

## Chapter 1

### Intro—0:53

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**Announcer:** The Tulsa Oiler Diamond Baseball Dinner was one of the best big league dinners in the country, organized by A. Ray Smith, owner of the Tulsa Oilers, a farm club of the St. Louis Cardinals.

Baseball's greatest would attend, and speaking at the dinner in 1973 at the Camelot Inn, was Oklahoman Allie Reynolds and Casey Stengel, followed by Joe DiMaggio, who was made an honorary Indian chief.

The first voice you hear is that of the emcee Pat Butrum, known for playing the sidekick of Gene Autry and for playing the character Mr. Haney in the TV series Green Acres.

At the time of the dinner, January 19, 1973, DiMaggio was 59, Reynolds 56 and Stengel 82.

The event was broadcast on radio station KVOO, preserved by baseball historian Wayne McCombs. And is now heard on Voices of Oklahoma "Memorable Events."

## Chapter 2

### Reynolds-Stengel—13:40

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**Pat Butrum:** I always say, "Everything will equal out if we just let nature take its course." For instance, you notice in the West here, we've got more buffalo than we need nowadays, and the railroads are extinct. Notice that? It'll all equal out.

I'd like to introduce a man, who is going to make an introduction. He's going to introduce one of the all-time greats. And he is a man who knows him because he is a great Yankee himself, and a great player. Let's bring up to the microphone Allie Reynolds. Here he is. Allie?

**Allie Reynolds:** Thank you. As always it's nice to be here at the Diamond Dinner, one of the greatest of its kind anywhere—that I've attended at least.

They gave me a quick switch-a-roo here. I'd made a speech to present to DiMaggio and I had so many nice things to say about him.

First of all, he was directly responsible for the trade from the Cleveland Indians where I went to the New York Yankees. And certainly that was nice, for more reasons than one. First of all, I didn't have to pitch to him. And secondly, he ran down my mistakes—and I was making a lot of them at that time. Probably the fact that I was a bit on the wild side during my earlier years and it was sort of a moral victory if I stayed between the third and first base lines sometimes when I threw pitches.

I just want to say again, Joe, I'm glad to see that you're now a Chief. I've never obtained that. I ran for it once but I was defeated. But as far as I'm concerned, for the many things, the help of getting me over and the many mistakes you helped correct for me, I'm most thankful.

It is a real pleasure, though, to introduce the next speaker. The man I had an opportunity to play for for six years. He was rough, he was fair, and he was certainly a fine strategist as far as baseball is concerned. And without saying anymore, because he'll tell you about it, I'd like to introduce one of the outstanding people of all times, a great player in his own right, and a tremendous manager and the holder of many, many records, some of which I helped him with a bit, Casey Stengel.

**Casey Stengel:** I wanted to start right in. I wanted to thank you ladies and gentlemen and you young kids now that are carrying me on. If it hadn't been for the boys that are sitting back there and right here on this big table here I wouldn't have been here. And if I hadn't lived a long time I wouldn't be here. And it was many a time I looked like I wasn't going to live a lot of time. So some of these men here are some of the most outstanding men you ever saw in your life. They go to your right, go to your left, they go in on the ball, go over the ball. They played with old-fashioned gloves this day. One of them got married in one, see this is true. He was just standing there, it's cold, you know, up in Alaska and there he is with his glove on.

And I said, "Jesus," I said, "Is that guy cold up there?"

And they said, "No, it's a little cold up there, that's his glove. He's playing up there in the winter."

Now I'll get down to the real players, see? You're going to see something now. I came here about, uh, about fifty four or five phone calls and I don't like to talk about the Yankees too much because the Mets paid me a salary, see. And you've got to go a little low on them. And if it hadn't been for any of those Mets players, I can tell you five or six things that actually happened.

Spahn started with me and I think he played in a little town, uh, oh, why he was making money with ole' Bradford, I think. And then he win there. Then he started the

next year, I think it was in Hartford, he win there. So I just took one look at him, see it was the club that I had in the fall, and they got a few hits off him and so forth. And then after I got fired, why five straight years he won twenty games a year. So you see, I said it was only eighty, so he beat me out of a hundred games of ball by me getting fired. That's how good he was and how he continued his career.

Now the other thing I thought was one of the best plays I ever saw was in baseball. Some of these men will understand it or can't understand it because now I'll have to tell you, two years ago I was made a Chief here. And I want to tell you something, I gained on it. They said, "Nobody can understand him. That's why they lost eight straight. They don't know what he said." It's Stengeleze.

But when I got that honor and I was made Chief Puhu I traveled in New England and I got that New England twang and I went over to London and got that twang. And now they all can understand me and they want to make me an international speaker.

Now the best thing I saw about some of the plays that were made that were good, I saw DiMaggio sit on a bench, play on a bench. He could go to his right, he could go to his left, he took long strides, he never had to dive for the ball. And they said, "Why don't he have to dive for it?"

