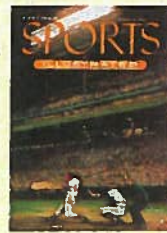




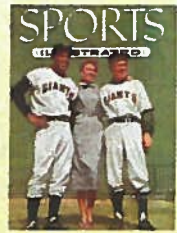
# GO



8/16/54



1/3/55



4/11/55

A N N I V E R S A R Y

**I** **"Cigarettes and Popcorn"**  
ON THE EVENING of Jan. 31, 1954, Edwin Armstrong dressed as the man of means he'd once been. The engineer had exhausted his \$9 million fortune in a legal war with RCA over the patents to frequency modulation (FM), the broadcast signal that would carry radio and television voices around the world—static-free!—in a distant future that Armstrong couldn't see from his apartment in the opulent River House, which afforded commanding views of everything else: Manhattan, the East River and, beyond it, the world.

In his apartment 13 stories above East 52nd Street, Armstrong put on gloves, a topcoat, a scarf and a hat to protect himself against the winter chill. He wrote a note to his estranged wife, Marion. Then he stepped through an open window and into oblivion.

Or what would have been oblivion, had Armstrong not given the world the FM signal, and the tower he personally erected to broadcast it. A latticework of steel 425 feet tall, it would be known as the Armstrong Tower to the 21st-century commuters who noticed it as they crawled past on Route 9W in Alpine, N.J. Yet it would host broadcast and mobile radio, television, cellphone and satellite uplinks (for a time it housed the broadcast and production operations of the USA cable network) and myriad other technological marvels

still undreamed of on the last day of Armstrong's life—the last day of the first month of that auspicious year for "new media," a phrase that didn't yet exist on Jan. 31, 1954.

On that Sunday night, television was still shiny and new and monolithic. The previous January, when Lucy Ricardo gave birth to Little Ricky on *I Love Lucy*, 44 million Americans watched, in 72% of all homes with a TV.

Nine months later, on Sept. 30, 1953, Vincent Edward Scully awoke from a restless sleep in Bogota, N.J. He was 25 years old and still lived with his parents and sister.

The Brooklyn Dodgers were visiting the Yankees one that afternoon for Game 1 of the World Series, a Scully was going to call that game with the great Yankee broadcaster Mel Allen for NBC on that all-consuming monstrosity called national television. That morning the gravity of this did what gravity does, and sank it.

"I got up, I got dressed, I went downstairs, and my mother—red-haired, Irish—made a big breakfast," Scully recalls 61 years later, over coffee in the press box that

bears his name at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. "It's the most important meal of the day and that. So I had the big breakfast and I excused myself. Then I threw everything up. Everything. Because I kept thinking: My God, I have done any television."

Few sports announcers had. On New Year's Day, 1954, NBC would make the first national color broadcast, sending the Tournament of Roses Parade to a small but enraptured audience over 22 stations that fed a growing demand to see the world as it was: In Living Color.



## HIS VOICE REALLY CARRIED

From his perch in Brooklyn, Scully's calls crossed the country on TV.

NEAR THE END of 1954, just time for Christmas sales, Texas Instruments and a company called IDEA revealed, to great fanfare, a more accessible technological marvel: the Regency TR-1. It stood for *transistor radio*, and the device came in six colors: black, ivory, mahogany, olive green, "mandarin red" and "clover gray." There was an immediate clamor for this 12-ounce wonder, because it made voices on the radio—from Elvis Presley's to Vin Scully's—portable.

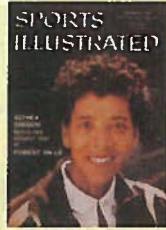
Baseball announcers enlisted their listeners as accomplices, requiring them to use their imaginations. And a young player from Oak Lawn, Ill., had recently given up his dream of playing third base for the White Sox and imagined another life for himself. "I listened to Mel Allen and Vin Scully," says Bill Rasmussen, who graduated from



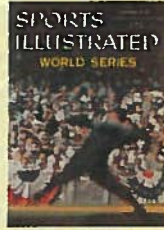
6/4/56



11/26/56



9/2/57



9/30/57



1/27/58



3/3/58

DePauw in 1954, “and thought, If I can’t play, at least I can get into the sports business.”

No one yet knew that the TR-1 was the first in an infinite line of what the airline industry would come to call “personal electronic devices,” easily taken to the ballpark or to the backyard bomb shelter. For the time, it was enough that the TR-1 put live baseball and football games in a man’s shirt pocket, which it was specifically designed to fit.

Until then the radio had been an immobile piece of furniture, as Scully knew well growing up in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Upper Manhattan. “We had that big four-legged radio,” he says, as if describing a piano, “with a cross piece underneath to give support for the legs, and I was about eight and I’d take a pillow and I would crawl under the radio so the speaker was right over my face, and the roar of the crowd came out of the speaker like water from a showerhead. I would get goose bumps from head to toe.”

But with the introduction of the transistor, sports fans were liberated: World Series games could be smuggled into classrooms for illicit consumption, like the pack of cigarettes that the radio resembled.

At Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, the Dodgers offered all manner of promotions. It was not unusual to show up at the park and see it filled with nuns in habit, as if a flock of penguins were basking in the sun at the corner of Sullivan Place and McKeever Place. Another special event was a day for the blind, when Flatbush was enlivened by 200 sightless people for whom the transistor radio was a godsend. “They loved it,” Scully says, “because of the sounds and the smells of the ballpark—the cigarettes and popcorn—but also because of that roar amplified by the radio. Apparently that made a nice picture for them.” That roar—of Scully and his partner, Connie Desmond, calling a Dodgers game; of a crowd in full throat denouncing the umpire; of the distant cry of popcorn vendors filtered

through a tiny speaker—placed for the first time a complementary medium between the spectator and the spectacle.

It was not the only complementary medium introduced that year. Between NBC’s first colorcast and Texas Instruments’ radio in six colors, Henry Luce launched a colorful magazine, which he was wont to do from time to time (from TIME to LIFE). Not every idea that caught Luce’s enthusiasm went to press, mercifully (or regretfully, depending on your inclinations), which is why you never heard of

the *Murder* magazine he once mooted. But on Aug. 16, 1954, Luce did publish the first issue of his much-anticipated SPORTS ILLUSTRATED.

“He had a profound sense of other people’s interests,” David Halberstam would later write of Luce in his book *The Powers That Be*. “He started SPORTS ILLUSTRATED even though he had remarkably little interest in sports. He stayed with it when it was a very expensive loser and most of his associates wanted to junk it, because his instincts told him the audience was there and growing. (Ironically, television, which would help kill Luce’s beloved LIFE magazine, was responsible for the explosion in sports and leisure life that eventually made SI so successful.) Luce knew somehow that sports was about to become big business in America, that others were interested in it.”

What Luce didn’t yet know was *why* fans were interested in sports, or

which sports mattered to them. Scully saw the first issue of SI in the visitors’ clubhouse at Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia. It looked promising, with Milwaukee Braves slugger Eddie Mathews on the cover. But when Scully opened the magazine and riffled through the pages, he thought, What is this?

“It wasn’t a sports magazine,” he says. “This was a rich man’s magazine. I think there were big articles on sailing and dog shows and that kind of stuff. And I thought, Wow. Why aren’t these guys doing sports?”



**On New Year's Day, 1954, NBC made the first national color broadcast, sending the Tournament of Roses Parade to a small but enraptured audience over 22 stations.**

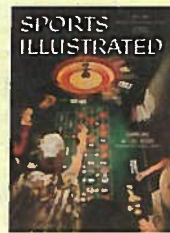
# 50

A N N I V E R S A R Y

LUCE WAS APPEALING to his wealthy friends, and toward that end SI ran ads for luxury items such as the Regency TR-1, which retailed—in time for Christmas shopping—at \$49.99, not including the battery, single earphone or leather carrying case. From the remove of the 21st century, the copy in the ad would read like a prophecy: AS A SPECTATOR, AS A SPORTSMAN, HAVE THE WORLD OF SPORTS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.

On the evening of that first issue date, Aug. 16, the Dodgers and the Phillies met at Ebbets Field. It was Ladies' Night and the hottest day so far in the boiling engine room that was New York City in August. Though the temperature would hit 88.3° and the humidity 97%, Scully dressed then as he does now, in a jacket and tie. ("Like any New Yorker," he said of that August, "you took your shower, you got in your car and by the time you got to work your shirt was stuck to the leather of your seat.") As the voice of the Dodgers, Scully knew he was entering each listener's home, and he dressed as if for a dinner party. This particular guest came calling with a carton of Lucky Strikes and a 40-ounce bottle of Schaefer, sponsors' products with which Scully sometimes had to pose on-camera for WOR-TV.

Leaving his house nine miles south of the Armstrong Tower, the Dodgers announcer drove in a heat shimmer, past apartments and houses with aerial antennae on rooftops straining toward the sound of a human voice like flowers to the sun. Had he picked up that morning's *New York Times*, he would have read that a record 2.8 million television sets had been sold in the first six months of 1954. The previous September, Swanson's had introduced the TV dinner, so that a viewer sealed to his seat by the maddening heat would not have to miss an inning of Dodgers baseball for something as secondary as sustenance. Ten million of these dinners were sold in 12 months, at 98 cents a pop, in what might have been the Big Bang of America's obesity epidemic.



5/11/59



11/9/59



3/14/60

As a story that summer in *Mechanix Illustrated* noted, antennae were fast becoming a blight in the U.S., except some 250 cities with "community antenna systems that up signals on a master antenna and relay them by cable to individual sets." Among the first of these systems was one in Williamsport, Pa. The Williamsport-Jerrold Television Cable Company had already signed up 4,300 subscribers in 1954, every one of them getting "clear pictures, free from snow" in that valley unreachable by conventional TV signals.

