once a year she'd go downtown to get fingerprinted. And, sadly to say, today people would resent that. She looked at that as, this is what I have to do and I'm happy. Our whole community was called The Hill. And just like there's discrimination far too much today, there was plenty of discrimination in those days. Cause...it was ...The Hill was a ghetto, but not with the connotation that it has today. That it's run down and infested with drugs and drug dealers and that. No. It was...everything you did was in Italian. And everybody knew everybody. The church that we went to was a Catholic church called St. Ambrose. That was the hub. And, like I have a lot of people in my life who many times say things like, uh, I grew up in a neighborhood like yours. And I say, well, do you know your committeeman? He says, what's that? And I say, then, you didn't grow up in a neighborhood like mine. Because that was the most important person, because our people couldn't speak English. It's pretty well known fact that Yogi and I grew up across the street. Yogi Berra. Who probably is, along with Muhammad Ali, the two most famous faces and names in the world! And, Yogi's courted by presidents. And, and he just made a commencement speech at St. Louis University, and once again, to, uh, to emphasize what I think of this country, Yogi never went to high school. And look at what he has done because of the opportunity. But, at any rate... Everything we did was in Italian. You went to a grocery store, they spoke Italian. You went to church, the mass was in Italian. The Feast Days. And we had Lombards (?), which my parents were. And then we had Sicilians. And we had all kinds of people and they spoke different languages. And I, I, I can't understand some of the dialect. But, I'm thrilled that one of our granddaughters is now, as we speak, over in Italy doing a whole semester. And she's so fluent in the Italian language, which I'm certainly not objective about. But it's a beautiful language. It's, it's much like Spanish. Like when I talk to the baseball players, I have fun with. And I love it! Because they come back and they say, you don't know what you're saying. And I say, no. Just so it's clean. That's all I care about. Don't teach me any of those other words! So, that's pretty much our neighborhood. But the thing that we grew up with, which was the basis for our family, was to help your neighbor. And we never got to go to the baseball games. We had the St. Louis Cardinals and the St. Louis Browns. Because our parents didn't speak English. But, there was a widow. And we used to refer to as the Widow Lady. Which, of course, is



redundant. And, when Papa went to work, or Yogi's father, or whoever. They would say to the kids, now you go down and you help Dominica. That was the widow. And, man, there'd be 20, 30 kids there wanting to help, because they knew the reward was to go to the ballpark. And so, what we did, we would go down there. And finally we'd say, hey, guys. We don't need 20, 25 guys here. Why don't four of you guys do it, and then, you guys are finished till you turn comes around again. We had like a little roster. You know. And we did it. And then she'd take us to the ball game. And, we sat in the section called the Knothole Gang. And that means that you could get in free, if you belonged to the Knothole Gang, if you were accompanied by an adult. And that was our biggest thrill, because, in those days, there was no television. And we had to imagine what these guys looked like. Our hero was a fellow named Joe Medwick. And I can still hear Franz Locks (sp??) talking about Ducky-Wucky Medwick, which was his nickname. With the bulging biceps from Carteret, New Jersey. And, Lord, we wanted bulging biceps, but we didn't know what they were! So that's the way we grew up. Uh, but again, I can't place enough emphasis on the fact that the, the church was the big thing. I can remember, uh, Saturday mornings, you always had to go to confession. And it was funny. We'd have fun. And I'd, I'd say to Yogi...well, he was Lawdie then. His mother couldn't say "Laurence," so she'd call him Lawdie. I'd say, Yog, want some of my sins? I had a pretty good week. I did okay. You know, that kind of thing. But, you had to go to church every Sunday. Oh, yes. You had to be there. And, my father worked for the church just like most men did. To what...these...a Catholic church wouldn't be a Catholic church unless they had an expansion program. And, so, Papa was either selling bricks or something, along with the other. But, the church. Our, our triangle was church, family, sports. And for us it wasn't necessarily in that order. Obviously.

**PS:** Was Italian your first language?

**JG:** Oh, Italian was our only language. In fact, when I went to the public school, cause Papa couldn't afford to send me to the parochial school at that time, I thought the other kids talked funny! I really did. And, and that's why I, I have a lot of empathy for, for the Spanish baseball player. A mean, you know, I mean, when our Joe was the General Manager, it was beat into him...and I have to take some of the credit for it...I said, Joe. You gotta have somebody that these kids can talk to. I mean...you know... I can tell you one of the saddest stories. It, it's, it's tragic, but it's also amusing. I will not name the young man, but he was with the Cardinals. And he as a good ballplayer. And he was trying to make the team. And, all of a sudden, he just went into a funk. I mean, he, he just was down. And that was not like him. And finally, the, uh, General Manager had somebody follow him home, because they had talked to him. And his problem was that he wasn't getting mail from his girlfriend. And he was writing every day. He eventually married the girl. But in those days, he was writing every day and he wasn't getting any answers. And he thought that she had dumped him. And what happened, when they followed him, he was not putting the letter in a mailbox, he was putting it in the trash. Not knowing the difference. And, you know...and, and, and that...and that is sad. That shouldn't have, when you got prospects. And so baseball's done a, a much better job than when I was growing up. And, and players were coming into the league. Cause we had fellows in Spring Training...some of the, uh, the Latino players...especially in Winterhaven. They had a big orange tree out in, beyond the left field fence. And that's what these guys would eat! And then, they'd go and they'd order ham and eggs. That's all they could say. I mean, you know, you spend a lot of money



to bring a ballplayer over here. And then you isolate him. And, and you, you want him to hit home runs. You want him to run. You want him to pitch. Help him! Simple thing like saying, hey, come on. We're going to have some English classes. And you start to learn. And then put television on...and that's where a lot of guys did. So, yes, we spoke Italian.

**PS:** So you learned English before you went to school?

**JG:** I tried to learn it. I'm still learning it. I've been fortunate enough to, to write three books. I'm not bragging, but...the way I write, I write like Yogi talks. You know. And my daughter helped me so much. But...Yes, I had to learn English. And, and my great education was with the "Today" show. Cause I never had the privilege of going to college. I have two regrets in my life. That's one of them, because I would have liked to have been exposed to the college life. I, I think that the subjects are great. And they help you down the road to this place called Success. And to many, people make it sound like Judy Garland's going to be there and it's going to be a Yellow Brick Road. Forget that. You know. When they told those guys to come over here, they said, oh, yeah. The streets are paved with gold. But you gotta pave them. That's number one. That, and the fact that...Yogi and I have talked about this often. Our parents never really understood what we did. Because...my mother only went to one baseball game in her life. And when she walked...and when...It's because the neighborhood had a Day for me. And, and they chipped in and they gave me a Nash car. Which has been out of existence for years. This was 946. And, one of the great compliments was, we use to have a, a...Tony Gagliardi (sp??). He'd go around walking. He would sharpen scissors. And knives. And when he saw me for the first time after I came to the Big Leagues, he said, Joey! Joey! And he threw a big hug on me. And he said, uh, you, you the first boy getting a name in the paper, no gotta kill somebody! I mean, that was his supreme compliment. And the people, they were so...My mother walks into the ball park, it was a night game. She turns to my brother and says, who's going to pay for all this lights? And my brother said, don't worry about it, Mama. Everybody's in there paid at least a dollar to get in. She said, he could afford it. Yeah, so that...they never... I'd go on a show like Johnny Carson show, for example. And every, people would say, oh, man, saw you on the Johnny Carson show. And da, ta, ta, ta, ta. My mother just knew I was on television. That was it. But, so...Never really...you know what I'm saying? She was happy that we were not in trouble. That's all she cared about. Cause she was a typical Italian mother. Had to go to 6 o'clock mass when it was dark. Dressed in black. And I'd say, Ma. It's not a sin to go to the 8 o'clock mass. You know. It's light. People see you. And that kind of thing. But that's the way it was. That's the way we grew up.

**PS:** You mentioned that, your triangle was the church, your family and sports.

**JG:** Well, school was something we had to do. I mean, like in St. Louis, when I was going to school, if the Cardinals were playing the Brooklyn Dodgers and Whitlow Wyatt was going to pitch against Mort Cooper, for me that was a whole damn obligation. I went to the ball park if I could get in! And many a day we kind of hitchhiked there. But...We didn't, we didn't do any bad things. We really didn't. I went to a public school till the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. And then the seventh and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to parochial school at St. Ambrose. And then I went to Catholic high school. But, I also signed a contract, in those days you could,



when I was a sophomore. And... That was... I did it probably the most... I have two poignant, let me use that word... moments. This one, when I signed the contract, which I write about in, in, the last one. "Just Play Ball." How... I asked for a bonus and the bonus I asked for was for 500-dollars because that's what Papa owed on the house. And I can remember every Sunday... cause he... it as a handshake! That's the way they did things on The Hill. Many of the people. And Papa would go every Sunday and give Mr. Carnegie (?) money. Sometimes it was 0-dollars. Sometimes it was 20-dollars. Cause he was a laborer. And I can remember, his check was \$55.40 every week. Same thing. And one week he worked overtime and he got a hundred dollars. He put it on the table and my brother Mickey and I had to watch it. Just look at it. Pop, what are we doing? Okay. I saw it. You know, that kind of thing. He was so proud. In fact, it was funny. When I got the 500-dollars, I took it down to Lecrete-Christie (sp??) And he was on his lunch break. My father was a big man. And had hands like snow shovels. Had no trouble communicating, really. No. If he wanted to get a point across, doink! He got it across. And probably get you on the rebound coming off the wall, too. But... he took the check. And I said, Papa, you don't owe anybody anything now. When you give this to Mr. Carnegie. And it was, it was so emotional for me, became here's this man... I had never seen my father kiss my mother, okay? But I know that when my mother was sick, he was so gentle. So caring, so loving. He did the cooking. He would make sure she stayed in bed. He'd get everything. He did everything. And it was when I gave him that check, these big gumdrops started to come down his face. And that ... obviously happy tears. You know, it's the, it's an old proverb. It's not biblical. But it says that tears are to the soul what soap is to the body. And, he just was so proud. And, I always kidded him. I'd say, Papa, if you would have owed a couple thousand dollars, I would have been a big bonus guy! Cause that's what I would have asked for. But 500-dollars. That was 94, so regardless of the number, it was such an up for me.