I said, "He gets it to it. What's the use of diving there, he's no swimmer!"

How about those boys dive down here, "Oops, there goes a shoulder." Or they'd dive this way and say, "Tough luck, it's the elbow."

See, now if you're managing you have bad luck. Now the boys I had graduated with that. Some of these men here are good, terrific. Try and tear down their asset, I saw Joe could play out there and it looked like—when I looked at an outfield I'd managed in the minor league I never had to watch center field after a week. 'Cause if he wanted to go five feet to his right he didn't argue, he didn't say anything, he went five feet to his right and the other two followed him in the outfield. Now you can't do that for a number of years and not make mistakes. And if you're the manager, that's what he accomplished. See?

Now if you wanted to go get an Indian that was any good, and I thought that this one was, was Reynolds. When he came up to me he graduated, he became a starting pitcher. And when I got in trouble he became a relief pitcher. So he started in relief for me and I want to tell you, that's something. Now if you can do both of them, you're really something. And that's what this man did for me and was outstanding.

And it was wonderful to say there isn't rivalry in baseball was to see him and Wynn pitch against each other. Now you see another Indian, he was pretty good too. He got over two hundred games he win and if you ever hit at him or watched him pitch, you ever see him, look at his face too? Go up there and throw there. And he'll hit a shell, a nut, a shell off your head. "Oh, a little popup." Hey, well who made him? He's an Indian.

But when you get the rivalry of the Indian race of Wynn and Mr. Reynolds, you saw something. Boy, you ought to see those two pitch out there when they're against each other.

Every Fall I used to get down here because amazing Spahn had to pitch against Reynolds. With all the oil and everything they had down there they had to come down there to see the farm that Spahn got and to see Reynolds go.

I want to say, the third thing that I want to say out here, really, it was very good. The best play I ever saw in baseball that saved me was, uh, in New York City, and I had—Lennon was a great pitcher when he was with them. They'd win, Lennon and four other men, they went out in eleven games on year. See? And I told everybody every day, I said, "Why, we knew it all the time." I said, "Win '92-'93 for me and I said you got it. Just win '93 for me." Uh, they win 111 and I win 103 and lost the pennant. Then they said, "This is the time to fire him." See? And I got to 103. They didn't say anything when you win 91. They did all right.

Now here's the best thing that I think the play was, I saw it happen—this is where it's interesting, these playoffs, of course you get money, somebody does, see? I'll tell you about those playoffs, pretty hard to play all year and play good and not have a bad day. That's a real risky thing in this business and I know it's lasts a long time. But I saw DiMaggio on third base and little Rizzuto at the plate. And little Rizzuto was up there with the bat and I found out within one year if you'd of told him how the bunter couldn't bunt as good as if you let him bunt himself. So I forgot to tell him that, about it, see?

And it's a good thing I didn't. I saw the best play I ever saw that beat Wynn out of a pennant because you've got to put it down the right field. And a nice right-handed pitcher, he's pitching to Wynn and he's smart like this and if he goes with a windup and he comes around here, he's got you. If you run before he pitches you've got to seize him open-hand.

So Joe's down on third, never made mistakes, I don't know why, used a little glove, didn't have to dive for a ball, covered more ground than anybody. Don't misjudge him. Has a peculiar stance at the plate, playing in the park wasn't built for him. And then he wins three awards once one year and I said, "I guess he wins all of them." And I guess he did.

Now here's what he did: Had a man play at third base for him. I don't want to say anything against his name or anything, his name was Lemon. And he says, "I think they're going to bunt."

And DiMaggio said, "I wouldn't be surprised." But stood there like this. And when that guy opened them fingers you can't think, it's gone. You're gone too.

And Rizzuto went down the first base line. He said, "Oop," he went over and got the ball and threw it on the field and they didn't suspend him but we win the pennant on it.

Now that wasn't a little play but the execution of both of those fellas, and if you saw two or three of those World Series plays, not a criticism, you'll see somebody made a mistake. Now, of course, if you're going to walk a guy you'd better get brave again in your life. And you're better be like a, Drysdale is good, that the ball comes in at you. See, if you're a right-handed pitcher and a right-handed man. So if you've got a man up there and you got a man on third and a man on second, and you're going to play that infield in you're better hitting that fella, you know, if you don't let him see when he opens this ball, or if he goes around you're in trouble, you'd better throw at him and hit him or pitch it back there and charge the money. You can't do it. Pitch it right back there and then if you hit him he can't score. Pardon me.

Now the man that taught me baseball was Mr. McGraw, thought I didn't know anything. See? And when I got through I said, "Jesus, this man knows more than I ever heard of. I just played outfield."