Indeed, all over the U.S. these cables were being laid in cities and towns beyond the geographical reach of broadcast television. Men had returned from World War II

with radio and electronics experience, gone to work at TV sales and repair shops and found themselves climbing mountains with a spare TV set and a portable generator and an aerial antenna, looking for broadcast signals they could send through cables into towns in valleys and hollows whose residents knew *The Ed Sullivan Show* only as an unsubstantiated rumor. And it was that Williamsport, isolated between the Appalachians and the mountainous Allegheny Plateau, suddenly got CATV. The men running the wires into houses were often offered, while up a ladder, cash to hook up a homeowner's house immediately, such was the desire of every American to di-

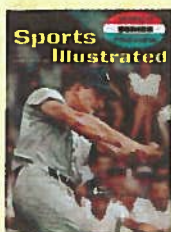


### VIEW MASTERS

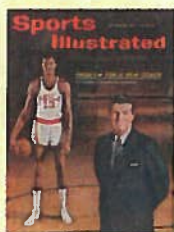
Long before they left Brooklyn, Dodgers players learned to play to the camera.

toe into the national stream of television.

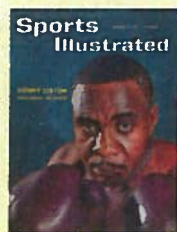
It would have been inconceivable to any of those viewers that one day expensive national cable programming would not just be imported into Williamsport but also exported from Williamsport, whose Little League World Series would have its own \$60 million contract with a network that was exclusively carried by cable or satellite and that broadcast nothing but sports, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to more than 100 million subscribers paying on average more than \$5 a month for the privilege. But ESPN did not exist in 1954, when Bill Rasmussen was still fresh out of college, hoping to be the next Vin Scully.



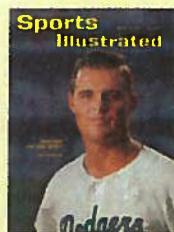
10/2/61



10/30/61



2/12/62



8/20/62



3/4/63



11/11/63

AS SPORTS AND TECHNOLOGY were wed in 1954, and thought of starting a family, their physical world was still a small one. Of the 16 major league baseball teams, three played in New York City, two in Philadelphia, two in Chicago and (until just the previous season) two in St. Louis. Four U.S. cities had claimed 56% of all big league teams.

In Brooklyn, Scully had the rarest of commodities on arrival at Ebbets Field: a parking space. The scarcity of parking, the borough's changing demographics and the aging of the 41-year-old ballpark—whose toilets perpetually malfunctioned—had Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley agitating for a new stadium. He envisioned a futuristic dome that would loom like a colossal igloo over the Atlantic Yards train terminus near downtown Brooklyn, where the Long Island Rail Road could deliver prosperous fans from the suburbs directly to the Dodgers' doorstep.

By 1956 the team had an enormous reservoir of goodwill in Brooklyn. It had won its only World Series the previous Oct. 4, at Yankee Stadium, and that night half of Brooklyn seemed to gather outside the team's victory party at the Hotel Bossert at 98 Montague Street, to which Vin Scully arrived with his date, Joan Ganz. From behind police sawhorses, the fans serenaded their Dodgers.

Riding that wave of goodwill, O'Malley in 1956 revealed a model of a roofed stadium designed by the visionary architect Buckminster Fuller. Its dome would be 300 feet high, and there would be underground parking. But its construction would have to be approved by New York City's powerful chief of all projects, Robert Moses, the urban planner who shaped modern-day Gotham. While countless observers (historians, pundits, cuckolded Brooklynites—many of them one and the same) would come to see that stadium proposal as a fig leaf to cover O'Malley's true desire to move his team to Los Angeles—1,356 miles beyond baseball's western frontier, in Kansas City—Scully says those people are wrong. "Had Robert Moses allowed Walter O'Malley to build a new ballpark in Brooklyn," Scully says flatly, "the Dodgers never would have moved."

It is a difficult point to argue, for the principals were Scully's contemporaries and sometime confidants. To Scully, Jackie Robinson is not—or not just—a man on a postage stamp. "To me," he says, "he was just Jack," a young man with a wife and a baby daughter, waiting for another spring in New York City. "This was maybe my

second year in Brooklyn," says Scully, shaking a sweetener packet over a paper cup of coffee three hours before the first pitch of a Dodgers game, "and Jackie and I were sent to Grossinger's, the resort in the Catskills, to have a little symposium with the customers there. We arrived about the same time, and I had my racing ice skates with me, and Jackie said, 'You're gonna skate?' And I said, 'Yeah.' And he said, 'Great, I'll skate with you.' And Rachel said, 'I'll go with you too.' Well, she was about seven months pregnant. And we went to the rink, and I'm putting on my skates, and Jackie gets a rental pair and he's putting them on and he said, 'When we get out there, I'll race you.' And I was just flabbergasted.

"I said, 'Jack, I know you were a great athlete, a long jumper, a basketball player, a football player, but I didn't know you skated too,'" Scully says. "And Jack said to me, 'Oh, I've never been on skates in my life.' So I said, 'Aw, Jack, I'm not a great skater, but I know how to skate. There is no way you can beat me.' It was so typical of Jack. His face got so serious, and he said, 'No—but that's how I'll learn.' That was his mentality."

Down a hall from Scully's broadcast booth, in the elegant Dodgers offices once occupied by O'Malley, sits the club's current president, CEO and part owner, Stan Kasten. Or rather, stands. "Vin and I both have this thing," says Kasten, having risen from his chair to make a point about Scully and the difference between life and history. "We hate the way major leaguers bungle rundowns. Whenever there's a rundown, Vin is thinking of me and I'm thinking of him. The way you handle a rundown is, you go at the runner and you do the full-arm fake." Kasten rears back as if he's going to throw the baseball on a beeline to a teammate. "You don't do this bulls---." He holds the ball in front of him, coyly feinting with his right hand, like a drugged cobra preparing to strike.

"How do I know that?" Kasten says. "Branch Rickey wrote that 70 years ago, O.K.? I've got Branch Rickey's little blue book right there"—he gestures to the bookshelf behind his desk, to Rickey's *Little Blue Book: Wit and Strategy from Baseball's Last Wise Man*—"and I read in it that a full-arm fake always stops the runner and ends the rundown. And Vin says, 'You know, that's exactly right: Branch and I used to talk about that.'" Kasten is 62 years old. Scully is 86. "So that's the difference right there," says

# 60

A N N I V E R S A R Y



2/24/64



7/13/64



4/12/65

Kasten. “I read it in Branch Rickey’s book. Vin talked about it with Branch Rickey.”

And so anyone who wants to understand the last 60 years in sports, the journey from the Regency TR-1 to the iPhone 5s, would do well to stop at Dodger Stadium, high atop Chavez Ravine. On the endless climb to the press entrance and the Dodgers store and the fifth-deck seats—at what is called the Top of the Park—a pilgrim feels as if he’s climbing to visit a mountaintop guru.

“We have people still working in this office who were at the game the day Bobby Thomson hit his home run off Ralph Branca,” Kasten says reverently. One of those people, Don Newcombe, now 88 and a special adviser to team chairman Mark Walter, was the starting pitcher in that Dodgers-Giants play-off game at the Polo Grounds on Oct. 3, 1951. Newcombe was lifted in the ninth inning for Branca, who surrendered the Shot Heard ‘Round the World.

“Ask Vin about that,” says Kasten. “Ralph Branca was lying prostrate in grief on the clubhouse steps, and Vin had to step over him to get into the Dodgers’ clubhouse.” He repeats it, as if to remind himself that Scully still works down the hall from him: “He had to step over Ralph Branca to get into the clubhouse.”

THE DISTANCE in time from that day seems not nearly as large as the distance in space, 2,448 miles, from the Polo Grounds to Chavez Ravine. Because—spoiler alert—the Dodgers did move west. “The biggest change of the last 60 years in sports was the expansion from one coast to the other,” says Scully. “We used to think it was a big deal to go out west—and that meant St. Louis, by train. How long did it take? It seemed like forever. However, there was a joy to it. They would take three cars and hook them onto a commercial train, so that we were private, and it meant you could sit around in your shorts and tell baseball stories.

“There was the wonderful old writer with the *Brooklyn Eagle*, his name was Harold Burr—B-U-R-R—and I would sit almost literally at his feet, and he would tell me stories about Babe Ruth. Because he covered Babe Ruth. And we’ve lost that now. Today it’s singlefile: On the plane, off the plane, adios.”

Burr sounds like *purr* in the honeyed voice of Scully, who has a courtly way of spelling names for writers, so that the guy who called him on behalf of Gillette to hire him as the NBC announcer on the 1953 World Series, launching him on the high seas of national television, was “Ed Wilhelm, W-I-L-H-E-L-M, of the Maxon advertising agency, M-A-X-O-N.”

There are fewer plane rides for Scully these days—he does road games only in California and Arizona—so there are fewer single-file deplanings with young men in headphones, their faces bent to tablet and smartphone screens, those “personal electronic devices” at once new and ancient.

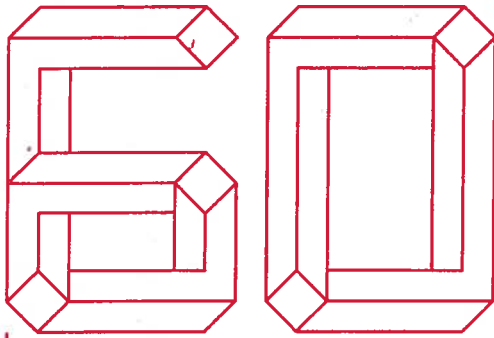
It was in Los Angeles that those air-planes became essential, as did another form of transportation, the transistor radio, which bridged the distance between fans in the cavernous Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (some of them in bleacher seats 710 feet from home plate) and the baseball being played on the field. “People were 74 rows away,” Scully says. “They knew the stars—they knew Mays and Musial and people like that—but they didn’t know the rank and file, so the transistor was a great

break. For me, a newcomer out here, it was a huge break.”