**PS:** So, did you always know growing up then that you were going to be a ballplayer?

**JG:** Well, I think all kids do. You say, oh, yeah. I'm going to be a baseball player. I'm going to play for the St. Louis Cardinals. The home town team. Or the St. Louis Browns. But, you never really know. What I tell kids is, hold on to a dream. Have a dream and hold on to it. Langston Hughes writes a great poem about dreams. When dreams die, life is a bird with a broken wing that can't fly. You know, hold on to it. And we had this dream. But we didn't have any equipment. Our game was soccer. It was an economical thing. One ball, 22 guys played. And I see a lot of, of myself sometimes, when I see teams in the Inner City. Or down in, uh, the Latin American countries. But at least baseball teams now are having academies where they help the kids and they teach the kids. Not only baseball. But the language, for example And you always dreamed about being a baseball player. But, how it happens... What I tell my kids, and, of course, they're grown now and they make us so proud. And our grandkids are the same way obviously. I tell them, you never know who's watching. The progression into baseball is almost like a made-up story. We were sitting on, on my front porch, and a, and a kid named Peter Fasani (sp??) came by. And he said, hey, they got a thing out at Sherman Park and there's two ball players out there. And we can go get some autographs. And we said, what are you, nuts? They're not going... uh! They're not going to let us get autographs. They kick us out of every place we ever go. I mean, I don't want to be disrespectful, but the first thing we heard as kids was, watch those Dago kids. They'll steal everything. You know, right away you're stereotyped. To



me, greed and discrimination are the two worst cancers of, of living. But anyhow, he kept...and so we went to get these autographs. Okay? And we sat there and we're listening to this guy talk. And hardly paying attention because he said, out of this group, uh, percentages has show n that probably two of you will go into Big Leagues. You know, and we thought, yeah, sure. Me and Yogi are going to go in the Big Leagues. Get out of here. If it wasn't for baseball we'd probably be doing five to life. But, anyhow... We, we, we sat there. And then I'm looking out and thinking about it. I can see it. It was a WPA project, which was a, a program the government had, to give adults jobs. Because it was...almost...it was after post-Depression. So, anyhow, if you signed up, they gave you a canvas, a piece of canvas that big with a number on it. And what you did, you went up and you hit. These coaches were on the sidelines. And they watch and then they pick number 72. So we said, let's go hit. We never hit with good bats or anything like that. We were like all the other kids, you know. Broken bat, put some nails in it, tape it up. Did the same thing with the ball. Well, anyhow, Yogi hit; I hit. And Pete hit. And River hit. And Pooch hit. All the guys. And we all got picked. And so we're playing...And I always thought that a scout, a baseball scout, would be a guy who would come in a beautiful suit. A limo. A cigar out to here. Money out of every pocket. But, we never saw a guy like that. But there was a man that always sat in the stands watching us play. And it ended up, he was...what was known in those days, as a bird dog. He worked with the scout and he would tell the scout, you ought to see this kid. He can play. And to make the long story short, if there's still time to save it...We played at Sportsman's Park. Which was the home...the Big League team. Yogi had a good day. I had a good day. And they said, would you like to try out, or work out with the Cardinals? Lord, yes! That was our dream. That was like going to the Vatican. And...So we did. And, and as they say, the rest is history. Because, baseball was always our big thing. That was our thing. But...we couldn't play baseball. We couldn't afford, uh, shin guards for the catcher or a mask. We played softball. And then we started to play baseball. And, uh...

**PS:** Where did you play?

**JG:** Well, they, they had a YMCA league. Uncle Joe Casino (??) would give us, like when we played soccer, he'd give us Army shoes. And we played baseball. And we used to use National Geographic's for, for the shin guards. And we'd borrow the other guy's mask. And...There was one team that had a uniform Edmund's Restaurant. I remember that team like it was yesterday. And every time we played those guys, we would clobber 'em. Because they had uniforms and they had hats and they had balls. And all that kind of stuff. And then...you know...Next week we'd be playing, uh, who was it? Oh, not the Wildcats. That was...that was a club... Anyhow. Four guys would show up. Or six guys would show up. And, you know, people try now, when they write stories, to make it sound like I always wanted to be a catcher. And Yogi, the same way. I loved to play first base. Yogi was an outfielder-pitcher. But to get guys, we'd say...where do you want to play? I want to play shortstop. All right, you play shortstop. Where do you want...I want to play third base. Okay. I want to play...Nobody wanted to catch. So we became catchers by necessity. And then, of course, my speed, my blinding speed, running the bases, augmented this position. Lord. I saw a scouting report that made me laugh. When I went into broadcasting, I, I saw an old Cardinal's scouting report. And it said, arm, above average. Power, average or a little below. Speed, deceptive. And I thought, what is that? And then there was this smart aleck scout put down. Slower than he looks.



**PS:** But you did okay.

**JG:** Oh, I did okay. Yeah. I could stretch a triple into a double with the best of them.

**PS:** So, so you had your career starting. And then World War II.

**JG:** Well, yes. First, I was 5 years old and they sent me down to Springfield, Missouri, to work with the groundskeeper. And to catch batting practice. And then later, it got a little bit fancy, and they said to Mr. Rickey, who was way ahead of his time. And I'm a big Mr. Rickey fan. Said, he was hiding me. Because...I was not signed to a contract, but I did not play American Legion ball which was the big showcase at that time. So that was 94, and I signed it that fall. And then in 42, uh, was 6 years old. I signed a contract to play Class C. At Springfield. And then, at 7, I played with the Columbus Redbirds. And then, when I turned 8 in February, I didn't know what to do because they were drafting everybody. And so, the Cardinals said, well, why don't you work out with the parent club in Cairo, Illinois, cause you couldn't travel to the South. There were restrictions. Everybody had to travel pretty close to homeland so, I was there. I didn't get drafted right away, so opening day they sent me to Spring, uh, Columbus, Ohio. And I thought, well, maybe I'll get to play a month or so. But the next week I was drafted. So, I missed all of 44, 45. Ad I got out of the Army in 46 on Mother's Day. What a day that was. See, the Lord blesses us with memories. Sometimes when I sit down in my office in my basement, I get out the scrapbook. Not to look at how many hits I got or what I did great. But, I'd see guys and I'd think, I wonder what happed to him. I wonder what happened to him. And then you'd think about these great days.

**PS:** What about your time in the service? Where did you serve?

**JG:** Well, I was on the American side. Thought I'd make that clear. And I was at Fort Riley, Kansas. And I knew about as much about horses...it was cavalry at the time. The only horses I ever saw was when the peddler man came by. And, when the... We got to know his horse pretty good because all the Italian men, they would give you instructions to help the widow lady. But when...his name was Jim Belani (sp?), it was an Italian name obviously. They said, when Jim Belani's horse does his thing, need it for the fertilizer. So, boy, we'd run around with shovels catching those hockey pucks. You know. So, that's the only thing I knew about horses. That they did whatever they had to do, anywhere. And I stayed there. And then when General Patton got caught in the Bulge, and, and, and e...everybody was made a tanker. And I went to Fort Knox. And we were 24 hours that Fort Knox was just running, because there were so many casualties. And then I was sent to the Philippines. And, as we were going across is when they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. And, then, we became MPs. And, uh, that was...that was good, because...There were some sad things. And there's nothing even comes close to, to the tragedy of, of war. And...you know...I, I just hate when I hear people say certain things. Because kids like, when I was a kid, I didn't know. They told me I had to go, I went. I mean, like down at the reservation, Billy Farris (sp?)...he was just killed. A roadside bomb got him. In fact, he was one of the first kids that I met down at the res. And, and he gave his life. Let's respect that. I mean, I...These people who, who say such awful things. But I don't want to get



into that because I'm not political. I, I do what I'm supposed to do and try to stay out of trouble. Which has been my philosophy.

**PS:** So you did service in the Philippines, then?

**JG:** Yes. I was in the Philippines. War was just ending. And, boy, I tell you. I went back to the Philippines and, and...what it was...When the war was...it was over. And we had to get our guy's back. That Manila, that's where I was. That's where they had to come to get discharged and to get all the paperwork. Well, these guys, these brave guys, were coming off of Bataan, Corregidor, Leyte. And Iwo. They came off Iwo Nimadi, I tell you...they had to be entertained. What do you do with all these people? So, they put a bunch of us in what they call this Olympics. We were playing three baseball games a day. Morning, afternoon and they had lights. It was at, at Rozell (sp??), Rozell Stadium. Rozell Stadium where the Japanese would...there were still bullet marks all over the walls. And, and we fixed it up. And, and so the guys were there. And, oh, they loved it because they could bet. And then we'd have, you know, something to keep them going. And, getting them back. Because, you know, you hear about Post War Syndrome. All of them were so brave, but the guys who came off Iwo, oh, I, I still...I, I still can remember them And so that's why we became MPs. Are you kidding me? We, we didn't tell that guy, you can't do that. We helped him do what he wanted to do. Because he, he was in the middle of it. And then, there was a great movie that James Bradley, his father was one of the guys in the statue of Iwo Jima. And, and the brave Pima Indian from down at the reservation right around the school, he, he was part of that. And, uh... In fact, we named the Feast House after him. Ira Hayes. And I got upset with Johnny Cash when he sang that song about the drunken Pima who went to war. Sixteen times he says that. This was a young man coming from a small village of Bapchule. And then he went...he, he wanted to help his country. And then all of a sudden, when they put the flag up at Iwo, they became celebrities. And they paraded them all around. And this kid wasn't prepared for that. When you, when you see that movie. And, boy, you get me started on that. Because, it, it just bothered me that, that this, this kid had so much integrity. There's one great story, and if you cut it out, cut it out. But, I think about it all the time. In the picture, they misidentified one of, of the GIs. Or Marines, rather. And, and Ira said, you got it wrong...told the PR guy. You got the wrong name. And they said, well, don't worry about it. You know, who knows? And he said, well, he didn't say anything. They wouldn't change it. And this kid lived in Texas I can't think of his name. But, his mom kept saying, that's my boy. That's my boy. And, and finally the older son and the husband said, you know, people will think you're going crazy. Don't keep saying that. She said, that is my son. I know. They said, how can you be sure? Cause you couldn't see his face. She laid one of the beautiful mother lines that any one can say. She said, I have wiped that butt too many times not to know that that's my boy. And when Ira Hayes came back...he hitchhiked from Bapchule, which is this side of Casa Grande. He hitchhiked to Texas. The mom had died by then. Met the father in the middle of the field. He was a farmer. And said, that was your son and I just want you to know. Hitchhiked all the way there. Told the father that. And then went back. That's the kind of integrity he had. And then you get Johnny Cash singing about a drunken Pima that, that... So. James Bradley came down there. He called me and he came down and made a speech. And, and the elders were so proud to hear him say, cause these... Ira was a good boy.



**PS:** It was a good movie. I saw that, too.

**JG:** Oh, great! You know, and it...and...Clint Eastwood did a great job with it.

**PS:** So you actually...you played ball then when you went to the Philippines?

**JG:** Oh, we played baseball...oh, we did everything. We would, uh, we would play... We couldn't play every day. I mean...ach! You know, three games a day. And we had Big League players. Early Wynn would play shortstop one day. And he was a star pitcher with Cleveland. Max Mackin (sp??) was a pitcher with the Dodgers and first base. He'd play there. And then every once in awhile we'd pick a couple of the GIs to fill in because we just couldn't keep up the pace. But ,the war was over and these guys had to be entertained. And then, we'd, we'd stage this Olympics where they had boxing tournaments and ping pong tournaments. We had everything going. To keep them busy. And, uh, so that was important. And then, the other job that we had...we would have to unload the ships. And we had the Japanese gang, a work gang. And we worked 'em.