Now the best and last thing I'm going to tell you is this, that some of these men up here, you'd be surprised how they did beat me. And you'd be surprised that each one of them had some of the most terrific assets that you ever saw. Some can do five out of six things, but if you've got a sore elbow you can't pitch. If it—the elbow gets big, see? But if you're going to be what you call nowadays that they say, "Well, they didn't play then like they did now."

I said, "Well, I don't know. They played with a ball and these fellas played pretty good for me and they carried me in life. Each time I broke a leg somebody kept me employed. And for these men, whether I hired or discharged them, I want to tell you something, besides me getting by in the life I still hear from fellas that own ball clubs that are still alive today so I didn't kill them. They're ninety now. See, I'm only eighty-two.

Thanks for this here. Thanks for coming in to see these wonderful men here. I hope I come down here in the future here and I'm glad that you have no mosquitoes, because I can't stand mosquitoes.

### Chapter 3

#### Joe DiMaggio—5:35

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**Pat Butrum:** I might tell you this is an installation dance they're doing and they're installing making an honorary Chief the one and only great Joe DiMaggio. You're being made a Chief right now. Come up and watch this, Joe.

Pamela Chibele, princess who is going to do the honors for Joe DiMaggio.

**Pamela Chibele:** Mr. DiMaggio, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the land of the Redman by making you an honorary Chief of the Indian people in Oklahoma. Your Indian name is Rocky Solitawa Queto Husey, meaning Great Warrior of the Golden Sun. This bonnet is a symbol of strength, courage, and leadership, which we feel is equally befitting its owner.

**Joe DiMaggio:** Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. What is that name?

**PB:** Honey, what is his name again? Now tell him once more so he'll remember it.

**PC:** It's Rocky—

**Announcer:** Rocky.

**PC:** Solitawa—

**Announcer:** Solitawa.

**PC:** Queto—

**Announcer:** Queto.

**PC:** Husey.

**Announcer:** Husey. You know what that means?

**JD:** I hardly know what that means, but I think I know what I will do. I'll get Yogi Berra to interpret this for me.

**PC:** Okay, thank you.

**JD:** Thank you, thank you so much.

**JD:** Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen. I feel like the prodigal son has just returned after all these years. After all, it is over thirty-one years since I've been back here. I did play exhibition games like in 1936-'37, till 1941.

And relating to 1941, I would like to tell of an incident during the time that the great Yankees, and they were great at that time, we used to barnstorm through here. And maybe I can make mention of the team. We had a catcher, we had Bill Dickey. At first base we had Lou Gehrig. At second base, Tony Lazzeri, shortstop, Frank Crosetti. We had Red Rolfe for third base. In the outfield we had Jake Powell and Selkirk and I was playing center field.

Now for pitchers, the starters we had: Red Ruffing and, of course, the great Goofy Gomez. And you'll know why I call him, why I called him Goofy as I tell you this story.

Uh, it was right here in the ninth inning. Of course, down the middle you noticed I did say Frank Crosetti, Tony Lazzeri, and I was out there, three Italians. And affectionately by our teammates we were called "Dago." Come the ninth inning in this particular game that lefty was pitching there was a bunt situation. A tied score and a man on first base. Well, the batter gets up and hits this ball a little too hard and it gets to Gomez on the first huff.

Well, naturally, it's the catcher's duty to yell where to throw the ball. So he yells, "Throw it to the Dago, throw it to the Dago!"

He threw it out to me in center field. That's a true story and it happened right here.

Just to give you a little more of an illustration about the great Goofy Gomez, why there was another situation where there was two of us playing Detroit. Goose Goslin gets up to bat and hits a ball right at me. Now the ballgame was over he throws the ball to first base, but oh, he's decides to throw this ball to second base and he's going like this and nobody's covering second. So he winds up throwing the ball to Tony Lazzeri at second base.

But Tony being quite curious, you know, after all hands were safe he didn't want to throw the ball back so he just walked to the mound and he said, "Now look, what's going on here? What are you trying to do? What? Make a farce of this game?"

He said, "Look, Tony," he said, "just yesterday in Chicago," he said, "in the sporting page," he said, "I read where the headline: Tony Lazzeri: Smartest Second Base in the Major Leagues." He said, "No, I didn't know what to do with the ball." He said, "I wanted to see what *you* would do with it."

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm getting kind of top-heavy and I don't want to take too much more time because I don't want to waste the fun of all you out here. Listen to the great Casey Stengel because they tell me there is a time limit. But I am grateful to you ladies and gentlemen for giving me the opportunity to say hello. And to Jay Ray—A. Ray Smith, thank you, for many things. Goodnight.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion—0:33

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**Announcer:** This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening everyday to these great Oklahomans share their life experience. Thank you for your support as we preserve Oklahoma's legacy, one voice at a time on [VoicesofOklahoma.com](http://VoicesofOklahoma.com).