

Baseball Hall of Famer who played for my hometown team, the Cleveland Indians, on his upcoming 90th birthday on November 3.

Bob Feller, also known as “Rapid Robert,” was born in 1918, and grew up in humble beginnings during the Great Depression on a farm outside Van Meter, IA. There he learned the importance of hard work, leadership and civic responsibility from his father Bill, who worked the family farm, and his mother Lena, who was a nurse and a school teacher.

While doing chores around the farm—including milking the cows and taking the hogs to market—Bob dreamed of becoming a Major League Baseball player. With the encouragement of his parents—especially his father, who had been a semi-pro pitcher—Bob honed his skills and worked to achieve his dream.

Bob and his father spent countless hours playing pitch and catch on the mound and a backstop his father had built between the barn and the house. When it was too cold to throw outside in the winter, they moved practice sessions into the barn.

As he grew, Bob’s pitching speed increased, and by the time he was in grade school he was regularly beating high schoolers. Word of his curveball and strong arm quickly spread, and sports fans across the country began to take notice of the kid with the “Heater from Van Meter.” As interest in Bob’s pitching grew, Bob’s father expanded the pitching mound and backstop into a full field with bleachers and a concession stand. A team was formed with Bob as pitcher and his father managing. Hundreds of people traveled to each game at the farm to pay 35 cents to watch young Bob dominate batters with his signature high windup kick and blazing fastball.

Bob began the first of his 18 seasons with the Cleveland Indians after his junior year of high school when he signed with the team and jumped straight to the big leagues. In his first Major League start, he backed up the hype and added to his legend by striking out 15 in a four-to-one win over the St. Louis Browns. At age 17, the win made him the youngest Major League pitcher to win a game—a record that still stands today.

After his rookie season, Bob returned to Iowa for his senior year of high school, and the eyes of the Nation followed him there. In fact, NBC covered his graduation live on national radio.

Back in Cleveland after graduation, Bob went on to establish himself as the premier pitcher in Major League Baseball, as he led the league in strikeouts in 1938, won 24 games in 1939 and, in 1940, threw the only Opening Day no-hitter in major league history. That year he also won a league best 27 games with an ERA of 2.61 and 261 strikeouts to win the pitcher’s Triple Crown.

Despite being at the height of his career, Bob traded his cleats and baseball cap for a Navy uniform without a second thought after the Japanese bombed

Pearl Harbor in 1941. Putting his country first, he signed up just 2 days after the attack, making him the first major leaguer to enlist in the military to fight in World War II.

In the Navy, Bob was assigned to the battleship U.S.S. *Alabama*, where he led an anti-aircraft gun crew and attained the rank of Chief Petty Officer. During missions in the Atlantic and the Pacific, he fought admirably along with his fellow shipmates in notable battles in the waters off New Guinea, Guam and the Philippines. Though Bob earned 5 campaign ribbons and 8 battle stars, he’ll quickly tell you that he is most proud that the *Alabama* never lost a man to the enemy in battle.

While on the *Alabama*, Bob stayed in shape by leading exercise classes twice a day, and playing on the ship’s baseball team; but his dedication to his mission and his shipmates was unquestioned. In fact, Bob declined an invitation by Admiral Nimitz to leave the war zone and fly to Honolulu to pitch in the Army-Navy World Series game, telling the admiral that he had more important things to do.

Bob missed all of the next 3 seasons—and nearly all of the 1945 season—but he never had any regrets. His wife Anne says, “For all that Bob accomplished in baseball, and all that baseball means to him, I still think Bob’s more proud about his service in the Navy.”

When the war was won, Bob returned to baseball. For many athletes, 3 years off would be a difficult challenge to overcome, but not for Bob. He returned to the Indians for the 1946 season and had arguably the best season of his career, as he won 26 games, pitched a no-hitter, two-one hitters and struck out 348.

After the 1946 season, Bob played a major role in the desegregation of baseball. In a series of exhibitions played across the country organized by Bob and his good friend Satchel Paige, the Bob Feller All-Stars matched up against the Satchel Paige All-Stars from the Negro Leagues. These games offered a great amount of national exposure, smoothing the path for Jackie Robinson and other African Americans who would later enter Major League Baseball.

Bob retired after the 1956 season as one of Cleveland’s all-time great players. Throughout his career he won 20 or more games in a season 6 times, pitched 3 no-hitters, was an integral part of the 1948 Indians team that won the World Series and played in the All Star Game eight times. He still stands as Cleveland’s all-time leader in shut-outs, innings pitched, wins and strikeouts.

In 1962, Bob’s achievements were recognized when he was elected to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility, becoming the first pitcher to enter the Hall in his first year of eligibility since charter member Walter Johnson.

More important than all of the records Bob holds are the lives he has

touched and the people he has inspired with his amazing gift. Like so many other boys growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, Bob Feller was one of my heroes. Getting to know Bob and observe his down-home humility, enthusiasm for life and baseball and, more importantly, his commitment to his country, has been a great joy for me during my time as mayor of Cleveland, Governor and now Senator for Ohio. I will never forget being on the mound with Bob and President Clinton on opening day of the inaugural season for Jacobs Field in 1994, and I still treasure the baseball he signed for me that day.

Since retiring from baseball, Bob has continued to touch countless lives, as he has devoted himself to serving the community with the same passion and work ethic that made him one of the best pitchers in baseball history. He is well known for always taking time to sign autographs and visit with fans and has dedicated countless hours to a number of causes. Today he proudly lists the Salvation Army, the Cleveland Indians Charities, the Little League of Gates Mills and the U.S.S. *Alabama* Foundation among his favorite charities. Bob also remains very active in the Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association and the Bob Feller Museum in Van Meter, IA.