**PS:** And so, then you, you served a whole two years and...

**JG:** Oh, I, I came back on Mother's Day 1946. And I joined the Cardinals in Philadelphia. Now here's my dream coming. I'm playing for the home town team, right? I get to Philadelphia and I must have looked like the cover of a Rockwell *Saturday Evening Post*. I got this little cheapy suitcase. Didn't know what pajamas were, for crying out loud. They said, bring pajamas. What are pajamas? What do you do with pajamas? You know. And they told me what you did with them. And I go to the Bellview Stratford in Philadelphia. I'll never forget it. And got in there early in the morning, like around two o'clock. And, uh, the clerk...I told him who I was and I was supposed to... Oh, he said, I have a note. Listen. Marty Marion is up in a room by himself. Marty Marion is then the star shortstop for the Cardinals. He said, he's in a room by himself. Just go up there and, and you can use that other bed.

And I thought, wake up Marty Marion? What are you, nuts? And I said, oh, okay. So I took my little bag and I went up to the floor and I sat in the hallway all night long. I, I didn't have the courage to, uh, knock on the door. And, uh, oh, and that was the beginning, you know, like so much happened. We won a pennant that year, playing the Brooklyn Dodgers. And most of these people, players, I had read about. I never really seen them live! Like the World Series. We played the Boston Red Sox. I had never seen Ted Williams live! And there was no television. And we'd hear about these guys, you know. And when Williams came up to hit the first time, I was awestruck. I was caching in a World Series and I'm looking up at him and I'm saying, this is the great Ted Williams. And he's doing his thing with the bat. And here comes a pitch right in there. And he, he followed it right into my glove. And he says, that pitch was inside? And I said, yes, sir, yes, sir! That pitch was inside! What, was I going to question Ted Williams? In fact, one of the big thrills, when he was pretty sick, I, I did a long interview with him. We talked about that. He said, yeah, he said, I remember that. He said, you were really scared, weren't you? I said, scared? I said, I had never seen you and every time I read about you, you were hitting the ball 590 feet! And, and that's the way it was. Because, television is great if used properly. On the first...today they, I mean, they got so



many toys in the control room that they give you 5 replays. And you're... what are they doing so many for? But, in those days,, radio. I couldn't wait! The first time, and he wasn't pitching for the Dodgers. I worked, what is Van Lingo Mungo (sp??)? I mean, that was the guy's name. Van Lingo Mungo. And, and Rabbit Maranville. I thought, who... why, why Rabbit? And I was scared of... These, these were all guys that I rooted for. And they'd come to the ballpark and I'd be thrilled to meet 'emir mean, big Poison and Little Poison Waner. And I thought, man, these guys must be bad. And they were the nicest guys! You know. The bubble gum cards came alive. That's what it amounted to.

**PS:** Great nicknames, too.

**JG:** Oh, didn't they though? You know, and they were cool nicknames. And great... The only guys who have bad nicknames are the catchers. And... Schnoz... Shany... Smokey. I mean, they don't have those exotic names like Ducky-Wuckey or something like that.

**PS:** What was your nickname?

**JG:** Well. I didn't have a nickname. And there were some managers I worked for didn't even know my first name! And, and, you know, they would just go by my ethnic background. I said, that's not my name! But... no. I didn't have a nickname. Yogi. He wasn't Yogi when he went to the Big Leagues. He was Lawdie. He got the nickname going... If you ever saw Yogi... he did... he doesn't have a neck. He's like this. And his feet are like that. And you can pick him out of a crowd of a million. And when he sits down, he has a unique way of sitting down. And so, he's... there in a movie and he's sitting down. Uh. And, uh, the... the yogi. The, the guy, you know, that plays the flute and the snake comes out of the... one of those yogis. And so Bobby Hoffman who was on the team, on the American Legion team, he said, that, that yogi looks like Lawdie. Lawie, Lawdie's a Yogi. And it was like he was baptized. He walked out of the movie and everybody started calling him Yogi. And you can walk down the street and ask anybody, who's Yogi! They'll know. They'll know.

**PS:** What kind of salaries did you make?

**JG:** Salaries! Oh, man, you could, you, you could cash a check with your paperboy if you wanted to. To put it in perspective, there was no minimum salary. Okay? And you negotiated the best you could. To put it in perspective, in 1946 there was no television. And we were trying to start a pension plan. And, uh, The winner's share was 2700-dollars net. Today, the winners share will be anywhere from 300-thousand to whatever. Depending on the ballpark. The size of the ballpark. But, the biggest change obviously has been the agents who have come in and negotiated. Because I... again, in, in the last book, "Just Play Ball," I talk about it. I mean... You negotiated. You went in and you did the best you could. And Mr. Rickey, I remember in Pittsburgh one year... I had a pretty good year. I hit 270. 272. And 2 home runs. Played 5 games. Wanted a two-thousand dollar raise. And in his office, all general managers have this big, uh, cha... blackboard and they have the whole organization up there. And we had just finished the season. And finished last. And when I got through making my presentation, he said, this is the Pittsburgh



organization. My boy, we finish last with you, we can finish last without you. And that was the end of the negotiations. My partner on the Game of the Week, Tony Kubec. He lives in Wisconsin. He got a contract and he...had a good year with the Yankees. He wrote to George Weiss. They sent him a contract. Tony sent it back with a note saying, uh, this is not right. I can make more money shoveling snow in Wisconsin. He got back a note saying, get a big shovel. I mean, that was the difference. Now these guys come in...high school kids! I mean, they'll sign for two, three, four million dollars. And they don't have to worry about it. So...you know...People say, are you envious? No, I'm not envious! I mean, I, I just wish I was playing now! I mean, the minimum salary is way up there. I mean, and, you don't even have to play. Just take the team picture and you got over 100-thousand dollars coming to you. I mean, and that's the way it's good. I keep going back to the book, because I, I hear these great lines. Cause people come up to me now and they'll say, ah, Joe. When you guys played, you played for the fun of it. I say, no, we played for the money. We just couldn't get it. Because Mr. Rickey, for example, he had a great theory. Lot of money over here. Lot of players over here. Don't mix 'em. Don't mix 'em. And then, Boyer had the great line. He said, yeah, I played for the love of the game. But, you know, what, the more money I got, the more I loved the game.

**PS:** So, do you remember what your salary was back then?

**JG:** My first year? I think it was four-thousand dollars. Oh, I played nine years in the Big Leagues. There were only 6 teams. And the most I was ever offered was with the Giants, was 4-thousand dollars. Nine years! And now they got 30 teams and a minimum salary... They...Don Zimmer told me that his first meal money, they give you meal money, was more than he made when he signed the contract. The meal money. And that's good! Hey, ask and you shall receive.

You know, this book that I wrote, the reason...and....You know what's gratifying about it? Cause I just got tired of hearing about steroids. Even today in the paper. Let Barry Bonds alone! Let him...just play ball! That's why I called it that. And, you know, human growth, hormones and all that. And it's just one anecdote after another. And, and the joy of doing these signings is, is...it's been great. And, and it's gratifying to the point that people are, are... They don't care whether they know the player or not. A funny story is a funny story. Okay? And like, I, I was at Changing Hands in Tempe. This lady walked up to me and she had her husband by the hand. And she, she said, Joe, I want to tell you, we're fighting cancer at our house. And, I have not heard my husband laugh in months. Once in awhile I see a smile. Tonight, I heard him laugh. I just want to thank you. God! How can you buy that?

**PS:** Why don't you talk a little bit about how you switched from baseball to broadcasting.

**JG:** How I switched from baseball to broadcasting. Well, I, I would have to say the origin of it was... In 1950 I was with the Cardinals. And it's really the only year that I wish I'd played the whole year. Because on June 1<sup>st</sup>, I was off to a great start. I was hitting 350. And, I had just finished a doubleheader in Pittsburgh. We had just finished. And in the first game I think I had three base hits. And in the second game of the doubleheader...I better explain what a doubleheader is, because that's become...gone the way



of dirt. Obsolete. Doubleheader is where you play your games on the same day and you only had one admission. Yeah. Try to get that today. But, anyhow... Having said that, I had pinch hit in the second game and hit a three run homer. We won it. Okay? Now, we come back to St. Louis and we're going to play the Brooklyn Dodgers. And, and when, when the Cardinals played the Dodgers, it was like war. I mean, it was really great. You know, we battled and battled hard in Ebbets Field. We battled hard in Sportsman's Park. And I never played against left-hand pitching. And Preacher Rowe was pitching for the Dodgers and he was a star left-hander. And the first at bat... and it was a drizzly night. And we had base runners at first and second. And, I bunted the ball. And the Dodgers had a play which I always liked. They would let the base runner from second go to third. Not worry about getting him. The third baseman would charge hard. Get the ball. Throw it to second, throw it to first, if the runner was below average speed. Which I fit that bill perfectly. Okay. And, they'd get a double play even though they allowed the man to go to third. So I bunted the ball and I knew that they were going to make that play. So, I'm running as hard as I possibly can. And Jackie Robinson was the, uh, was covering first. And, as I say, it was drizzling. And he was laying across the bag. I mean by that... like... the bag would be here and his feet would straddle the bag because he had kind of slipped and was reaching. And, just as I got to the bag, he reached. And you can try this at home if you want. If you're laying on your stomach and you reach, your back feet go up. And he clipped me across my shins. And I did a terrible tumble. Ended up that I broke a couple ribs, separated my shoulder, and, was really in deep trouble. In fact... and I'll get to... this was the start of it. My, my wife, my sweet wife, and I always tell people that's the best catch I ever made. She was pregnant with our Joe at the time. And I was taped up on the shoulder. I was taped across here. And I was walking all bent over. And I couldn't help her, she couldn't help me. And I said, Sweetheart, if we get through this year, we'll be married forever. Nothing's going to be worse than this. And as I'm talking to you, we been married 57 years. So anyhow, I was really in bad shape. I finally went to the president of the team. And... Mr. Fredvy who since is gone. I said to him, I'm really hurting! So he sent me to a doctor at the Shriner's Children's Hospital in St. Louis. And they looked at the X-rays and he said, you need surgery. Well, what they were doing by taping me up is have me come back before my time. Before I was healed. In fact, the way they explained it to me, kind of in a crude way, this being my arm, this was my shoulder, it's supposed to fit like this. Mine was like that. And they wanted to cut that tip off. And when I went to the Mayo Clinic a couple of years ago and they saw that, they said, if you'd have cut that you probably wouldn't have had the use of your arm. But that's... a while other story. Anyhow, I went to Mr. Fredvy. And he sent me to the hospital. And Dr. Kreigal (sp??). He operated. So, I'm laying in bed recuperating. And I got a pin in my shoulder. I'm all taped up. And, he was not a baseball fan. Thank God. And he said, do you throw with that arm, son? And I said, no, I throw with this one. Well, he said, you're very fortunate because if that had been your right arm, you'd never play again. Wow! What would I do? What would I do? Because what we did in the off season in those years, you got a job. And I sold used cars one year. I sold Christmas trees another year. Worked at Sears-Roebuck. I should tell you... Yogi was ahead of his time at Sears-Roebuck. He started the self-service and doesn't get credit for it. Cause he doesn't know a ball peen hammer from, from a nail. And when somebody would ask for something, he'd say, go get it and bring it here and I'll ring it... Self-service now! Anyhow... I was laying in bed after he left, Dr. Kreigal, and I said, well, what would I do? Well, there was a wonderful broadcaster, Gabby Street, who... we used to sit on the train and we talked. And he said... he always called me Jody. He said, Jody, you can do what I'm doing. Just got to