During a dull game in the Dodgers’ third season at the Coliseum, in 1960, Scully idly flipped through the umpires’ guide and discovered that one of the men in blue—“Frank Secory, S-E-C-O-R-Y”—was celebrating his birthday. “So on the air, I explained to a big crowd that it was his birthday,” says Scully, “and I said, ‘I’ll tell you what, we could make history tonight. For the first time ever, we could all holler together, ‘Happy Birthday, Frank!’ No umpire in history has ever had a crowd say ‘Happy Birthday.’”



The transistor radio was the personal electronic device of its day, bridging the distance between fans (and the sidelines) and the action on the field.



7/19/65



5/2/66



7/18/68



7/31/67

## A N N I V E R S A R Y

Let's say 'Happy Birthday' on one . . . two . . . three . . ."

And on three, 27,626 people shouted "Happy Birthday!" to a startled Frank Secory. The other umpires gathered about and wished him a happy birthday too. And when Scully got into his car that night for the drive home, using the commute to analyze the broadcast, as he does to this day, he was briefly sobered by the power of the radio. "I thought, Whoa: Supposing I had said, 'one . . . two . . . three . . . Hap—' and nobody joined in?"

But there was no chance of that happening, because sports fans were eager for this secondary communal experience—this early harbinger of crowd-sourcing. The transistor was a social medium without hashtags or raised thumbs. "If I said something on the radio, the crowd would either groan over a pun or laugh over a joke," Scully says. "The worst pun: We were playing the Brewers in the Coliseum, they must have had 70,000 people there, and the night before, Joe Torre [had been] the catcher and suffered a foul tip on his hand. The next night he played third base, and I said, 'Isn't it interesting? If Joe never goes behind home plate again, he'll forever be known as Chicken Catcher Torre.' And you never heard 70,000 people groan like that. It is still my worst pun since we've been out here. To this day Joe and I kid about that."

In Los Angeles, games had become a call-and-response revival, the Church of Dodgers Baseball, Rev. Scully presiding. "I talked to the people as I'm talking to you," Scully says, "because I knew they were listening and they would react."

The balk rule required a pitcher to set for a full second, which was difficult for visiting pitchers in Los Angeles, because Dodgers shortstop Maury Wills was almost certainly going to try to steal second. One afternoon Reds pitcher Joey Jay was called for a balk, and Cincinnati manager Freddy Hutchinson kicked off an enormous argument that stopped the game dead. "And I've got nothing really to say except that they're arguing," says Scully. So he said into the microphone, "To all of you folks in the ballpark, how long do you think a complete second is?" He paused and said, "I tell you what I'll do. I'll say 'A,' and after a second is gone, you answer 'B.'" In the booth Scully said "A," and the fans shouted a mistimed "B!" "That's terrible," Scully told them. He asked them to try again, and the exchange was repeated.

A phone rang in the booth. It was Walter Alston, the Dodgers' manager, who said, "Why in the hell is the crowd yelling 'B' in the middle of this argument?"

"That," says Scully, "was the fun of the transistor radio."

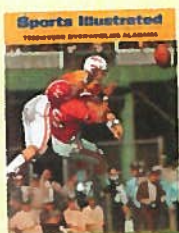
A handheld electronic device linked fans watching a game in a way that was at once ancillary and indispensable—until it was largely dispensed with in 1962, when the Dodgers at long last moved into Dodger Stadium, and the 80-year reign of the radio ended. O'Malley had told Scully he could see the day when fans paid to watch games on TV. "I also remember reading an article prophesying that the day would come when the ballpark would be a studio, and there wouldn't be anyone in there," says Scully. "They would just be televising the game. I thought, That can't be, can it? I mean, people are gonna come to the games."

With pay-TV still a Jetsonian fever dream, O'Malley helped finance Dodger Stadium by selling the broadcast rights for Dodgers games—and exclusive advertising in the new ballpark—to Union Oil for \$10 million over 10 years. It was a new kind of ballpark, with softening features like the San Gabriel Mountains beyond the outfield "pavilions" and but a single ad that didn't mar the view but enhanced it: an orange ball—the Union 76 gas station logo—rising like a second sun above the pavilions, which were fragrant with more than the cigarettes and popcorn of Ebbets Field.

"Walter O'Malley loved to get his hands in the dirt and grow things," Scully says, "and what he really loved to grow were orchids. So when he built this ballpark he envisioned flowers. If you go outside, where you walk in the Dodgers' office, there are these planters that look like enormous cocktail glasses? He envisioned flowers spilling over those, and flowers on the mountains. There is really no place quite like this."

Dodger Stadium would be different in other ways too. O'Malley hired a promotional savant named Danny Goodman from the minor league Hollywood Stars to become his advertising director, and Goodman filled Dodger Stadium with all manner of new products, so the team was the first to offer everything from replica batting helmets to bobblehead dolls.

"Why would anyone think it unusual to pick up a hat or a sweater when he's at the ballgame?" Goodman asked an interviewer in 1962, that first year at floral, fragrant Chavez Ravine. "They go to drugstores for everything from



10/30/67



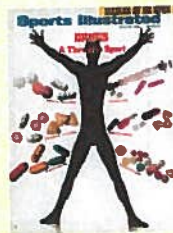
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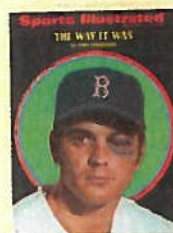
9/30/68



3/31/69



6/23/69



6/22/70

automobile tires to hardware as well as their medical supplies. . . . I think eventually we'll have full-scale shopping centers inside the parks. After all, we're dealing with a captive audience for three or four hours."

Scully has been out here for 56 years now, a Southern California institution like Disneyland and the HOLLYWOOD sign and the Dodgers themselves. Dem Bums left Brooklyn to whatever fate awaited it, which would turn out to be a long fallow period followed by a startling renaissance.

Ask Scully when he last went back to where it all began, at 55 Sullivan Place, and he says, "The last time I was in Brooklyn was the last game ever played there." He called the Dodgers' final game at Ebbets Field, on Sept. 24, 1957, before 6,702 fans. Fabled organist Gladys Goodding played "After You're Gone" and "How Can You Say We Are Through?" and "Auld Lang Syne" as a coda for baseball in Brooklyn, and possibly for Brooklyn itself.

"I had no reason, really, to go back," Scully says softly of the borough that had by then given the world Bugs Bunny and Mae West and a wild-throwing Dodgers prospect named Sandy Koufax. "There wasn't anything there for me."

## II

### "Sports Are Changing, Kid"

AT THE SYMBOLIC dawn of the 1960s, President Kennedy went hatless at his

inauguration, and by the time he got to "Let the word go forth from this time and place," American men had stopped wearing hats altogether. By 1963 a men's accessories merchant in suburban Philadelphia named Ralph Roberts sold his business-attire firm, the Pioneer Suspender Company, and bought the community-access TV system in Tupelo, Miss., with 1,200 subscribers.

That same year Robert Edward Turner II committed suicide. His billboard business, Turner Advertising Company, was passed down to his 24-year-old son, Robert Edward

Turner III, known as Ted, who then bought a radio station, giving him two old media, relics of the previous decades.

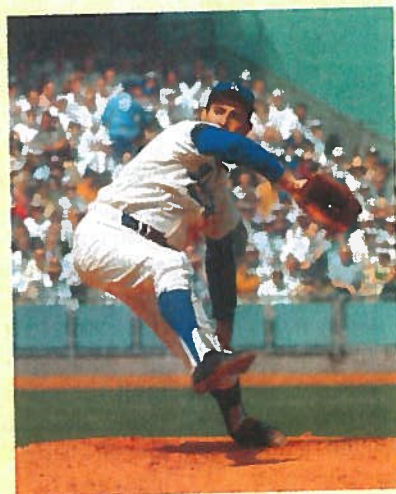
Bill Rasmussen was 30 in 1963, and that milestone—reached the previous Oct. 15—had given him cause for reflection. He had started an advertising business but was not ready to abandon his bigger dream. So he'd left his job and by April had signed on at WTTT radio in Amherst, Mass., one small step closer to becoming Mel Allen or Vin Scully. "I gave myself three years to make it," he says.

Scully was still the voice of the Dodgers, still wearing a jacket and tie in this new era of informality, and blessed to be calling the games of baseball's most dynamic pitcher, Koufax. Among the lefthander's growing legion of fans was a bookish boy in Philadelphia named Arn Tellem, born in 1954, the year the transistor radio debuted, Scully took over from Red Barber as the Voice of the Dodgers and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED was first published.

Tellem treated the magazine as kids before him had treated the transistor radio. "Every Friday night when SI came, there was this special moment when I would get into bed with my magazine and read it cover-to-end," he says. "The magazine fueled my dreams. It was such a powerful thing, to finally read SI after wondering all week who would be on the cover. My grandparents and my mother had

always encouraged me to read, and I became absorbed in biographies of historical figures, but I had total immersion in the world of sports. For me, reading about sports became more enjoyable than watching them. The writers were so terrific that when I finished reading the magazine, I would fall asleep dreaming of a life in sports."

That life, Tellem was beginning to think, would be as a sportswriter or as the coach of one of Philadelphia's Big 5 basketball teams. He was a Phillies fan, but like many Jewish kids, he became a Dodgers fan every fourth



### MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE

The spring after he refused to pitch on Yom Kippur, Koufax held out.



# GO

A N N I V E R S A R Y



8/17/70



3/15/71



11/1/71

day, when Koufax pitched. "His greatest seasons, 1961 to 1966, were the prime of my childhood," Tellem says. His father, Milton, was at Connie Mack Stadium on June 4, 1964, when Koufax no-hit the Phillies. That season was notable for the Phillies' historic September collapse, in which they blew a 6½-game lead with 12 games to play, driving Arn further into the arms of his idol, at a time when distance nurtured legend.

