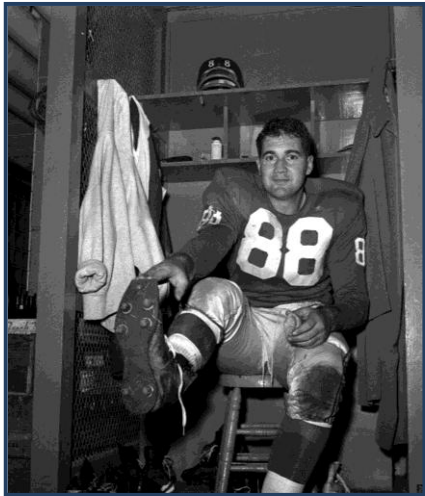


Influence of Pat Summerall

The late Pat Summerall had a fine career as a football player, but became a household name as a football broadcaster.



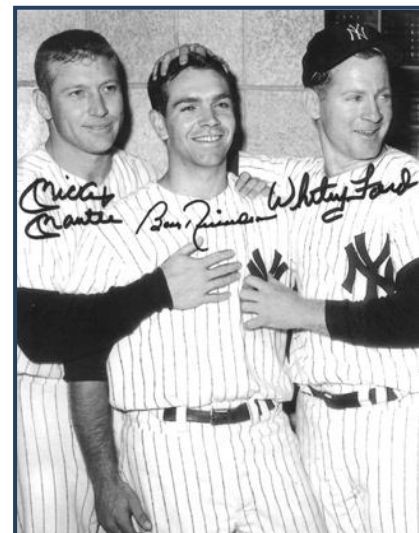
Summerall (1930 – 2013) played college football for the Arkansas Razorbacks and in the National Football League from 1952 through 1961. He played first for the Detroit Lions and then the New York Giants. After retiring as a player, he joined CBS as a color commentator the next year. He worked with Tom Brookshier and then John Madden on NFL telecasts for CBS and Fox.

Few knew of his behind-the-scenes battle with alcohol, and fewer knew of his influence on another sports legend, Mickey Mantle. Mantle (1931 – 1995) was a major league baseball centerfielder and first baseman for the New York Yankees for 18 seasons, from 1951 through 1968. He is regarded by many to be the greatest switch hitter of all time, and one of the greatest baseball players in baseball history.

There were several connections between Summerall and Mantle. Summerall used the same locker during football season that Mantle used during baseball season. They had played some minor league baseball together and had golfed together several times.

Something else they had in common was their troubles with alcohol. Summerall went into the Betty Ford Center in the 1990s. While there, Summerall committed himself fully to Jesus Christ and was baptized. Mickey Mantle later inquired about going to the Betty Ford Center himself, and Summerall encouraged him to do so.

In the last days of Mantle's life, Summerall opened his Dallas home to him, and ministered to him physically and spiritually. In 1995, both Summerall and former teammate Bobby Richardson (former second baseman for the Yankees) reached out to Mantle while he was seriously ill. Both were happy that Mantle had renewed his interest in Jesus Christ, and both attended his funeral. Richardson gave the eulogy.



This story dramatizes the power of influence. And all of us have that opportunity with someone – a family member, a co-worker, a fellow churchgoer, a former classmate in school.

(more)

Take advantage of that influence to support or encourage others who are looking up to you.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Timothy 4:12).

– Beecher Hunter