clean it up a little bit, that's all. And I'd laugh. And he'd say, no, you got a lot of stories. And you, you write down these stories. And anything you hear, you write it down. And I said...you're going to be in broadcasting for the next 20 years. Well, I didn't know he was sick then. And he kept encouraging me. And Harry Carey was the broadcaster. And Harry Carey held out until I got a chance to, to start broadcasting. And that's where I started...was broadcasting in St. Louis as...I been around long enough. They used to call him the color man. And now they're the analysts. I, I was an analyst, but I didn't know. I was a color man. And, and so then, I did that. And one of the things I always tell my kids, or young people or even the kids down on the rez. You never know who's watching you and just keep doing it. And how it evolved is...it's...it's unbelievable. When I look back. I didn't say, well, I want to go to the network. And I want to do *Game of the Week*. I was happy as a clam working in St. Louis. Cause if I, I figured if I made 5-thousand dollars a year...wow! I'd be in great shape. And if I ever made 20-thousand, look out, man, I'd buy me a new pair of shoes or something. So, the reason... I signed a deal with the Anheuser-Busch and then I was making speeches everywhere. Cause I never had any formal training. You know, people say, where did you learn to do this or that? Just do it, man. And then get that flop sweat. Because I tell my kids...my own, but also the kids down at the rez...God gave us two gift certificates. One of them, very important, it's a certificate for ignorance. The guys look at you like you're nuts. I say, but, it's a good kind of ignorance. To where you do something and people come up and say, how did you do that? I don't know how I did it. I just did it. And, it's like the first book that I wrote. I wrote it in longhand. And I gave it to a sports writer and he cleaned it up so much it didn't sound like me. And I...finally I found a man who was a great baseball fan, Martin Quigley, and worked in PR. And we had a little system. He's say, Joe, I don't understand this. You got a story for this? And then we worked together. Okay. That's how it happened. I was too dumb to know. I've been blessed, like when I did *The Tonight Show* and filled in for Johnny Carson. Who's my first guest? The Beatles. Paul, Paul McCartney and John Lennon. I looked in the audience and I see all these stars. Lena Horne was out there. Tony Bennett was out there. Bob Hope. He could have gone and plugged two or three of them and had a great show! So, anyhow...I'm doing a game in Pittsburg. And, a, a wonderful sports writer, Chile Doyle. He, he was retiring. And he had been good to me. Because we had such a bad team. And so...he's...and I, I bought the ticket. I mean, I'm sitting there as a patron. I bought a ticket to go to Chile Doyle's banquet. And in the clubhouse when I was a player, Chile used to always got a kick cause I'd do a broken English thing. And he grew up in an Italian neighborhood and he just thought that was the greatest thing. Now, here's this man getting this trip to Ireland. And getting all these gifts. And he spots me. And he says, Joey, Joey, you gotta come up. Talk to them like you do in the clubhouse. I said.... Come on, Chile. And they finally got me up there. And to show you how it evolves. I got up there and I did my little thing. And that was the end of it. Everybody got some laughs. And Al Abrams who was then the editor of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, he says, hey, would you come do the Dapper Dan Dinner? That was the biggest dinner I'd ever heard of. Because I was just doing the Kiwanis, and, and Boy Scouts. And Blue and Gold banquets. I even went to a magician and said, teach me a couple of little simple tricks. Because, you know, the attention span of those little Cub Scouts is about that much. And so, I'd do little tricks. Because the stars got the big banquets. Musial and Slaughter got the big banquets. And I'd get the Kiwanis Club, the Optimists Club. And if you've ever made a speech there...I, I wrote about it, so I'm not talking out of school. Those guys just want to be marked "attended." I, I always say that if Moses had come down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments and he got



there at, say, , we'd only have seven commandments because everybody would have gone. See? So, anyhow. I, I said, yeah, I'd love to do it. So I do the Dapper Dan Dinner. Once again, keep in mind, you never know who's watching you. Okay? So, all of a sudden at the Dapper Dan Dinner, the Hickok Award...the Hickok Belt people, they use to give out this beautiful diamond and gold belt for the Athlete of the Year. And that year Mickey Mantle was the Athlete of the Year. And these guys who have these banquets, they're always scouting other banquets. And they came up to me after the Dapper Dan Dinner and said, would you come do the Hickok Dinner? I said, I'd love to. And so, I do the Hickok Dinner. And luckily for me, Mantle was the recipient. So New York writers were there. Well, the biggest banquet in the country then was the New York Writers. And I'm on the program with George Gobel who is the hottest comic going. And, too dumb to know that, you know, he was that good. And I just told my baseball stories and this was a baseball crowd, so I got a good reaction. And here's where you get the big break. You can say what you want, I didn't have a blueprint. I, I had a friend of mine, who...oh, Irish name... I can't think of him anymore. He died. Anyhow, big Cub fan. Ended up working on "Candid Camera." But he was a scout for the Jack Paar Show. Tom O'Malley had been trying to get me on the show and telling... and Paar would...you know, O'Malley would come back and he's day, hey, no, no, Paar, he doesn't, Joe, he doesn't like baseball. But I'm going to keep trying. Jack Paar's neighbor was in the audience at the New York Writer's Dinner. So he tells Paar, you gotta get this bald-headed guy on your show. He's funny. He's funny. You gotta get him. So, I hear from O'Malley. He said, he tells me the story. I'm on the Paar show. And, and we became great friends with Jack and Miriam Paar. But, but it was so funny. The first time I go there, he was, Pal, Pal! I don't know anything about baseball. What do we talk about? What do we talk about? I said, just ask me, what does a catcher say to the pitcher when he goes to the mound. What? What does a catcher say to the pitcher when he goes to the mound? And, I do about five stories. And...that night when I did that and we broke for commercial and...you're getting a lot of laughs. You're getting a lot of laughs. What can we talk about? I said, ask me, what does a player say to an umpire to get kicked out of the game? An umpire. And that's where it started. And then, from that, Shadenarshield (sp?? – might be two names) were the producers of the *Today Show*. I'd written "Baseball is a Funny Game." And Dave Garroway was then running the show. And I'm standing next to Shad and Archile and Dave Garroway when Shad is telling him, you interview this kid. And I was a kid then. And, Garroway said, ah, I don't know anything about baseball. I don't want to interview him. Let Lescoulie do it. And, no, Shad's said, no, you're going to do it. I want you to do it. I'm sitting there in my best Sears-Roebucks suit, scared to death. I'm in New York and, and this guy doesn't want to interview me. So, I said to Shad, hey, if he doesn't want to do it, that's okay. He said, don't worry about it. You do what you did on the Paar show. As soon as he asks you the first question, you go to the commercial. Don't stop. Just...shunk! Go! Which is exactly what I did. And Dave Garroway would ask me back. And then, there was a wonderful sports director, Tom Gallery (sp??). And NBC was going to get the early *Game of the Week*. And he had heard me at banquets. And he had heard me in St. Louis. And he was going to go to bat for me. And he did. And I was hired to do *Game of the Week*. And then the gates opened up. That's why...you never know who's watching you. But you need opportunity. And you need someone who's going to go to bat for you.

**PS:** And you need some talent there.



**JG:** Todd Gallary (?) hired me for NBC's *Game of the Week*. And then, doing *Game of the Week*, NBC lost the contract. So I still wanted to do baseball, so I did the Yankee baseball in 65, 66, which were tough years. And, that's when the producers of the *Today Show* invited me to be a kind of a regular. To the point, on Mondays I would do sports. And some great producers. Al Morgan. He was tremendous. But...there was another one. Schulberg. Stuart Schulberg. Budd Schulberg, the great writer and his brother. He expanded me, so to speak. And he put me doing other interviews. And then I became a regular and I had to make a decision...between doing Yankee games. Because...I was working t the network and some funny things happened. I was doing the *Today Show*. I was doing game shows. And on weekends I was doing *Monitor* which was a wonderful radio program. We did a lot of live cut-ins. And then, of course, you did that guest shot on the *Tonight Show*. In fact, one of the funny stories was... This particular day, I did the *Today Show*. cause I was a regular and you get up pretty early for that. And after the *Today Show*, I was doing a daily radio show, commentary, which is like three minutes of a five-minute show. So I did that. And then I would break for lunch. Instead of eating a big lunch, you went and you did the interviews for your *Monitor*'s segment on Saturday. And then there were two days a week where we did the game show. And whether it was, oh...I did *To Tell the Truth* for awhile. And then I did *Sale of the Century*. Not necessarily in that order. I'm just naming some of these shows. And they were doing two shows in the morning. And three in the afternoon on the next day. Well, this particular day I had done *Today Show*, my radio show, *Monitor*. And I did two game shows. And then I was booked for *The Tonight Show*. So, I'm in the Green Room, and, man, I'll never forget it. Hines, Hines & Dad were on the same night. And I fell asleep. I was sitting in the Green Room. Now, they come in and they shake...come on, Joe. Joe, you're next. Okay, okay. Okay. And Mr. Hines says, Joe, you're the coolest cat I ever saw. You can sleep before you go out there? I said, Mr. Hines, that wasn't being cool. That was just sheer exhaustion is what it was. But that was one of the things. But...I was doing too much. The merry-go-round was going around. And it got harder for me to say "no." In fact, one of those funny, tragic stories. Not a tragedy, but... made me really stop and think. I'd been on this merry-go-round and doing all kinds of stuff. And then, I was working for Chrysler at the time. And doing the commercials. You know. Buy a car, get a check. Buy a car, get a check. We were the first ones to do that. And, I'd fly sometimes from New York to Detroit, do a speech and come back the same day. And this particular day, our Gina...she's our youngest, our daughter. I drove up and my wife said, Gina, it's Daddy. And she said, what channel? Oh, boy! Did that hit home. I said, when your own kids think you're on tape, time to take inventory, pal. And that's when I started to think about leaving the *Today Show*. I will never say that much derogatory about the *Today Show*, because that was my education. That's where I learned so many things. Cause the blessing is that... You can read the paper, go into the studio, and the person who was in the morning paper making headlines, was sitting right there. And even if you were not interviewing them, you had a chance to talk to them in the Green Room. Which was a great thing. I mean, here I was talking to people like President Jimmy Carter. President Ford. Mr. Kissinger. Oh! Billy Graham. We sat there talking about, you know, I can remember, I said, Reverend Graham, you know we all want to go to heaven, but none of us want to die. He said, aw, it's going to be a great trip. I said, yeah, I know. I hear my priest always talk about, you know, come home, and you're going home and...home. I just want somebody to tell the Lord that I'm not homesick. You know. That kind...So you did that kind of conversation with wonderful, big people like that. And then, when Stuart Schulberg put me in something besides sports. I still remember the first interview I had was a



book that thick, written by a lawyer called Martin Mayer. And it was titled *The Lawyers*. I read that thing. It was like a book report. And I had all kinds of notes. And, man, I...cause I didn't want to look like Ned and the Third Reader. You know. I wanted to look like I knew what I was talking about. And I walked in there and, and the associate producer, Doug Sensil (sp?), he calls me and he says, Joe, Martin Mayer had to cancel out. I said, no, no, no, no. I, I don't care. Give me his address. I'll go to his house. I'm going to interview him. I mean, come on. I spent a week reading this! So those are the kind of thing...And then you worked with great people like Hugh Downs. And Frank McGee. And Barbara Walters. I mean... Barbara is such a talented person. And, you know, we would always... I'd talk to her. Madlock (sp?). Bryant Gumbel. When I went back the second time.