"Dodgers games weren't on TV in Philadelphia," says Tellem, "and that made Koufax more of a myth. My whole idea of him came from reading about him. He became bigger in my mind because I couldn't see him." It was exactly the reason that Steven Spielberg, a decade later, would withhold a full view of the Great White shark in *Jaws* until the end of the movie.

But Koufax didn't enter the canon of 20th-century sports icons until the season after his Philadelphia no-hitter, when the Dodgers reached the 1965 World Series and he refused to pitch in Game 1, which fell on Yom Kippur. The Dodgers started their other ace, Don Drysdale, and the righthander was a disaster, giving up seven runs to the Twins in 2⅓ innings. When Alston came to the mound to remove him, Drysdale famously said, "I bet right now you wish I was Jewish too."

"Koufax's refusal to pitch on Yom Kippur in '65 and the collapse of the Phillies in '64 were my two defining moments as a baseball fan," says Tellem. "Koufax stood up for his faith and put it above his individual performance. For someone who grew up post-World War II, that moment of conscience set an example."

The Dodgers won that World Series in seven games, Koufax was named the MVP (he won his second Cy Young that season as well), and his conscience began to extend beyond religion, to an even more hidebound institution: baseball. A ballplayer—even the best player on the best team in what was still America's favorite sport—had little power over his own life. The reserve clause bound each player to his employer for the duration of his career. When Koufax and Drysdale jointly held out in the spring of 1966 for three-year contracts that would pay them each \$500,000 over the life of the deal—\$1 million for the pair, spread over 36 months—their only leverage was in their joint resolve. Koufax promised to retire if the Dodgers didn't pay him, and Drysdale planned to sit out the season.

But they required a man who could work that leverage. So Koufax and Drysdale hired a Beverly Hills entertainment lawyer named J. William Hayes, of Hayes & Hume, to negotiate with Dodgers general manager Buzzie Bavasi. Hayes was a former American Airlines pilot who was married to a film actress named Nancy Gates and represented actors such as Lloyd Bridges and executives such as Aaron Spelling.

Bavasi refused to negotiate with Hayes and insisted—per long-standing baseball custom—on dealing directly with Koufax and Drysdale. "I told them I would negotiate only with them, that the amount of money they were asking was ridiculous and that nobody on the ball club, including me and Walter Alston, was ever going to get more than a one-year contract," Bavasi said.

"You're both athletes," the GM told his top two pitchers, "and what you're selling is your physical ability, and how can you guarantee your physical ability three years in advance?" Since "not even Cassius Clay could make a guarantee like that," Bavasi said, "the meeting broke up."

Or so Bavasi recalled in a first-person article in 1967 in *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, a magazine that by now was hitting its stride with stories on sports and their role in the larger society. "If I gave in and began negotiating baseball contracts through an agent, then I set a precedent that's going to bring awful pain to general managers for years to come, because every salary negotiation with every humpty-dumpty fourth-string catcher is going to run into months of dickering," Bavasi wrote. "Sandy knows I've got better sense than that."

On the eve of that season Drysdale, with Koufax's blessing, met Bavasi at a restaurant called Nicola's near Dodger Stadium. There the two worked out a deal that would pay the lefty \$125,000 and the righty \$110,000 for the 1966 season, still hefty raises from their previous salaries of about \$70,000. Baseball management was saved, after a 32-day holdout, from the specter of every humpty-dumpty fourth-string catcher wanting legal representation when signing a contract. At the end of that pennant-winning season, in which Koufax had 27 wins and a 1.73 ERA and won his third Cy Young Award, the man sometimes called the Left Arm of God retired with painful arthritis in that arm. He was 30.

"And that signaled the end of my childhood," says Tellem, who was 12 years old. "Koufax retired, and two

# BO

A N N I V E R S A R Y



4/17/72



8/4/72



8/13/73

months later my father died, right before my bar mitzvah." The definition of *bar mitzvah*, Tellem says, is when a Jewish boy learns he has a better chance of owning a sports team than of playing for one.

His mother eventually remarried, to a man named Hank Stern—"a wonderful man," says Tellem, "and we bonded over sports"—who took his stepson to the Philadelphia Sportswriters' Dinner, mainly to hear Howard Cosell deliver the keynote address but also to let Arn mingle with the sportswriters he hoped would be his future colleagues. By a stroke of fortune, stepfather and son were seated at the *Philadelphia Daily News* table, and Arn next to sports columnist Stan Hochman, to whom he confessed, "I want to be a sports columnist."

Hochman listened patiently and said, "Sports are changing, kid. If you want to have an impact, become a lawyer."

SPORTS WERE CHANGING because America was, but the reverse was also true. On March 7, 1968, after speaking in Los Angeles, Martin Luther King Jr. had dinner at the home of Don Newcombe, the Dodgers' pitcher who had yielded the mound to Branca, who had in turn given up the home run to Thomson. Dr. King thanked Newcombe that night. "Don, you'll never know how easy you and Jackie and Doby and Campy made it for me to do my job by what you did on the baseball field," King said, referring to Robinson and Larry Doby and Roy Campanella. Twenty-eight days later, in Memphis, King was assassinated, and a summer of urban discontent was ignited.

The Dodgers' former home, Brooklyn, had been troubled by racial tension since before the team departed Ebbets Field. The white flight from Brooklyn was described by one of that borough's bards, columnist and novelist Pete Hamill, in an essay in 1969: "Leaving was made easier by four central factors in the period of postwar decline in Brooklyn. All, in their special ways, were emotional. The four factors: 1) the folding of the *Brooklyn Eagle*; 2) the departure of the Brooklyn Dodgers for California; 3) the long years of insecurity and the final folding of the Brooklyn Navy Yard; 4) the migration of southern Negroes, most of whom settled in Brooklyn, not Manhattan."

These first two were symbolic blows, a powerful right-left combination. The *Eagle* was the paper of Harold Burr, B-U-R-R, who used to regale Scully on the train rides to

St. Louis with tales of the Bambino. The Dodgers, in fact, were the principal reason to buy the *Eagle*.

With the "migration of southern Negroes," Broo became easy to block-bust, as Hamill wrote in *New York* magazine. Which is to say, realtors bought a property and moved black tenants in, encouraging and precipitating white neighbors to sell their own properties quickly, at below market prices, and leave. "So Bedford-Stuyvesant exploded," Hamill wrote. "Whites began leaving by the hundreds. But something else was changing in Brooklyn in 1966, at least according to Hamill, who was writing that summer before the Dodgers' replacement—the Miracle Mets—the World Series in October and Shawn Corey Carter born in Bedford-Stuyvesant in December.

That Carter would go on to global fame as a hip-hop artist with the stage name Jay Z—and the ancillary handle of J-H-1 with its intentional echo of Jehovah—does not imbue the city with a messianic quality. But 1969 was the year that Hamill portrayed as Year Zero, the start of a new calendar, the beginning of Brooklyn's revival. Young people with no ties to the borough were moving into the neighborhoods of Park Slope and Cobble Hill. The New York Port Authority predicted a job growth in Brooklyn by 1985. Three previous scourges—street gangs, heroin and the Mafia—appeared to be in decline. What's more, "The wound of the Dodgers' departure seemed finally healed," Hamill wrote that July. "The arrival of the Mets gave the old Dodger fans something to cheer for, and there are no more of the old Brooklyn Dodgers now playing for the Los Angeles team. Baseball itself has declined in interest and slow, dull, almost sedate these days, especially on television. Pro football excites more people in the Brooklyn saloons.

Hamill's declaration of a "renaissance" for his native Brooklyn, while born of hope, was a quarter-century premature. Neighborhoods gentrified glacially, and the economy was on its own designs: By 1975, New York City would be on the brink of bankruptcy. Crack cocaine would fill the vacuum left by heroin. Of course, none of that mattered to the residents of Brooklyn and Queens on Oct. 6, 1969, when the Mets won the National League playoffs.

The next day the Cardinals traded Curt Flood to the Philadelphia Phillies. Arn Tellem was 15, and without Koufax, he had gone in with his hometown Phillies. But even then, reading about Flood in the papers for which he one day hoped to write, the boy was awakening to the hubris of baseball ownership.



4/15/74



9/2/74



6/9/75



11/17/75



8/9/76



8/30/76

Flood had already done so. He declined to report to his new team, and he wrote in a letter to commissioner Bowie Kuhn, "After twelve years in the Major Leagues, I do not feel that I am a piece of property to be bought and sold irrespective of my wishes"—thus challenging the reserve clause that had bound Koufax and Drysdale to the Dodgers in perpetuity.

"Curt Flood was a huge moment for me," says Tellem. "Howard Cosell and Marvin Miller would later talk about a player's right to have a say in his career, and as a child of the '60s, I started to see that sports were on the cutting edge of the issues we would all confront as a society." More and more, these issues were infiltrating and informing his weekly Friday-night readings of *SL*.

That year, 1969, the onetime seller of men's clothing accessories, Ralph Roberts, changed the name of his growing collection of cable-TV systems by mashing up Communications and Broadcast to form something called Comcast.

Joan Ganz Cooney—Vin Scully's date at the Dodgers World Series party at Brooklyn's Hotel Bossert 14 years earlier—debuted her new show on public TV. It was set in a New York City very much like that Brooklyn of brownstones and neighbors on stoops and racial diversity. The show was called *Sesame Street*.

Bill Rasmussen had moved from radio into TV, first doing weather at the ABC affiliate in Springfield, Mass., and finally becoming a sports anchor at the NBC affiliate there. But he also called hockey games for the Springfield Indians because local television sports was a three-minute prison from which he needed an occasional escape. "It was laughable to do three minutes of sports on local TV," he says. "I did it virtually every single night—at 6:20, 7:20 and 11:20—and rarely would I get off the air without someone calling to say, *What's the matter with you? How could you not have covered . . . whatever it was.* But really, how much can you cover in two or three minutes?"