Cleveland will be forever indebted to Bob for his contributions and I am proud he still fondly calls the area home. In fact, he currently lives with his beautiful wife Anne in nearby Gates Mills, where he remains in close touch with his three sons and grandson.

Despite all that he has accomplished, Bob remains the hard-working, down-to-earth, patriotic and compassionate farm boy from Van Meter. When asked once if he could relive any one of the many great moments of his life, Bob answered without hesitation, “Playing catch with my dad between the red barn and the house.”

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I would like to congratulate Bob Feller on his upcoming 90th birthday, and thank him for his service to his country, his dedication to the community and for sharing his love of baseball and the Cleveland Indians with so many. He is truly a role model that all of us should strive to emulate. I wish him continued health and happiness.●

TRIBUTE TO NANCY NEIGHBOR RUSSELL

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a great Oregonian, Nancy Neighbor Russell. Not long ago, Nancy woke up and demanded that her family take her to see the Columbia River Gorge. It was not an unusual request because Nancy has been a tireless and fearless defender of the gorge for more than a quarter century. The scenic beauty of the gorge was her passion and protecting it was her crusade.

What made this trip different was that Nancy suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, often referred to

as “Lou Gehrig’s disease.” Taking her to visit the place she loved most would not be easy. Her family hired an ambulance, placed Nancy in the back, and drove east from her home in Portland. Once there, Nancy saw her beloved gorge for the last time. On September 19, 2008, Nancy Neighbor Russell passed away.

While she is gone, her legacy is not. No individual has had the lasting and profound impact on a Pacific Northwest’s landscape as Nancy Russell has had on the Columbia River Gorge. In my hometown newspaper, *The Oregonian* reporter Katy Muldoon described her this way: “a lion in conservation circles, a fearless but graceful negotiator, a dogged fundraiser, a mentor to young leaders and an inspiration to anyone who had the pleasure of hiking or hunting wildflowers with her on the grassy slopes above the Columbia River.”

Anyone who has seen the Columbia River Gorge know that its steep cliffs, dramatic rock formations, and graceful waterfalls makes it one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It is the crown jewel of a Pacific Northwest landscape filled with a treasure trove of natural beauty. But it took someone like Nancy Russell to recognize that the gorge’s beauty, drama, and gracefulness needed to be protected. She would devote the rest of her life to making sure it was.

In the early 1980s, she founded the Friends of the Columbia Gorge and began an unprecedented effort that in 1986 resulted in passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. As Congressman of the Third Congressional District at the time, I was proud to stand with friends and allies to vote for this historic legislation. That act preserved the gorge while protecting the valuable orchards and agriculture lands and acting as a catalyst to the tourism and recreational values so important to the communities along the Columbia.

But Nancy didn’t stop there. She continued to push the Federal Government to purchase important pieces of property from willing sellers so that stunning views of the gorge would remain open to the public. She personally purchased more than 30 properties and donated them to the public so hikers could enjoy them for generations to come.

Today, the Columbia Gorge faces issues that Nancy would have never contemplated three decades ago. Fortunately, Nancy Russell leaves behind what may be her greatest accomplishment—an organization with members who are inspired by her vision and determined to follow in her footsteps. The gorge may have lost an ardent supporter, but it has not lost support. I am confident that Nancy’s children and grandchildren, her countless friends, and Oregon’s and Washington’s leaders on both sides of the aisle will honor her by continuing to protect this great legacy.

On those times when I return to Oregon and my flight takes me over the Columbia River Gorge, I will think of Nancy Russell and her last visit there. Knowing what I do about Nancy and all that she did for that beautiful area, it will be hard to think of anything else. I pay tribute to her life well-lived today and thank her and her family for all of her many, lasting accomplishments.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:00 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1014. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Public Health Service to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases in women.

H.R. 1157. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

H.R. 3018. An act to provide for payment of an administrative fee to public housing agencies to cover the costs of administering family self-sufficiency programs in connection with the housing choice you her program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

H.R. 3232. An act to establish a non-profit corporation to communicate United States entry policies and otherwise promote tourist, business, and scholarly travel to the United States.

H.R. 3402. An act to require accurate and reasonable disclosure of the terms and conditions of prepaid telephone calling cards and services.

H.R. 6469. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize increased Federal funding for the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network.

H.R. 6568. An act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to encourage research and carry out an educational campaign with respect to pulmonary hypertension, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6946. An act to make a technical correction in the NET 911 Improvement Act of 2008.

H.R. 6950. An act to establish the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Gift of Life Medal for organ donors and the family of organ donors.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1810. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the provision of scientifically sound information and support services to patients receiving a positive test diagnosis for Down syndrome or other prenatally and postnatally diagnosed conditions.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 255. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the United States commitment to preservation of religious and cultural sites and condemning instances where sites are desecrated.

H. Con. Res. 393. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of “National Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month”.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1343) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide additional authorizations of appropriations for the health centers program under section 330 of such Act, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that in accordance with the request of the Senate, the bill (H. R. 3068) to prohibit the award of contracts to provide guard services under the contract security guard program of the Federal Protective Service to a business concern that is owned, controlled, or operated by an individual who has been convicted of a felony, is hereby returned to the Senate.

At 12:17 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Zapata, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 7060. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for energy production and conservation, to extend certain expiring provisions, to provide individual income tax relief, and for other purposes.

At 4:59 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Zapata, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1382. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 2932. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and grant program to provide assistance for poison prevention, sustain the funding of poison centers, and enhance the public health of people of the United States.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 214. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should grant a posthumous pardon to John Arthur “Jack” Johnson for the 1913