And Katie Couric. I mean, it hurts me to read the things they write about in the tabloids of... Cause Katie is a very talented person. Bryant...so he gets people upset with his body language. Don't look at his body language! Cause he's a bright guy. And, so, the *Today Show* was great for me.

**PS:** When did you first come to Arizona?

**JG:** I first came to Arizona in 1953. Yes. I was with the Cubs. And we spring trained out in Mesa. Hohokam Park. Not what I see now! I mean, that place was kind...they had built-in bad hops! I mean...there was... But, there was a wonderful man who was Mr. Baseball and people of Arizona should never forget him. Dwight Patterson. Dwight, he was the pioneer. And he kept talking to the Cubs and these teams and got it going. And, we liked Arizona. And Spring Training. What was not to like in Okay? And, when I left the *Today Show*...I'll never forget that day. It was a Sunday afternoon. My wife and I were just taking a walk. And I'd been thinking about it because, you really, you know, it's heady wine, the *Today Show*. You're invited everywhere. But, you better realize that, it's not so much because you're this warm, wonderful, perfect guy. It's that *Today Show* microphone. Okay? And you can't play both ends. I mean, you have to turn most of them down, because you're getting up mighty, mighty early. And, I was thinking about...because like, you know, you'd say to your wife, look, honey. We'll go out Friday night because then I can sleep late Saturday. Friday would come, you'd say, look, let's go out Saturday. Because I'm kind of tired. And we can go to late mass. And then you'd go out Saturday. But, you'd be thinking about the author or the interview you had coming up on Monday. And, the conversation would run something...she'd say something. I'd say, what did you say? Huh? What? Because you were preoccupied. And finally I said, wait a minute. I'm starting to pull away from my family. And there's nothing more important to me than my family. And so I'd been thinking about it. And this Sunday afternoon I said to her, what if I told you I'm going to leave the *Today Show*? And, boy, she's a winner. She said, I'd be the happiest woman in the world. So I said, well, I'm going to tell them tomorrow. So I went in and told them. And like everything else, you know...well, you never gave us any trouble. You never wanted to have lunch and talk over some problems. Whatever they told you to do, you did. Don, don't say anything. Maybe you'll change your mind. And they start throwing things at you. That's why I don't get upset at the ballplayers. You know. You want a limo to pick you up? You want this? You want... No, no, no. I just want to be with my family. And so, I left. And then...where we going to go? So, we talked about Arizona. And my wife said, well, yeah. It's nice to go there in January and February and March and April. We're going to go out there in July and August and see what it's like. And I hadn't thought of that. And I was



doing *Game of the Week*. Never forget it. Brought them out here. And I put them at the hotel. And...I was going to Montreal to do the game. So, I was gone Friday night. And I was gone Saturday. Came back Saturday night. And my wife and daughter are there, and I said, what do you think? Said, Oh! I'm going to die! I'm going to die here! I'm going to melt. I'm going to die! I can't...I won't...I can't stand it. So I said, well, wait...you know. Give it a chance. Said, Oh, I'll give it a chance! I'll give it another day. And so... We, we kind of drove around. And Gary Gentry, the former ballplayer, he was the real estate agent. And what really sold us on Arizona was, really, when you got down to it, not the climate. Not the mountains. And not the beauty of it. The people. The people. We...not we, my wife found this little, wasn't that small, but this little house right off of Tatum. Arroyo Verde. And the neighbors are so great. And it wasn't that they, you know, because of Mr. Television coming to the neighborhood. Cause they took care of my wife. I mean, the MacGruders (sp??) and, and...the Langston's still are our, our close friends from there. And, you know, we would have these football parties. And basketball parties. Any way to get together at somebody's house. And I often say, the difference between Arizona and New York is that when somebody in Arizona says, how are you, they wait for the answer. In New York, they don't wait for the answer. And, and New York's always giving you a question. You been there. You know. You say, what time is it? What do I look like? Big Ben? You know, that's what you get. And they don't mean anything by it. But, that's just the way it is. But, the beauty of it. And then...we could have gone anywhere. And our second choice was San Diego. But we, we have been so happy here. Our, our kids are all here except for Steve. And the grandkids. And it's, it's been great.

**PS:** What year did you move here?

**JG:** I want to say...let's see...70...oh, man, I don't know. We're here about 26 years, I think. I'm bad for years. I really am.

**PS:** Well, we'll look it up.

**JG:** Look it up. Yeah.

**PS:** Well, what are...you say your wife got...you got involved with your neighbors. Did you get involved in other things here in Arizona?

**JG:** Well, I...you know me, I mean...I'm going...if somebody stopped, I'm going to talk to them. I mean, I go to ballparks, I, I talk to everybody. Groundskeeper, players, foul pool. Umpires. Whatever. It was easy to get involved. I...it just did...And we had great friends, the Scheffings, Bob Scheffing was a player and a manager with the Cubs and Cardinals. And we knew the Scheffings. And so...We got involved with them, they introduced us to people. And it just kept expanding. And then, uh, we just lived in a...a pretty....a normal life. I mean, you know. It was nothing fancy. Just being around people.

**PS:** There was no baseball here though. So...



**JG:** Oh, no. But there's a minor team here. And, uh...but...we, we got involved when there was a chance. Well, Joe was out of school. And he and Jim Breuner (sp?) really did the work to...I'll never forget the first go-round, we tried to get baseball here. Joe talked to Mike Gallagher from Gallagher, Kennedy and me to go around. We got our heads handed to us, man. People would say, Well, you...baseball here. Using my tax money. I'm at the airport one day and it was really funny. This, this old gent from Sun City comes up. He said, I saw you on television. They're going to use my tax money to build a ball park. And...and it's just recycled money. I said, what are you talking about? Recycled money! I said, you ever go in the parking lot of a, of a team like the Cubs or the Cardinals. There's license plates from Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas. Whatever. I said, It's not recycled money! Well, they're using my tax money. I said, your tax money? I said, why, why am I paying for schools in Sun City? You got no kids going to school there. Why are they putting streets there? You guys never leave your houses. And he got all worked up. But, it was...but it was an experience. And then, of course, when Jerry Colangelo got involved, and, and it's just...uh...so many good things have happened. This town really came together. Just like here in 2006 and 7 with the Suns. You know. People you didn't even know would say, what do you think the Suns are going to do? And, you think that Stoudemire is going to do it? That's great! I just wish they would do it for the Coyotes and, and the Mercury and all that. I think sports is really the glue. Because sports is...I don't care what the sport is. What you do is, is shown to everybody. Just, let's just zero in on baseball. You make an error before 30,000 people, it's on that scoreboard. I mean, what we're doing right now. If I said something that you didn't want to use it, we just edit it out. Who knows it? You, Manny and me. That's all. But in sports, oh, oh. It's out there for you...any sport! I mean, can you imagine the pressure of a one point game and you're at the free throw line? And these other people, if you're playing at the Visitors arena. So sports and, and, and...getting it transcends everything. You judge a man on his ability. That's, that's important. Give a guy a chance. Give me a chance. And if I screw it up, then it's me. But don't stop me. None of us...I didn't fill out a paper that said, I want to have my father and mother be Italian. I want to live in St. Louis, then I want to move to New York. And then I want to go to Arizona. I never filled out any papers like that. I'm not a religious fanatic of any kind, but God had a plan for us. He, He had me be born of the parents and the people and the environment, because there's something that I have to do. The same with you or Manny or whoever. I, I got a simple little prayer. I say it every day. And I...and, and, I think it says it all. And, and I found it in *Guidepost*. A man named Fred Bower (sp?) wrote it. And it's simple. Oh, Lord, teach me to know that every day, down every street, come chances to be God's hands and feet. Now the job is, to find that chance. Cause sometimes we don't recognize it. But if you went through life being God's hands and feet, man, you're on the express...you're flying first class on a jet right to the Pearly Gates.

**PS:** And, talk about some of the ways that, that you, you've done that. You've gotten involved with the St. Peter's Indian Mission. How did that happen?

**JG:** Oh, well that...I didn't recognize it. I didn't get up one morning and say, whoop! There it is. God sent me to St. Peter's Indian Mission. No, that wasn't it at all. If I told you that story, you'd just say, Joe, you're nuts! I was watching television one night. And a Little League team up north...they, they had all their equipment stolen. And that really bothered me. I thought, what rotten...what a terrible thing to do.



So I called a friend of mine at the police department. I said, you know the address or name of that lady that was talking about being robbed. He said, no, but I can get it for you. Which he did. And I call this lady. And this is roundabout way, but this is how I got it. Cause, you know, this thing about God working in strange ways, let me tell you something. When I get to St. Peters, you won't believe what's happened to me. And then the projects. But, anyhow. I, I call this lady and she can't believe it's me and all that kind of stuff. And I said, listen, I always got equipment and blah, blah, blah, blah. So, I meet her. Up north. I don't even know where it was. Believe me. So, I said, where do you guys buy your equipment? And they said, Oshman's. I said, well, let's go and maybe we can make a deal. So, we go in there. I got her and about six of the kids. And...I don't know the kids. And so I ask for the manager. And I go through this whole thing. I aid, you know, these kids had their stuff robbed and, and I gave them some bats and I gave them some gloves that I had, but if you could give us a real good deal, I think I can get a television camera out here. And, you know, you get some free publicity. So he said, well, I gotta call my boss. So he comes back. He said, my boss said he'd give you 50-dollars off. I said, you serious? Fifty dollars...it's going to cost me 49-dollars to make the call. And, and...so I said, no, we're not...So we walk outside. And I says to, to the lady, don't you go some other place? She said, Play It Again Sports. I said, let's go over there. So I talk to the kid and he said, well, I can't...I have to call the owner. And this wonderful man, Manny Cantu (sp??). He comes down and I, I introduce myself. Tell him the whole story. Just flat out says, tell the kids to pick out what they want and we'll straighten it out. And I said, well, I'm going to call a TV camera. He said, you don't have to do that. I don't, I don't need the publicity. I don't care about it. Just so these kids get what they want. I mean, they walked out with catcher's mitts and then the whole thing and all that. And I did call the TV and he was on,. And, so these kids were happy as they could be. Okay? So...don't you know... I go to church and ...at OLPH (???)...on Sunday, and the usher says to me, hey, I saw that story on television. Those kids. That was really great. I said, oh, that wasn't...Manny did the whole thing. And he said, well, that was good. And all that. But you should have been here to hear this nun. I said, what about this nun? Said, what was so great about her? He said, well, she was talking about how it really is down on, at the mission. I said, what was her name? He said, I don't know. I said, boy, she made a great impression on you. You don't even know her name? And so, he said, she's a friend of Bill Bidwill's. So, I said. Okay. That's enough. So, next day I call Bill. And...I'm going to blow his cover by telling this, because he, he was helping them and still helps. And so, I tell him, you know, about this whole thing. And he said, well, it must be Sister Martha. I says, where is this? He says, I-0, get off Exit 75. So, I put a bunch of stuff in there, in my car. Bats and balls and so forth and so on. And I go down there and I met Sister Martha. Well, first of all, the...the school, the buildings, really needed some help. And I'm walking around, and I thought, man, this place is really something. So we're talking, and some of the key elements of the story... she tells me that 95-percent of people are below the poverty level. And you could see. So...I said, well, you know, what am I going to do? I can't do...give them these balls and bats and all that. And they had a field. The backstop was falling down, weeds were all over the place. You couldn't tell where the mound was or anything. And I thought, that's terrible. So I said to her, what's your number one priority here? And I thought she was going to say, computers or this or that. She said, a basketball court. I said, a basketball court? You're a nun! You're supposed to tell me computers and, and things. She says, no, a basketball court. I said, why? Well, the school is built like a U. Okay? Like two sides. Classrooms here, classrooms here, classrooms here. And this was all mud. She said, if we had a basketball court there, the