Ted Turner, meanwhile, bought a UHF station in Atlanta and renamed it WTCG. The call letters stood

for Turner Communications Group, but he liked to tell people they really stood for something more hubristic still: Watch This Channel Grow.

### III

#### "Ted's Got Giant Balls"

STAN KASTEN will never forget the final night of the 1976 Republican National Convention in Kansas City, Mo., not because Gerald Ford narrowly won the GOP presidential nomination over Ronald Reagan,

but because the morning after the Gipper's defeat, the 24-year-old Kasten, fresh out of Columbia Law School and touring U.S. ballparks with his fiancée, Helen Weisz, left Kansas City for St. Louis. It was Aug. 20, and—for Kasten, at least—U.S. history would abruptly succumb to personal history in the four hours it took to drive across Missouri.

On arrival at Busch Stadium, Stan and Helen bought tickets for the Cardinals' game against the Braves. As a special treat, Kasten sprang for seats in the lower deck. Had the tickets been anywhere else, or had the Cardinals hosted any other team, Kasten would have returned home to New York to become an antitrust lawyer.

That he didn't was a happy accident. "Between innings," Kasten says, "we see this wild guy running up and down the aisle. I was such a baseball fan that I even knew what the owners looked like. The wild guy running up and down the aisle was Ted Turner, the new owner of the Braves."

Stan told Helen who the man was—"She said, Oh, O.K.," he recalls—and after the game he told her, You know what? I think I want to go up and talk to him. "He was approachable," says Kasten. "He still is to this day. That's just who Ted is. I went up to him, we started chatting, and he said, 'Send me a letter,' and a couple weeks later he invited me down to Atlanta."

On his first day as a lawyer working for Turner, Kasten attended a meeting about the boss's purchase of an NBA team, the Hawks. Turner had bought the Braves prior to



"Flood [left, with Miller] was a huge moment for me," says Tellem. "I started to see that sports were on the cutting edge of the issues we would all confront as a society."

# 50

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that season, and he immediately acquired Dodgers pitcher Andy Messersmith as a free agent—the very first free agent. A decade after Koufax and Drysdale held out, MLB’s permanent arbitrator, Peter Seitz, struck down the reserve clause (and for his temerity was fired immediately by the owners). Turner signed Messersmith for \$1 million over three years, the magical figure sought jointly by Koufax and Drysdale, and issued him the number 17. Turner briefly put CHANNEL above that number on Messersmith’s jersey, to promote his own Channel 17, WTCG—Watch This Channel Grow. All over America, people would soon be doing just that.

Six weeks after Kasten arrived, Turner put WTCG—and the Braves—on the Satcom-1 satellite as national programming for those cable systems now covering the remotest areas of the U.S. Says Kasten, “Ted had this sense, for sure, that this was absolutely going to change things.”

Not everyone was enamored of the idea. “As you can imagine, teams didn’t want competition,” says Rasmussen, who had by then abandoned sports broadcasting to work as the communications director for the New England Whalers of the World Hockey Association, in Hartford. “Eventually there was a landmark suit brought by [station owner] Stanley Hubbard in St. Paul, Minn.: Ted had a syndicated deal to carry *I Dream of Jeannie*, but *I Dream of Jeannie* was also sold in individual markets. So when Hubbard makes a deal to air *I Dream of Jeannie* in Minneapolis, and Ted is also showing it there, and Braves broadcasters are telling viewers, ‘Stay tuned for *I Dream of Jeannie*,’ well. . . .”

Well, the result was *Hubbard Broadcasting Inc. v. Southern Satellite Systems, Inc.*, whose resolution gave—via something called the passive carrier exemption—a green light to Turner. “It’s so funny,” says Rasmussen, “that *I Dream of Jeannie* was the show at the center of it all.”



2/21/77



11/14/77



7/17/78



8

In that inaugural spring of satellite-TV baseball, Kasten was dispatched to Florida with another young Turner attorney Terry McGuirk. In one of his earliest jobs, McGuirk had laid the wire for cable TV, a job that did not quite prepare him for what awaited him and Kasten in the Grapefruit League. There the two men were charged with explaining the benefits of the new national network that would televise most Braves games to an audience that didn’t yet know it wanted Braves games.

“Terry and I were the first people to share with other teams’ owners’ this great new idea of the Superstation,” says Kasten. “They didn’t think it was so great, but that was our job—we were your sacrificial lambs.” At his first Major League Baseball owners’ meeting in Tampa in 1977, Kasten was describing the wondrous new satellite technology that would put the Braves in homes beyond the South. “A very gruff, stern, impatient Walter O’Malley was grilling me,” Kasten recalls. “He kept referring to me as *Counselor*, as if it was the worst insult you could call a person. I’m 25 years old, being pummeled and intimidated by [73-year-old] Walt O’Malley. I’ll never forget that.” Kasten pokes an invisible cigar at the cheek of an imaginary young attorney and says, “Is that so, Counselor?” In Kasten’s retelling, *Counselor* sounds very much like a-----.



### DEAL OF THE CENTURY

The owners of the ABA’s Spirits of St. Louis (in orange) got rich on NBA TV money.

Turner knew that ubiquitous television would not cannibalize the live audience for his baseball games but, in contravention of conventional wisdom, would only increase it. By putting the Braves on the satellite and calling them America’s Team, he would make them America’s Team. It was—at least in Turner’s view—a self-fulfilling prophecy.

“What distinguishes Ted?” Bob Wussler, the former president of CBS who became the senior executive vice president of TBS, liked to say. “He’s got giant balls.”

“When his advisers tell him not to do things, he does them,” Kasten says of Turner. When the Utah Jazz drafted



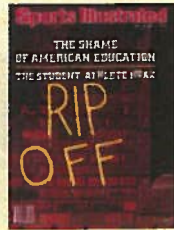
7/9/79



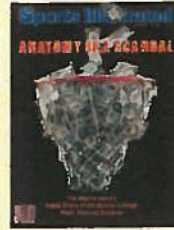
11/19/79



3/3/80



5/19/80



2/18/81



6/22/81

Dominique Wilkins third in 1982, the Hawks wanted him, not least because he had played three years of college ball at Georgia. And the Jazz, in financial trouble like the rest of the teams in the NBA, were willing to deal him. “We would have to trade a couple of players,” Kasten says, “and Utah would do the deal only if they got a lot of money. We had to give them”—he pauses like Dr. Evil before saying this phrase—“one million dollars.”

When Kasten presented the proposed Wilkins deal to Turner, the boss liked the idea and turned to his chief financial officer, Bill Bevins. “Bill, can we get a million dollars?” Turner asked.

Bevins replied, “No, Ted, I don’t think we can.”

At which point Turner turned to Kasten and said, “Stan, go do it.”

Banks were understandably reluctant to lend money to a professional basketball franchise. The NBA had shown little economic promise when Kasten arrived in Atlanta in 1976. That year the American Basketball Association went out of business, except for the four teams that were absorbed by the NBA: the Nuggets, Pacers, Spurs and Nets. The other five teams were euthanized, including the Spirits of St. Louis, whose owners—the brothers Ozzie and Daniel Silna—had held out for the best possible incentive to go away: \$2.23 million and one-seventh of the TV revenues that the four former ABA teams would earn in the new NBA. So dismal were the prospects for the NBA on TV that the league made this deal with the Silnas in perpetuity.

“Perpetuity is a *looong* freakin’ time,” says Kasten. But the NBA had little to lose, so deeply unappealing was its on-court product and so anemic its future television revenue. The Hawks, for instance, were about to move out of Atlanta, only 10 years after moving there from St. Louis. Like a farmer searching for more arable land, Turner was going to move the Hawks to Charlotte for the 1978–79 season, and he would have done so had coach Hubie Brown not performed a rather inconvenient miracle by getting that team with its \$800,000 payroll into the playoffs.

Even so, the Hawks played 1977–78 regular-season games in Charlotte, Hartford, Baton Rouge and Louisville. In Louisville an existential question was raised: If a tree—or Hawks center Tree Rollins—falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? Because in Louisville no one showed up.

Turner had been in Charlotte for the Hawks’ home game there, had flown to New York City the next morning for an advertisers’ meeting on Madison Avenue and planned to rejoin the Hawks in Louisville that night. But two days before the game, Louisville had its largest snowfall in a 24-hour period in history, and governor Julian Carroll closed the roads. Still, the NBA had a rule requiring teams to play if they could both make it to the arena. “It didn’t matter,” says Kasten, “if fans couldn’t get there.”

Freedom Hall is a couple of minutes from the Louisville airport. The Hawks had no problem getting to the arena. “They made us play in front of nobody,” says Kasten. Turner arrived to discover there were no available rooms at the Hawks’ hotel, which was bursting with stranded travelers, so he spent the night with Kasten, who recounts the story as if it’s from an ancient civilization: “I shared a hotel room with Ted Turner, and we played the Bulls in an empty Freedom Hall.”

It was no more depressing than playing the Bulls in the cavernous and echoing Chicago Stadium. “Those were sad, awful games,” says Kasten. “There was no one in Chicago pre-Jordan. People have forgotten, but those were the old days of the NBA.”

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY was even less robust. The Whalers were beaten by the Winnipeg Jets in the fourth and last game of the 1978 Avco Cup, the WHA finals, on Monday, May 22. Bill Rasmussen, the Whalers’ director of communications, refers to that date, with an astonishment undiluted by time, as “that fateful day.”

