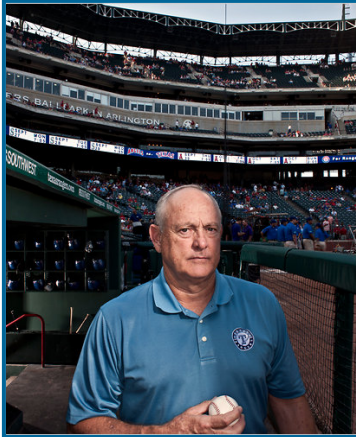


A Smile from the Dugout

The World Series is under way, and the Texas Rangers and San Francisco Giants are battling for the Commissioner's Trophy and championship rings.



One of the spectators, with a special interest in the outcome, is Nolan Ryan, Hall of Fame pitcher and currently a part-owner and team president of the Rangers. Ryan was a hard-throwing right-handed pitcher who threw pitches that were regularly recorded above 100 miles per hour, even past the age of 40.

His wife, Ruth Ryan, shares a poignant personal insight about him. She had one moment she looked forward to in every one of her husband's games. In *Covering Home*, she writes:

It probably happened the first time on the high-school baseball diamond in Alvin, Texas, in the mid-1960s. Then it happened repeatedly for three decades after that. Inevitably, sometime during a game, Nolan would pop up out of the dugout and scan the stands behind home plate, looking for me. He would find my face and grin at me, maybe snapping his head up in a quick nod as if to say, "There you are; I'm glad."

I'd wave and flash him a smile. Then he'd duck under the roof and turn back to the game. It was a simple moment, never noted in record books or career summaries. But of all the moments in all the games, it was one of the most important to me.

Ruth Ryan's account touches on a significant part of our human makeup. Those who love us long for us to acknowledge them, to give them our attention. This is true not only in marriage and family, but in our relationship with God

Throughout our days, in both the big and small moments, God enjoys it when we "step out of the dugout" and smile in his direction.

– Beecher Hunter