kids could come back and play. They would enjoy it. And then we wouldn't have all that mud. I said, great idea. So, I called my friend Greg Hancock. And I said, Greg, I was down at this mission. Blah, blah, blah, blah. You know anybody that does basketball courts? He says, yeah. I'll call Jim Fox. Jim Fox...I'm going to give it to you in shorthand. Cause it would take a week and a half to tell you the whole thing. And...So, Jim Fox comes down and we build a basketball court. Well, that was the start of...it was like wiping the fender of a dirty car. Okay. Cause now that looked good...and...And, I get a call from her and she said, oh, man, we had some excitement today. I said, what happened? She said, the reverse blew out in the Suburban. I said, did anybody get hurt? She said, no, we're still driving it. I said, what? She said, yeah. I said, how could you drive a car that doesn't have a reverse? And she said, we make big wide turns and we don't go backwards. So, I tell her to come up and we go see my friend Lou Grubb. And I tell him and, and Grubby sells me a car for practically nothing. Now we got a Suburban. So now, I'm getting in there. You see where I'm going? In there! So now, the buses. I look at the buses and they really worried me. Cause one bus had like 37,000 miles on it. And it was gas driven. And, I thought, if this thing gets hit from the rear, 50 kids will not have a chance. So that was my priority now. So, I'm playing golf with this banker and I'm telling him the whole story. I said, you ever repossess cars? I said, you know, maybe I could call... It's all right. Hey, Bob. We're never going to use your house again. We're never going to use your house again! You'll be sorry. So, anyhow. We're talking about St. Peter's. And so, I'm, I'm, I'm playing golf with this banker and I said, you guys ever repossess cars at your bank? He says, yeah, why? I said, well, you know, I got this buys. Blah, blah, blah. And I told him about the van, which they needed a van to do errands. He says, he calls me and he says. I got you a couple cars. I says, what do you got? He says, I got this van and I got this four, six-passenger, whatever. Wasn't a bus. It was another car. I said, well, I'll take the biggest one. He says, no, you can have both of them. So now we got two vehicles. And it's going and it's growing. And... My friend, Greg Hancock. I got to get him in there, because, he's not even Catholic. Okay? And I have to say that cause of...when I tell you what he did. This convent that they got... unbelievable. It was so small. So... ..I don't, I don't even know where to begin. I saw the convent and the room was about to that wall to here. I mean, it was, it was the epitome of the joke, if you open the door and you break the window. You know, that kind of thing. That's how small it sand so, Kathy Sprenzill (sp?), who works for John Bebbling, in the Tempe Decorating. She said, you got to get John Bebbling. And...he wants to talk to you anyway because of the Gene Autry, uh, Banquet. He wants you to MC it. So, I said, well, that's okay. If he gives me a pay day. Cause I got a fee. And she says, well, you ought to talk to him. And this is really when it broke wide open. I put a contract in my pocket of how much I got for a, a banquet that I had done. And so, if he was going to give me lip, I would say, here! So, we go to this restaurant in Tempe, and he says, okay, what do you, whatever you need, you, you get. I said, no, no. You don't make a deal like that. I said, I just want you to know that I don't run a two-price shop. Here's my deal if it's commercial and here's my deal if it's a charity I'm involved in. So he said, well, what do you need? And I said, I got a lot of things. I said, first of all, I need eight floors in classrooms, cause the termites are eating us out of it. He looks at me and he says, do I have to take the floors out? I said, no, we'll take the floors out. He said, okay. Can we eat? I said, no, not yet. He said, what do you need now? I said, the church. I need indoor-outdoor carpeting down the center aisle, on the altar and in the Sacristy. He says, okay. You got it. Let's eat. I said, I'm not finished yet. So he says, what do you need now? I said, this convent that the nuns got, one room is green carpet, one is red carpet, one is blue carpet. I want...I don't



care how many come down there, but they come down, they pick the carpet they want, and you do all the rooms the same carpet. So, he's got two salesmen from the carpet company. And he says, you guys help me? And they say, yeah. Okay, you got it. Can we eat? I say, yeah, now we can eat. Since then, he's going down to put cabinets in the library. That's a whole other story. John Bebling. And then through him, I met Chris Boyles (sp?). And what's happened is...and...it would take too long to tell you all of it, but I'm just going to give it to you in shorthand. I get sold at auction. You know. Celebrity auction. You have lunch with them. So, I, I have one key question which you will understand. So, I'm at the Phoenician with these four gentlemen. And we're talking baseball and I'm doing my thing. And I always ask this question. What do you guys do for a living? And so, they tell me. And this particular day, Kenny Goldfein and his family, they said, we, we own Hampton Inns. And Comfort Inn. I said, really? What do you do with the sheets and blankets. Because it was cold and, and...we needed blankets pretty badly down there. He said, oh, we give it to charity. I said, how about giving me half the action? He said, what are you going to do with it? So, I told him the story. He said, great. Since that, to show you how it's grown. I've got from Hampton Inn on Scottsdale Road. Comfort Inn on Gold Dust. I got one in Mesa, Peoria. And I get the Lost and Found. So my kids are running around, uh, with the ball players out in Peoria. These bonus kids. Some them don't want to take the shirt and stuff home. I got kids running around in designer clothes. And, so, that's one way. And it was through that that we got a lot of help.

**PS:** What made you decide to get so involved?

**JG:** I didn't decide to get involved! It just happened. I changed the name of St. Peter's Indian Mission to Our Lady of Quicksand. Once you're in, you can't get out! I mean, I'm not going to stay here and tell you I'm St. Francis of Assisi. They need something, they give me a call. I mean...I, I have people, wonderful people. Who call me. My neighbors leave clothes when they clean up or they downsize. Like this big beautiful house we're in. By the time I leave here, I will have said to...Bobby Simons, is it? Barbara! I will say to her, something, and she'll say, oh, yeah, when I clean my closets, I'll give you a call. And that's what I do. and, and, and I have people help me. We get Mo...let me tell you something. If I told you how God works in strange ways. And you can cut this out, but you got to listen to this story. This to me is just unbelievable. We never had a library down at the school. A school without a library is ludicrous. And that was the one thing I wanted to do was to get a library. So I got this brilliant idea. I mean, it was genius idea. I call the *Today Show* and I say, you know, they got this *Extreme Makeover* thing. And you guys have been down there. You did a show. If you did an interview down here about needing the library, we could get the national guys to come and they'd donate it like they do in *Extreme Makeover*. And Jeff Zucker, who runs the network...I called him,...he said, great idea, let's do it. So I said, okay. He said, call 'em. I said, call 'em? I said, you're the number one man. You own the candy store. You call him. If you call 'em, they'll do it. He calls 'em. I get a call, I talk to the PR guy. And now we're off and running. But it has to be a green building, okay? So...it's fine. I'm talking to the PR guy and all I gotta do is provide the slab. Now, money that I make on speeches, I been kind of been squirreling away. And a lot of my friends hear about it. They give me checks. And they're beautiful. So we're, we're going fine. Then all of a sudden, I can't get a hold of anybody. I call the PR guy. Never answers me. So, I thought, something's going on. Took a while, but I realized it. So, I made up my mind that I was going to call 'em every 0 minutes. And I would leave



messages. He finally calls me back. I said, Jerry, what's going on? He said, Joe, I'm embarrassed. What are you embarrassed about? He said, I can't deliver what I promised. I said, why? He said, well, you know, they were going to all do it, but when Katrina hit and the other devastation in the South, the national vendors really got hit. And you were down on the priority list. And I said, you know, Jerry, I can understand that. These people were homeless. They should be taken care of. It doesn't hurt any less, but, I understand it. So now here I am with a slab and that's it. Now what am I going to do? And there are no coincidences. And if this sounds like a sermon, I lived it. And so did Sister Martha. And so did the rest of them. I'm laying in bed one night. And I am at my wit's end. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to build anything. Greg Hancock, who's always my go-to guy, he built them a big beautiful house that they use as a convent. And gave it to them. He renovated what we call the, uh, the Adobe House. And that's what we use for an office now. The Feast House was a ramshackle place. Greg built a beautiful one for us. Practically gave it to us. Just paid for what the material was. And now, it's the focal point. We have everything. Weddings, baptisms, funerals, a polling place. Pre-marital...uh...whatever. Greg Hancock. So, I go to Greg. I said, Greg, what am I going to do? He says, well, let's, let's think about it. Okay? And we're talking. I'm laying bed at night. And I go back to my prayer. Be God's hands and feet. I said, God, I want to be your hands and feet, but I'm hurting. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know where I'm going. Please make something happen. Push me in the right way. Four days later I get a letter from Jim Ohell (sp?) who owns Agate. They do these pre-engineered houses. Steel houses. And buildings. He had put up a roof for me so the buses wouldn't have to stay in the sun. H also put a roof over the gas tank for me. Free. In the letter, he writes, he said, I really was impressed by what I see down there. And I love the kids. And if there's ever a project you think I can help you with, give me a call. Oh, ho! Speed dial job. Jim! Joe! And we started...and he said...I told him and he said, well, when can we meet? I said, whenever you say. I can be down there in 20 minutes. He said, this would be a good time cause all the guys are here. It was around Christmas time. So I go down there and they're all sitting around the table. Okay? And I proceed to tell them the story. And he looks at me like I'm looking at you and says, I think I got a building that'll fit that slab. I said, Jim, don't yank my chain. I'm very fragile. How could you know that your building would fit my slab when I don't know what I'm doing? You didn't know I was doing this. And you say you got one in the yard. He said, I'll show it to you. No, I'll take your word for it. But...what are you talking about. He said, we had contracted for a job in Kingman. And when we got up there with the building, because of a technicality, ordinances wouldn't let up put it up. So I had to take it back and put it in the yard. All I need to do is measure the slab and see if it fits. I said, when do you want to measure the slab? He said, when can you do it? I said, after this meeting. So he started laughing. And we went down. Three of us. And his two guys are out there and they're measuring. And I'm standing next to Sister Martha. I said, Martha, you got that rosary in your pocket? She says, yeah. I said, get on it and speed dial. It. I said, this is our only chance. If you get blisters from going too fast, I'll put the Vaseline on your fingers. But, pray! These guys come back and they say, we only have to add three feet of concrete and the building will fit. Okay? We got the shell of the building up there. And I'll do it quickly. Howard Air Conditioning did all our air conditioning. And they charged us, but they didn't make hardly anything. And did a first rate job. The plumbing. Computers. My friend...I mentioned Chris Boyles before. Chris Boyles introduces me to a fellow, at IBM. And they have a program there. If you work at IBM, you get a discount. So, they recruit guys. And I go to buy the discounted computers from the guys who work there. And