In truth, that day became fateful only the following Saturday, when Rasmussen was called at home by Colleen Howe, whose 50-year-old husband, Gordie, was the Whalers’ leading goal scorer, an extraordinary feat considering it came six years after his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame. The Howes’ son Mark finished second on the team in points that season, while Mark’s brother Marty was a staple of the Whalers’ defense. Colleen, for her part, was one of the first female agents in sports. Mrs. Howe didn’t just negotiate the contracts for her husband; she would have the foresight one day to trademark his nickname: Mr. Hockey®.

All of which is to say that being the Whalers’ p.r. guy was not all that different from being the Howes’ p.r. guy, a role that Rasmussen had formally filled for the family’s company, Howe Enterprises, whose matriarch was now ringing him

# 50

A N N I V E R S A R Y



1/18/82



3/8/82



8/8/83



9/9/83

up on Memorial Day weekend on her way to the family's summer home in Traverse City, Mich., sounding ominously tongue-tied. "Bill, I didn't want to do it this way," Colleen began, and Rasmussen knew it was bad news: The Whalers had been swiftly swept from the Avco Cup, and now, Colleen noted, the front office was being swiftly swept clean of its occupants. Owner Howard Baldwin didn't want Rasmussen back. Furthermore, she said, Howe Enterprises no longer required his services. Rasmussen, sitting at home in the Hartford suburb of Avon, Conn., had just gotten the ziggy from Mrs. Hockey®. (She trademarked that name too.)

The following Monday morning, Rasmussen called Baldwin, who abruptly and somewhat indignantly confirmed his firing. "It did not quite meet the standards of today's HR practices," says Rasmussen of his termination. But Tuesday held one last potential indignity. Rasmussen had been scheduled to meet with a man named Ed Eagan about a Whalers retrospective TV program. He called Eagan to say he no longer worked for the Whalers and didn't feel terribly enthusiastic about promoting them. But Eagan persuaded him to keep the appointment, and the two men discussed the need for a half-hour cable program about Connecticut sports, something to compensate for the three minutes of local broadcast sports that Rasmussen—and his viewers—had always found so desultory.

There obviously would not be a large audience for such a show—Connecticut had only five cable systems, the largest of which, in Plainville, had 9,500 subscribers—but they thought that small audience would be enthusiastic. It helped that UConn athletic director John Toner (who five years later would become president of the NCAA) loved the idea. Rasmussen forged ahead.

It had been only 18 months since Ted Turner had put his UHF station, replete with Braves games, on RCA's Satcom-1 satellite. Since its launch on Dec. 13, 1975, Satcom-1 had been orbiting the earth largely bereft of commercial traffic. Rasmussen was among the few who knew of its existence, or of its principal patron. "We knew Ted was up there," he says, but that was about all. So one morning Rasmussen screwed up the nerve to call RCA at its towering art deco headquarters in Manhattan's 30 Rockefeller Plaza. "I have just been fired, this little guy from the South Side of Chicago, a former sports announcer," he says. "But"—and here's the secret to so much of life—"the operator doesn't know that."

She put him through to the gentleman in charge of Satcom sales. When Rasmussen introduced himself, the salesman practically cut him off. "Where are you in Connecticut?" I asked. "I'll be up there tomorrow morning."

Unknown to Rasmussen, RCA was looking for some brave or foolhardy soul who wanted to use one of its satellite transponders 24 hours a day, so that RCA could charge that price 24 hours a day. The same wisdom that advises against owning a horse—*Don't buy anything that eats while you sleep*—also prevailed about programming a satellite around the clock. "Even Ted Turner went off the air at 1 a.m.," Rasmussen recalls, "because conventional wisdom was that all TV stations signed off at 1 a.m. HBO was only on five hours a night. HBO had been founded by a man named Charles Dolan, who delivered premium movies to monthly subscribers."

The more Rasmussen thought about it, the more he liked the idea of filling 24 hours with sports. It was barely a month since Mrs. Hockey® had called to can him, but his innocence was intact. "We just did it day to day," Rasmussen says. "We had to get financing, but that didn't stop us." He got a \$9,000 cash advance on his credit card, invited relatives in Illinois to "invest" in his "company" and found a small investment bank in King of Prussia, Pa., to help him find stakeholder who didn't share his surname. "We were turned down by half a dozen," he says, "by the time we got to Getty Oil."

Getty Oil, which would eventually become the principal owner of this new enterprise, could see Satcom-1 as an open field in its own right, a source of almost bottomless potential. *The Wall Street Journal* ran a piece on Satcom-1 shortly after Rasmussen made the deal with RCA. "And then a lot of people in the summer of 1978 became suddenly aware of the possibilities of these satellites," Rasmussen says.

By the fall, the Satcom-1 transponders were all sold. Warner Cable would put a children's channel called Nickelodeon on transponder reportedly purchased from the televangelists Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. The Learning Channel, the Weather Channel, Lifetime—so-called niche programmers—would follow them into space, like the moon man who became the mascot for another satellite cable channel: MTV.

Turner's 24-hour news channel, CNN, would go live on June 1, 1980, and the man who inherited his father's billboard business would order a three-dimensional billboard of his own, outside the National Cable Television Association's convention in Las Vegas. On it Turner played guitar.



8/13/84



12/10/84



3/10/86



7/14/86



1/5/87



4/20/87

beneath the tagline I WAS CABLE WHEN CABLE WASN'T COOL. But news and weather and music could fill 24 hours, as they had forever on the radio. Sports faced a problem. "We now had to program 8,760 hours a year," as Rasmussen puts it, "rather than 30 minutes a day." That problem was largely solved during a single car ride from Avon, Conn., to Ocean Grove, N.J., on Aug. 16, 1978. "Twenty-four years to the day after SI's first issue," Rasmussen notes. "So it's your anniversary, and ours."

BILL RASMUSSEN REMEMBERS the date because it was the 16th birthday of his daughter, Lynn, and Bill and his son Scott were driving to the Jersey Shore to celebrate with her. Sweating in a traffic jam on I-84 in Waterbury, Conn., in a small blue Mazda without air-conditioning, father and son listed their programming ideas on a yellow legal pad, including a nightly half-hour program based on the show that inspired this whole enterprise. They called it *Sports Central*.

Scott suggested that the rest of the echoing void be filled with as much football as possible, for that was the sport—as Hamill had divined a decade earlier—that was now most appealing to American appetites. College football, in particular, seemed a boundless renewable resource. Bill and Scott even sketched the headquarters building they would eventually place in a "development zone" in Bristol, Conn. "The architect asked if we wanted the whole building air-conditioned," Bill says, "or if we didn't want to cool the stairwells and bathrooms."

There was also the matter of what to call this new channel. Rasmussen liked Sports Programming Network, but its initials were already taken by something called the Satellite Program Network. "So we threw an 'E' in front," he says, "and became the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, or, for short, the E.S.P. Network: That's E period, S period, P period." It was eventually shortened further to ESPN, though that still

wasn't short enough for some. *TV Guide* said it wouldn't carry the network's listings because, Rasmussen was told, "Real TV networks have three letters, not four."

By then he had grown used to rejection, having faced it almost without pause since Mrs. Hockey® gave him the axe that fateful day in Connecticut. "I remember meeting with the Pac-10 conference in Phoenix and pitching the idea to them," says Rasmussen, "and they said, 'Nah, we're not really interested, we're doing just fine.'" He heard the same from

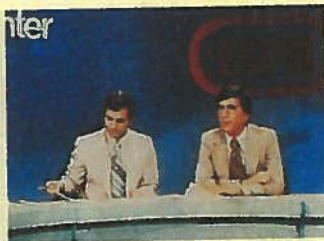
other officials throughout sports, each like Walter O'Malley telling the young Stan Kasten, "Is that so, Counselor?"

With or without the blessing of *TV Guide*, ESPN was first beamed to Earth via the Satcom-1 satellite on Sept. 7, 1979. Until then, when the Rasmussens drove on family vacations in that little blue Mazda without air-conditioning, they would pass motel after motel that boasted, WE HAVE HBO. But as early as 1980 they began to notice a small addendum on some motel marquees: WE HAVE HBO & ESPN. Seeing the first such sign, Bill and Scott shouted, "We're in motels!" They could scarcely believe their good fortune: They had joined air-conditioning, ice and hourly rates as a marquee motel amenity.

Soon after, some restaurants and bars began to put up their own signs: WE HAVE ESPN. "We were going to households building a business based on pennies per subscriber when the bars now had 42 screens and were drawing

money from them," says Rasmussen, "so eventually we worked out a business rate as well as a residential rate."

The nightly 30-minute highlight show wrapping up the day in sports—*Sports Central* had by now been tweaked to *SportsCenter*—was attracting a devoted audience. "That first extensive coverage of March Madness in 1980," says Rasmussen, "was like a feeding frenzy, all these people saying, *I watched four games last night on that new sports channel, ESPN!*" It was too rash to say, but some were now thinking it: Twenty-four hours of sports might not be enough.



It wasn't long after ESPN went on the air in 1979 that some began thinking: **Twenty-four hours of sports might not be enough.**

# SO

A N N I V E R S A R Y



5/9/88



8/22/88



7/31/89



10

## IV "But Isn't the Future Wire-less?"

ARN TELLEM, the Phillies fanatic and Koufax acolyte, took his local sports columnist's advice and became a lawyer instead of a scribe, attending Michigan Law School, where Branch Rickey got his degree.

After graduating, Tellem followed the Dodgers to Los Angeles, where he went into private practice with another young attorney, Steve Greenberg. While not quite the player that his father had been—Hank Greenberg was a Hall of Fame slugger for the Tigers—Steve played five seasons of minor league baseball after graduating from Yale and now was the attorney for a former teammate, All-Star third baseman Bill Madlock.

Seeking a baseball-playing client of his own, Tellem courted—who else?—a flame-throwing lefthanded pitcher, whom he found at San Jose State. The Mariners would select Mark Langston in the second round of the 1981 draft.