they're in there in here. So we have computers. We have...and then we built a, a little bathroom for our little guys. Our pre-kid, kindergarten. Because when we renovated the big bathroom, we forgot about the little guys. So they go in and they come out with shoes that shrink. You know. So...And then people heard about it and they give me money. Books. Ann Curry (sp?) is the one who really got us going. Because what happened, we...she came down and I took her down to the rez. And she loved it. And she calls me one day and she says, I have, I'm going to make a speech and I can't take any money, but Scholastics said they would give me \$5,000 worth of books. You want me to designate St. Peter's? I said, oh, please do. So, here comes 5-thousand dollars worth of books. We got no place to put 'em. Just a room. And the good people from Ahwatukee and Sun Lakes and Chandler, they put shelves on it. Volunteers. And we have a room with these books in 'em. And we can only let four kids in the room, get their books and leave. Now with this library...5000-square feet. A third of it's going to be computers, library, bathroom. Big space where the kids don't have to go home. They can come and study together. Like I saw the other day at the Barnes & Noble on 0. A lot of the high school kids were studying together in this beautiful room. And our guys, our kids, they don't have that. But they will have it. Now, I just finish up by saying, we're on the radar screen. God knows we're around. And that's all I can tell you.

**PS:** Pretty amazing story. We'll have to go down there and see that for your video.

**JG:** Well, you should. Because I'll tell you, when, when you get people donating a 5000-square foot, uh, building. And then...When I need guys...I got go-to guys. Greg Hancock, John Bebbling, Chris Boyles. These guys. You call them and they do it. I went to Phoenix County Day last, I think it was Thursday. And they're renovating. So the guys at Country Day, they call me. And, they say, Joe, we got some nice shelving. We got some files. We got some display cases. We got like five bags of clothes from Lost and Found. I needed two trucks! Where am I going to get two trucks? I call my friend, Chris. Two trucks and three workers were there. Loaded it up. Martha, and, and the nuns, were, were in tears. In tears. I mean, that's what it's all about. That's what it's all about. I'm a good beggar.

**PS:** Well, you made a good connection there.

**JG:** They made a great connection, too, you know. It's a two-way street here.

**PS:** That's true. But, I've met Sister Martha, so I know.

**JG:** Well, you know what I tell her a lot of times...I say, so and so is coming down here. Just Martinize her. She knows exactly what I mean.

**PS:** Well, some of your other Arizona connections...do you have a few more minutes?

**JG:** Yeah. Now go ahead....I'll give you maybe a... How many, how many more you got?

**PS:** Well, I want to talk about the Diamondbacks.



**JG:** Diamondbacks! By the time this thing is on, who knows what they've done!

*Interview continued on January 6, 2008*

**DS:** I'm David Strang and we are with Joe at the St. Peters Mission School on the Gila River Indian Reservation. Let's talk first about the Diamondbacks baseball team...

**JG:** Well Getting involved with the D'backs was easy because of my baseball background. We had tried before the d'backs to get a franchise because I've always felt that the Phoenix area especially and the state of AZ is a big league area. I can remember campaigning with Joe Jr. and Mike Gallagher and we got our head handed to us. People ...no... base ball. I remember one debate this lady relates; well she was all over me, talking about how it's recycled money. I said whadya talking about, recycled money. . Well they'll spend it on other things like theaters. I said have you ever been in a parking lot like in St. Louis. We had people come from Oklahoma, Kansas, Illinois, Tennessee. People would come from all over. At any rate, we lost. And I was pleasantly surprised when Joe Jr. talked about he and Jim Bruner, who really put his career on the line, he had political aspirations. And he gave the deciding vote to have the D'backs come here and a lot of people had forgotten that. But the people who wanted baseball like I did will never forget that. He knew it was the right thing to do, and of course, everybody's taking credit for bringing me here. But it was Jim Bruner and Joe Jr. who went to Colangelo and told him a franchise was available and what they had to do. And Jerry, who is a doer, there are talkers and there are doers. Jerry is a doer and he got the thing going and pretty soon, the next thing you know he's going to meetings, he's making a presentation, and we got the D'back here. And Joe is the attorney representing the D'backs, and of course, he's got a whole baseball background. He was an attorney for the Yankees working for Steinbrenner and that was an education in itself, I always tell people that George which I always appreciate BECAUSE when the Yankees signed Jackson Joe's instructions were something like, listen I just made a deal with Reggie. Work it out. Here's a kid just starting out, but he worked it out, worked for the Yankees, and then became an agent representing players and Jerry offered him the job as general manager. And the proof is in the results and the results culminating in the quickest that any franchise, new franchise team, won the World Series, when Joe was the general manager.

And then my involvement came when Jerry said to me, you're gonna broadcast some games. I said great and that's how it started because I was, I moved from New York. I left the Today show and Game of the Week and I was out here so I was glad to become a d'backs part time announcer, because obviously I love baseball.

The high point obviously was World Series, when they played the Yankees because they were going against the David and goliath kind of a situation. I'll never forget that wonderful line that shilling laid out there. The newspaper guys from the east said to Curt – you guys gonna be affected by the aura of Yankee Stadium and the tradition. Shilling looked at him and said, aura and tradition those are two strippers down town phoenix. That's what they are. ....and they did, they went there and it looked like they were gonna be



ok and then they had the young Kim had the two tough games with home runs beating him and then they came back in the 7<sup>th</sup> game and it looked like it was over and I know I was that they had gone that far and then Womack gets a double and Gonzalez base hit which was just – I had to use an expression in talking about the ...Trevino award, the golfer used – he said the ball landed on the grass but I'm talking about Gonzalez' ball because they were similar --- The ball landed on the grass like a butterfly with sore feet. Hardly bending any blades and the whole city erupted and I remember it was such a thrill. The great thing about a world series in any city is it will pull people together. People that you don't know will see you now about those D'backs. Wasn't it some world series? What about Gonzalez. And that to me I'll never forget because I lived that. We were watching in and we lived that World Series thru Joe and what a thrill it was. I played in a world series in '46 with the Cardinals – a young 20 year old. That was a big thrill, but nothing to compare to the World Series with Joe as a general manager because he was part of the team that drew up the plan of how to get to the World Series and how to win.

**DS:** sow have you seen Phoenix change?

**JG:** ell Phoenix has changed to where it is a big league city, bigger than I expected. I mean when I first came here, I mean, the mc Cormack ranch was just that. The first time I came here, I was with the cubs in '53 and we played in a park in – Dwight Patterson, old pat, he was really the father of spring training - and he was trying to get teams to come here and play, and that ball park we played in – it was a park, it wasn't like it is now, what Scottsdale has and surprise and Glendale and phoenix and Tempe, I mean and teams are wanting to come here now. That to me is just such a warm feeling. Phoenix has everything. Phoenix has everything. People say, well, what made you move to phoenix. We really had thought of San Diego as our first choice when we talked about leaving New York. We had been here on vacation and my wife, who is the wise one in the family and figures things out. She doesn't just jump to conclusions like me. Meet's go, let's do it. C'mon. No. Let's think about it she said. I said let's move to Phoenix. She said, well, let's go look at it, but we're not gonna go in December and January and February when it looks like the Garden of Eden. We're gonna go in July and August. And I said what. And she said, well, the heat. And I'll never forget. I was doing Game of the Week at the time, coming in from Montreal. My daughter and my wife were here. I went to do the game. When I came back I was anxious to get a reaction I stepped off the plane. And said, what do you think sweetheart. And she said, we're gonna die here. We'll never make it. It's too hot. And that night , we were over at , I guess it's the Millennium now, that hotel over on Scottsdale road and the air conditioning broke down, everything went wrong, but what really sold us is that we found a little house over on the royal Verde and the neighbors were do great. And it was the people. I kid about it. I say, when I move here, the difference between New York and Phoenix – is you say to somebody, when they ask you doing', they wait for the answer. In New York – how you doing' and they're about a block and a half away. They don't wait for the answer. And you don't get questions for your questions. I mean, for example, you ask a New Yorker, what time is it, and he'll say, what do I look like, Big Ben? Here they'll say, well about a quarter to twelve, or whatever. It's the people. And we're, Audrey and I, we're Midwestern. We grew up in St. Louis and this to us is people, they are interested in ya, they're friendly, not that – I'll never knock New York, don't misunderstand me, that's a pretty big place in comparison to Phoenix. But it's the people why we move here.



**DS:** Tell me about the Spit Tobacco campaign.

**JG:** Well, spit tobacco to me, I just wish we could eliminate it from baseball. It's not part of baseball tradition. And contrary to what the tobacco companies say, and there insidious. They're after our young people. They've done things that just upset me to no end. Like sending our men and women who are in Iraq, for example, sending them snuff cans and talking about it's a morale booster. Who are they kidding? (during world war II ?) They sent us cigarettes. They weren't trying to ...it just bothers me. And with the baseball players, youngsters emulate – I don't care what anybody says. It's not just that you are gonna raise anybody else's children. But you are a role model. You have a responsibility because you are recognized and you are this public figure. And it bothers me because the first, what really got me interested because I lost a friend, Jack ....., he was coaching San Diego. And Jack was a wonderful guy. I played some – he had a great sense of humor, and low and behold he had part of his tongue cut out, and a year later he was dead. And that really got me. And I said somebody gotta say something. And I want to make this clear, it's none of my business what people do, it's their decision, but they ought to at least know what they're doing when they put that stuff in their mouth. Because it is not a part of baseball, it's not tradition, it doesn't affect your motor skills regardless of what they said, it doesn't make you a better ball player. And what it does to a family is devastating . Doug Harvey is a cancer survivor. He was always chewing tobacco. And he goes out and makes speeches. And Joy, his wife, put it in perspective, she says when you guys use tobacco, you don't ask your family or your wife for permission. When you get sick we get at least half the action. I'm the one who had to pick up the phone every day when Doug's mother called, and she would be cryin because her son had cancer. I was the one who had to rub his back because of the radiation. so it devastates the family. It's a deadly, addictive habit, and I still - you get a lot of lip service.....but the D'back with their new chew crews, but it is as reminder to them. Because when I was a kid we had the knot hole gang and you could go, you were chaperoned to a Saturday game free if you belonged to the new chew crew – they'd give you a yellow t shirt and if you'd go with your dad or mom, you'd get into the ball game for free. And they'd promise not to use tobacco. And that' – I could go on for a week and a half, but let me just finish with this. Ken Kendrick, the owner, general partner of the d'backs, wonderful idea which I wish baseball would adopt. He says, and rightly so, let's grandfather them in; those who are using it now, let them use it till their careers over. But then a youngster comes up in the minor leagues, because it's banned in the minor leagues, he can't use it in the big leagues. And then eventually it would stop because it is a deadly, addictive habit, and all I can do is keep talking about it.

The baseball assistance league. It bothered me when I would see players, before the pension, would come up against hard times. And Peter Uberoff, then the commissioner, he formed a group who started out with the baseball alumni team, and we changed it to baseball assistance team. And a wonderful man, Joel Rubenstein, was the guy to help commissioner Uberoth get this going. What it simply amounts to is that it's a group that is formed to raise money with the help of baseball to help those who have come up against hard times and have no place to go. I can go chapter and verse, but I'll go to my grave thinking about this. There was a World Series star who had hard times and when he called me I could have cried and I did, make no bones about that. He said something like, Joe, I had three World Series rings, I had to sell two of



them. I'm terminal; I'm not going to make it. Will you guys let me die with one? This was a World Series fella. That was really the motivation to have husband is in hospice, he's not gonna make it and I don't have enough money to bury him. And so our answer was almost standard. We'd say, you bury him with the dignity you know he deserves. I can't talk about that without thinking about two guys who very early in it. One was Frank Slocum from out of New York and the other was Joe Black, because the Negro league players were forgotten, absolutely forgotten, and we were able to get them to become eligible which they should have been. Because, no body signs a certificate –I'm gonna be born of Italian parents and live in St. Louis and then move to Arizona. We're here, we're here to do a job and Joe did a big job in helping the Negro leaguers. And then those lady professional baseball players – you talk about a forgotten group. So, now it's a running....it's great organization because today's ball players, contrary to when we first started, they're helping. Today's ball players, you don't hear about the guys who have given money to keep it going. And that has been able to help many, many people, and that's what it's all about.

**DS:** Tell us about your goals for the St. Peter Mission school.

**JG:** Well, what's gonna happen....it's gonna be a dream come true for a lot us. First of all you have to understand that when I first came down to give St. Peter's some baseball equipment and I've been, different things have happened, we've done different things, and I've even changed the name of it. I call it the Parish of Our Lady of Quicksand. Once you get into it you can't get out. You're always doing something and I kid, this is the Library and I could just not imagine a school not having a library where the kids could come and study and have a library. And what really got it going was Ann Curry from the today show came down with me one time and she loved what she saw with the kids, and you'll love em too when you see em. And she just fell in love with St. Peter's and when she got back after awhile, she called me and she said, Joe, I'm gonna make a speech and I know you don't have many books . I can't take money because I'm in the news department, but they're gonna give me money because its scholastic publishing and they're going to give me \$5,000 worth of books. Would you want me to designate St. Peters? I said. Please Ann. I said this is not the answer to a prayer; it's the answer to a Novena. And so, we got \$5,000 worth of books, we were unloading and the good people from Ahwatukee and Sun Lakes from around here and they volunteered and we got 'em in the library. We had a room in which we just put up shelves and the books just kept coming and it got to the point and a kid would get a book and get out and four more would come in so that's when we started the library. And a lot of road blocks would come in front of us and there are certain people that I just have to mention that Dick who is an architect. Without him, nothing would have been here. And Jim (?)...this building, I'll never forget it. Because we had built a slab in hopes that would get the national advertisers to come down and help us because the Today show was going to interview. But, unfortunately Katrina and all that devastation in the south, we went to the last place on the priority list

So here I was with a slab. I didn't know what to do; Jim had built a roof – to cover the gas tank. He wrote me a letter and said, anytime you think I can help you. Which is the worst thing you can say to me? I had to laugh myself because I've become a full fledged equal opportunity beggar; is what I've become. Anyhow, he called, or he wrote the letter, and I called and said I got something going and I proceeded to



tell him that we had the slab, And I didn't know what to do. I prayed to God saying, make something happen. I don't know what I'm doing. I'm doing it for a good reason, but I don't know what to do. And Jim's letter came we went down to see him. And he said he had a building in the yard. And I said how could you know. He said he had a building that didn't work up in Kingman and it might fit your slab. All we have to do is measure the slab. He said when can we come down. And I said, how about after this meeting. I'll drive you guys down. And I'll never forget it, right in the, right where this room is now, Sister Martha and I were standing on the concrete. I said, Martha, you got the rosary in your pocket. She said Yeah. I said put that baby on speed dial. This is our only chance. Our only chance. And Jim donated this building. 6,000 sq ft. gave us the building

And now we had to have an architect who could design a building with in a building and that's what Dave Dick did. And wonderful friends – I'm gonna put a plaque up and in a small way we're gonna repay em. And hopefully where we're standing is gonna be something. This is the Michael Dowd story telling section. Michael, John Dowd's son out of Washington, the famous lawyer in the Pete Rose case. And what's gonna happen here is our little guys will be able to read books and have stories told to em and dean Dwyer, he painted these walls, especially.....but when you see what he's gonna do. We have this prerecord teach us today that down every street come chance to be God's hands and feet. The kids say that at school every day. Be god's hands and feet which is a lesson for all of us. Well, Dean is gonna make trees and for the leaves, little fingers and feet so that they will always be reminded of that and then we're gonna have that also for our friends. This is, it's been very difficult to do. We've had many setbacks. But I believe in my heart that we are on God's radar screen. He knows what were' doing and what happened – something will happen to keep it going forward and these kids will have a library and it will be state of the art. New books which are rarely had and just as I look at it I just can't believe it myself. So many people have chipped it.

There are many good people in this area, believe me.

We've done some things. Greg Hancock, a builder, wonderful guy, my close friend. He saw the original convent and I asked him if he thought his guys could move a wall out and he said, naw, you can't, it's adobe. He ended up giving them a beautiful house, which I'm sure you'll see

And the next thing was what was called the Feast House. I said, Greg, you gotta come in and. The feast house is like the meeting house, at a wake, in the Pima Culture, they stay with the body, for a night and it would be hot, and they had a shack almost. It was unbelievable how there was nothing...in fact when I took Greg I said wait till you see the inside and they had it locked...and I went like that with the lock and the door came off in my hands. And then I showed him inside and he couldn't get over it. They had a galvanized sink from the '30'. And to make this long story short, we built this feast house. And we changed the name of it; we call it the Billy Ferris memorial. Because Billy was one of the first people I knew, we have him a catcher's mitt, and he was killed in Iraq. We wanted to remember Billy just like Ira Hayes was a genuine here, and we have an Ira Hayes wall up there e because he was the one who planted the flag in Iwo Jima with the other great men. James Bradley who wrote Flags of our Fathers came down here and



told the story of how much his father thought of Ira Hayes. And I wanted the kids here to realize that they have a real genuine hero who lived right in the midst of them. I mean, heroes to me are people like that. Not baseball players or football players. Ira Hayes Billy Ferris, and the rest of those wonderful Native people.

So that's up there. And we built a field because these kids have diabetes and instead of writing a hundred times on a wall...she makes em do laps, and that kind of keeps em going. But we never had grass, we never had grass, just dust, and you can see from I-0 that it's a dust blowing area. I came down here one time and there were about 5 kids off on the side. And I said to Martha, what's that all about and she said, well, they have breathing problems. I'll never forget that. I looked straight up and I said, why can't we just have grass, let us grow grass. We'll put some PVC pipe down there and we'll get grass. Well, I was really upset about that and Karsten Solheim, a wonderful man from Ping, he had donated an agronomy building to U of A...and I went down to see it. And the number one guy there used the magic words and he said, Joe, we appreciate your coming down and if there's anything that I can ever do, please call me. Whoop. The antenna went straight up and when I when I got back after seeing those kids, I called (?) who was the golf superintendent for the cactus and pine group and she knew the guys name. She said what to do you want to do. I told her, and she said I think our guys can do that. Can you come to our meeting? I went to their meeting and I didn't know what they were talking about....golf, oxidizing...and they took home two inches of dirt and they said we can grow grass, we have to do certain things to it, and we go grass. And that's how we got it. And I'll never forget the, right after that, and there were three games goin on. There was a softball game, flag football, and a volleyball game and the kids were running and rolling in the grass, I could have cried, just a simple thing like that. And then the softball field. That's another thing. That was the first thing that I saw when I came down here. The bleachers, there were no bleachers, Just benches with weeds growing. With this one we made a field and Ramón, from the Boys and Girls Club in Tempe, he helped us with major league baseball and then, it's so hot, they can't play in the day time. I had done some banquets for little league people, 3 years running. So I called a friend of Musco (?) and said, you got any used lights and I proceeded to tell the story, just so matter of fact, and that's the way most people are, and he said, yeah, I got some used lights. He didn't send used lights. He sent a brand new set of lights and his people installed them. And we have lights down here for the kids and the grownups use them on the field. So little by little.

But there are so many things happening. When we first put the grass down we had wild horses coming across. The horses, stopping having a meal, breaking the pipes. So we put a fence around it and we put a fence all around the school. There are just so many things. It's like wiping the fender of a car. That fender looks good then you go to the other fender, then you go to the hood, then you go to the roof and you're just wiping the whole time If you told me I'd be part of this, I'd say, are you nuts? But God works in strange ways. When you see the faces of these youngsters and you get some cares. I was reading one the other day. A little kid wrote, thanks for all that you do. When you die I hope you live your life with God. . C'mon, that's what it's all about. When I die to live my life with God.

**DS:** What advice would he give?



**JG:** I tell our guy, look, you are as good as anybody ... Life is a race and the guy next to you may be in Nike shoes, Nike shorts, Nike tank top, here you are. You probably got old shoes on, blue jeans, maybe a shirt on, torn, or you don't even have one. Ok. You may have to run harder, but you're in the race. You've got a chance, just like everybody else. And the only thing I tell em isn't compromise. Hold on to a dream. Everybody gets, I think we get gift certificates from God. One is for a dream. My dream was to be a major league baseball player and I was able to fulfill that dream, a lot of nice things happened. I tell the kids, don't let anybody talk you out of that dream. And the other one is a gift certificate for ignorance. The kind of ignorance that's good for you, that you don't know why you did it, but you do it. I mean, my life, people have come up to me and said, how could you do that. I don't know. I just did it. And that's what I tell our guys. Don't ever think that because you look or you feel different, because of television or whatever, we're all the same. But the main thing is, hold on to your dream. Don't lie. Don't compromise. And remember we have to keep each other warm.

*Interview on June 6, 2007 with Pam Stevenson at book signing of Just Play Ball at Poison Pen bookstore in Scottsdale, Arizona. DELETED - running, disjointed conversation with people as he signs books.*