Three months earlier, the major television networks had urgently announced an assassination attempt on President Reagan—and then returned to their regular programming of soap operas. Ted Turner's new news network, with 24 hours to fill, followed the story in real time, and it was therefore the first to announce that the president had been shot and gravely injured.

If the conventional wisdom of television was wrong and you didn't have to sign off at 1 a.m.—or indeed ever—and more baseball games on TV meant more fans through the turnstiles, then what else was wrong about the conventional wisdom in sports? As the young general manager of the Hawks, Stan Kasten subscribed to the monographs of baseball analysis published by Bill James, who had pored over box scores to pass the time as a night watchman at the Stokely-Van Camp pork-and-beans cannery in Lawrence, Kans. James later published annual books of statistical analysis called *The Baseball Abstract*.



### THE ABC'S OF TBS

With lots of airtime to fill, Turner set out to make the Braves America's Team.

Says Kasten, "I had become fascinated by statistics and the question, Could you do more with them?"

So one day in the early 1980s Kasten got a phone number "for this guy in Kansas," called him up and introduced himself as the general manager of the Atlanta Hawks. "Wait a minute," James said. "You're a basketball GM?"

"Yes," Kasten replied. "Are there any basketball applications? Are there any lessons for me?"

In Kasten's recollection, James could think of only one thing. "Whenever you can," he said "just question the conventional wisdom. I find it is wrong so often."

The two continued to chat, and James mentioned that he was a fan of the Kansas Jayhawks. As Kasten recalls, "He said, 'It always seemed to me that when a player scores 30 points or more, he may do his team more harm than good, because it takes the team out of what they're trying to do.' He said, 'Is there any way of checking that?'"

There wasn't, at least not for college basketball, but Kasten discovered in the annual *NBA Guide* a list of every game from the previous season in which a player had scored 40 or more points. He quickly calculated the winning percentage of teams featuring a 40-point scorer. "And I had an interesting conclusion after one season," Kasten says. He then got the previous 10 years of *NBA Guides*. "And it was always the

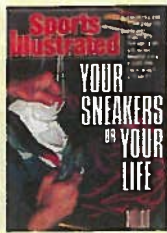
same," says Kasten: The team that had a 40-point scorer won the game more than 70% of the time. "Completely the opposite," he says, "of what my hard-ass coaches would tell you." And of what James had guessed.

On the court and in the culture at large, the NBA was going from analog to digital. A *deus ex machina*—two of them—had descended from the heavens to solve the league's problems tidily in the third act. By the time those young gods, Larry Bird and Earvin (Magic) Johnson, were joined in 1984 by Michael Jordan, three franchises-





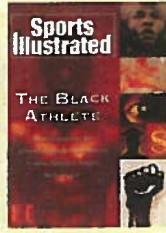
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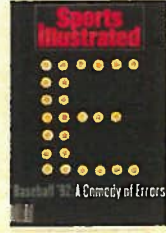
5/14/90



7/22/91



8/5/91



5/18/92



8/22/92

one on either end of the country and one squarely in the middle—were lifting all the others. The world felt a growing appetite for U.S. basketball and its biggest stars. Ted Turner was eager to feed it.

Six years after Kasten borrowed \$1 million to buy Dominique Wilkins from Utah, and two months after 'Nique's team lost to Bird's Celtics in a riveting Game 7 of the 1988 Eastern Conference semifinals—Bird outscoring Wilkins 20–16 in the fourth quarter—the Hawks sent a 60-person party on a 13-day goodwill tour of the Soviet Union. Wilkins, Spud Webb and Doc Rivers played in front of hushed crowds against Soviet stars such as Aleksandr Volkov, whom Kasten had already drafted and who would join the Hawks the following year. "Truthfully, the tour had much more to do with TBS than it did with us," Hawks guard John Battle said, referring to Turner's growing cable-TV station. Turner had changed the call letters from WTCG to WTBS in 1979 and later dropped the W in compliance with *TV Guide's* rule that real networks had only three letters.

TBS had broadcast and coproduced the Goodwill Games from Moscow in 1986, 10 years after going up on Satcom-1. The genie—like *I Dream of Jeannie*—was forever out of the bottle.

Kasten scarcely had time to absorb what had happened. When he started in the NBA in 1977, the Hawks had one assistant coach on the bench. By the end of Kasten's tenure as GM, in 1990, they had an army in Armani on the sideline. "When I bought the team, there were six people in the front office, and in a good year you could make a million bucks," Turner liked to tell Kasten. "Now there are 200 people in the front office, and in a good year you can make a million bucks."

That's because salaries had risen as swiftly as revenue in the 13 years since Turner signed Andy Messersmith as the first free agent. In 1989, eight years after Mark Langston left San Jose State to become a young attorney's first sports client, he was a free agent, squired from team to team by Arn Tellem, who earlier that year had left the law firm to open his own sports agency. Tellem secured for the 29-year-old pitcher the richest contract in the history of baseball: five years for \$16 million, including an astonishing \$3.25 million in each of the last four years.

By the time the 1980s drew to a close and this new era of commerce was ushered in—almost at the same moment as the Berlin Wall was opened to the West, on Nov. 9, 1989—

the Silna brothers, the former owners of the ABA's Spirits of St. Louis, were reaping tens of millions of dollars from their perpetual TV deal, enriching them beyond imagination. "Every year the numbers got bigger and bigger, and it was never going to get easier to do a deal with them," says Kasten.

By then Kasten was also running the Braves—he would go on to run the Atlanta Thrashers of the NHL too—and turned much of his attention to baseball. Turner's Braves in the 1990s were the best team in the National League, with a large fan base reared on the Superstation and an owner for whom the world was a plaything. Turner was a cat with a ball of yarn—the earth wrapped in coaxial cable.

Before each home game of the 1991 World Series, the Braves' owner drove into his team's obsolescent ballpark, Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, with his famous fiancée, Jane Fonda, the two of them emerging from the same down-market sedan whose back bumper bore the understated sticker I [HEART] CABLE TV.

ATLANTA-FULTON COUNTY STADIUM had opened in 1965, "in that era of multipurpose stadiums which we now know were really no-purpose stadiums," as Kasten puts it. He had first seen Dodger Stadium on his honeymoon, in 1977, on another holiday ballpark tour, this time to see each of the California parks. Danny Goodman had made Dodger Stadium relatively rife with shiftable souvenirs, but in most of Kasten's travels he found no reason to arrive at a game early, because there was nothing to see beyond batting practice. "Narrow concourses," says Kasten. "A few concession stands with a few items. No variety."

The ballpark renaissance that Goodman had envisioned in 1962—"We'll have full-scale shopping centers inside the parks"—didn't begin in earnest until 30 years later, when the Orioles built their new ballpark at Camden Yards with the aid of a young architect and urban planner named Janet Marie Smith, the team's vice president of planning and development. She worked with the architects HOK on the new stadium, though it wasn't a stadium at all but a ballpark, more steel than concrete, that would fit into the surrounding neighborhood organically, as if it had always been there, so that Oriole Park and the warehouses beyond it would appear to have grown old together, like a married couple.

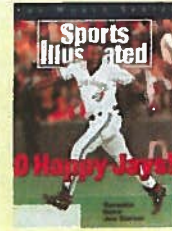
Which is what a ballpark and its neighborhood were supposed to be: spouses. Ebbets Field had fit seamlessly

# GO

A N N I V E R S A R Y



5/10/93



11/1/93



1/17/94

into the Flatbush streets that gave it its shape. The Dodgers' move west had been not just a triumph of manifest destiny but a failure of urban planning: baseball divorcing its neighborhood rather than completing it. So when Muhammad Ali, with trembling hands, lit the torch to open the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, in a stadium the Braves would take over as their own, Smith had already been working for the team for two years, hired by Kasten to convert Olympic Stadium into a ballpark named for Ted Turner. Once again, Bill James's advice—"Whenever possible, question the conventional wisdom"—would serve Kasten well.

"When we did Turner Field, we did three things," says Kasten. "We borrowed some things, but they were innovations that have been copied everywhere since. Number one was the grand entry plaza: You stop in it, with concessions and entertainment and a merchandise store in a big gathering place. We weren't in the city, so we were gonna make our own city square. Number two was the Chop House [restaurant and party deck]—which, frankly, Janet and I borrowed from the [Blue Moon] brewery in Coors Field, that brew pub that looks out onto Blake Street. We said, Let's do that, but let's have it in the stands, looking at the game. And the third was the Coca-Cola Sky Field, a place for kids to roam and play. There's a variation of all three of those things everywhere now."

The mantra he instilled in everyone working on the project was one that Danny Goodman (who died in 1983, souvenir pennants flying at half staff in his memory) would have admired: "Milling is bad," Kasten said. "Buying is good." Twenty years later he says it again, slower and with greater emphasis—"Milling is bad, buying is good"—sounding a little like Alec Baldwin in *Glengarry Glen Ross*: "Always be closing."

The ballpark was the most natural place for a fan to buy team gear. By then something called the World Wide Web had entered the margins of public consciousness, but the few wonks who used it could scarcely buy anything over a computer at the start of 1995. Indeed, the National Science Foundation had only recently lifted its prohibition against commercial transactions on the Internet, whose purpose was research, unsullied by filthy lucre.

But even "research"—whether scientific or journalistic or pornographic—was difficult in that dark age before search engines. A 1994 self-help manual titled *How to Use the Internet* likened it all to Ted Turner's dominant medium

of the day: "Surfing the Internet is a lot like channel surf on your cable television," wrote author Mark Butler. "I have no idea what is on or even what you want to watch."

That year NBC's *Today* show displayed an email address for viewer comments, prompting host Bryant Gumbel to ask, "What is the Internet, anyway? Do you write to it, I mean, by mail?" Katie Couric thought the @ symbol stood for *about* or possibly *around*. From off-camera, the disembodied voice of a crew member tried to explain the Internet: "It's like a computer billboard . . . and it's getting bigger and bigger all the time."

Futurists promised the Internet would democratize media, give every citizen his own bullhorn, build an opinionated Tower of Babel but also build communities of like-minded people. By February 1995, *Newsweek*—in an essay by author and astronomer Cliff Stoll—was still skeptical, to say the least. "The cacophony more closely resembles citizens band radio, complete with handles, harassment, and anonymous threats," wrote Stoll. "When most everyone shouts, few listen. How about electronic publishing? Try reading a book on disc. At best, it's an unpleasant chore: the myopic glare of a clunky computer replaces the friendly pages of a book. And you can't tote that laptop to the beach. Yet Nicholas Negroponte, director of the MIT Media Lab, predicts that we'll soon buy books and newspapers straight over the Internet. Uh, sure."

That summer, while the Braves were leading the NL Eastern Division en route to winning the World Series in their dilapidated home only nine months before the Atlanta Olympics, Columbia Pictures released a dystopian thriller called *The Net*, in which Sandra Bullock played a systems analyst who lives her life primarily through her computer, which was becoming the engine of all human possibility and—at the same time—the instrument of man's imminent demise.

If there was no reason for Turner Field to be wired for the dial-up Internet when the Braves began play there in 1997—those who used the Web at all in 1996 did so for an average of 30 minutes a month, or six hours all year—then Kasten and Janet Marie Smith would have to divine the future as they planned Philips Arena, the future home of the Hawks. They chose to hard-wire it, in case the skeptics were wrong. No one really knew what the future held. Madison Square Garden, owned by HBO founder Charles Dolan, installed TVs in some seatbacks, on the hunch that



6/12/95



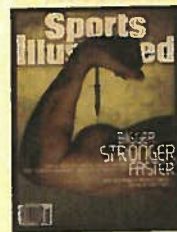
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10/28/96



4/14/97



7/7/97

fans wanted to watch what they were already watching, only in smaller form and without a panoramic field of vision.

Tomorrow was a mystery, and it remains so today. "What's the next innovation?" says Kasten, seated at a glass coffee table in his office at Dodger Stadium. "Little dancing holograms where we watch the players play the game right here?" He gestures to the coffee table and shrugs. "I don't know. I don't know what's next."

The Hawks opened Philips Arena in the final year of the 20th century, when some people fervently believed that a "Y2K virus" would bring all computers (and by extension the world) to its knees. Kasten remembers showing the 41-year-old billionaire Mark Cuban around Philips Arena and pausing to point out the conduit laid in the concrete under the stairs for that futuristic day—"it wasn't ready yet, but we knew it was coming"—when the world linked hands inextricably, like a chain of paper dolls.

Cuban and his friend Todd Wagner had attended Indiana University and wished, after graduating and moving away, that they could still hear Hoosiers basketball games on the radio. Together they founded AudioNet, later renamed Broadcast.com, a company that "streamed" ballgames on the Internet the way transistor radios once did through the air. Sports fans could listen to radio calls of their favorite teams from wherever they could find an Internet connection. For this small miracle, a company with the improbable name of Yahoo!—one of the few profitable Internet enterprises, a so-called "portal" with 30 million unique visitors a month—purchased Cuban's company in 1999 for \$5.7 billion in stock. Looking around Philips Arena that year, the newly minted dotcom billionaire was suitably impressed. "Wow," Cuban said. "You have one wired building."

Kasten replied, "But tell me, Mark, isn't the future wireless?" Cuban said yes, of course it was, but this way the Hawks would be covered in that period of transition as

one millennium turned to another without a catastrophe. And so it did, or so it seemed. With his new fortune Cuban bought an NBA team, taking ownership of the Mavericks on Jan. 4, 2000, the Y2K bug having spared the world a postmodern cataclysm.

The wireless future still had not arrived on Sept. 11, 2001, when the North Tower of the World Trade Center fell, and with it the 360-foot-tall broadcast antenna used by several New York City TV stations, so that the terrible events in Lower Manhattan were communicated to many of the people most immediately affected by them—New Yorkers—via the local stations' emergency backup transmitter. For some, that was the tower that Edward Armstrong had built in Alpine, N.J., to broadcast FM radio signals in 1938, when the world was again on the brink of war, and an 11-year-old Vin Scully would lie under his family's radio across the Hudson River in Washington Heights, the sound pouring over him like water from a shower head.



**When Turner Field held its first game, it immediately embodied the mantra that Kasten instilled in everyone: "Milling is bad, buying is good."**

**V** | **"That Little Kiss of Red"**  
ONE NIGHT in 1999, shortly after Arn Tellem had moved into a new house with his young family in the Los Angeles suburb of Pacific Palisades, a neighbor came calling at the door. That's odd, thought Tellem, who was working in his home office off the front hall. Why is the doorbell ringing at 9 o'clock? His son Michael answered, and Arn—from a

distance—heard the boy and his two brothers scream. "Then," says Tellem, "I heard the Voice."

The dapper neighbor standing on the front step was going door-to-door soliciting donations for a charity. If Sandy Koufax was a Biblical figure to Tellem, here was the Bible's omniscient narrator, Vin Scully, physically coming into his home, as he had done metaphorically lo

# 50

A N N I V E R S A R Y



2/27/98



10/26/98



5/24/99



7

those many years. The agent stood there thunderstruck, as if “God was standing in my front hall.”

That voice had been borne by radio and broadcast television signals, triangulated by satellite, transmuted through coaxial cable, carried through the public address speakers at Ebbets Field and Dodger Stadium and even, unfiltered, through the air at a million Dodgers caravan stops. But the Internet would make it truly global, sending it to every corner of the world, like the Voice of America.

Steve Jobs introduced the iPhone, to fevered anticipation, on Jan. 9, 2007. It was slightly smaller than a deck of cards—easily fitting in a man’s shirt pocket—and would eventually come in several colors. Like the TR-1 transistor radio, it could be taken to a ballgame and used as a radio, but more than that, the so-called smartphone could summon a world of information with a finger-swipe. As with its forerunner, the cellphone, many fans enjoyed simply sitting with it behind home plate, yammering into the mouthpiece while waving through the TV to the person on the other end.

By then Kasten was president and minority owner of the Washington Nationals, in a city divided by everything but sports. “We were the unifying element,” he says, “a politics-free zone. Friends on both sides of the aisle could agree to come to games, so we had conservative and liberal justices of the Supreme Court. All sports, not just baseball, are a fundamentally wonderful and unique part of our culture.”

Kasten left his position with the Nats after five seasons, eminently aware that no U.S. team has had a larger cultural significance than the Dodgers. When embattled team owner Frank McCourt put the ball club and its stadium up for sale at the end of 2011, Kasten hadn’t forgotten that it was the Dodgers (not to mention his wife) with whom he had spent his honeymoon. So he joined Mark Walter, chief executive of the global financial services company Guggenheim Partners, in bidding to buy the team. Their

group was glamorized by the addition of African-American entrepreneur Magic Johnson, who had helped to transform the NBA economically, and vice versa.

But the Dodgers had other prominent suitors, among them Mark Cuban, and another group led by hedge fund manager Steve Cohen, who enlisted as a partner Arn Tellem. The powerful sports agent had joked that a Jewish boy learns at his bar mitzvah that he has a better chance of owning a team than ever playing for one. Now here he was attempting to buy the team that featured in his adolescent fever dreams as he fell asleep with his SPORTS ILLUSTRATION

on Friday nights in Philadelphia. “The Dodgers for me weren’t about business,” Tellem says. “It was an emotional decision to pursue one of our most important franchises, with the greatest history—to be linked to the team of Robinson and Kousser.”

Had Cohen’s bid prevailed, Tellem would have been the team president. Instead the Dodgers went to the group led by Walter and Kasten and Magic Johnson, whose winning bid was an arresting \$2.15 billion.

On his second day as team president, CEO and part owner, Kasten went home and told his wife, “Vic Scully called me today!”

“What did he want?” Helen asked. Stan sighed and said, “You don’t understand. That’s the story: Vic Scully called me today.”

Kasten now occupies the offices built and occupied by Walter O’Malley, who terrified him back in 1977, when he and his friend Terry McGuirk—now the chairman of the Braves—tried to sell skeptical owners on the concept of a baseball team on cable TV.

Kasten immediately set about updating 50-year-old Dodger Stadium with the help of the Ballpark Whisperer, Janet Marie Smith, who had gone from Turner Field to Boston to modernize Fenway Park, then back to Baltimore to freshen up Camden Yards for its 20th anniversary in 2012. Among Smith’s many improvements to Dodger Stadium were adding charging stations for

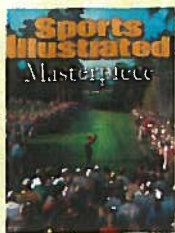


## SELFIE-EXPRESSION

Thanks to the smartphone, athletes aren’t the only attractions at the park.



5/15/00



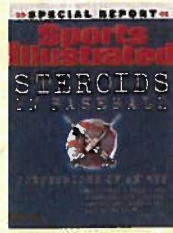
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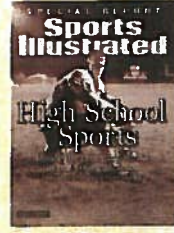
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personal electronics and doubling the size of the flagship team store. *Milling is bad, buying is good.*

The Dodgers have exported their brand to the world, and the world in turn has exported its icons to the Dodgers. Kasten thought deeply about what to put on his office walls, which he hung with portraits of transformative figures in team history: Scully, Robinson, Koufax, Fernando Valenzuela and the club's legendary Spanish-language broadcaster, Jaime Jarrín. "I maintain that there is no franchise ever or anywhere that has had the impact on popular culture—or on culture at large—that the Dodgers have," he says. "Starting with Jackie Robinson." He gestures to Robinson's portrait before mentioning natives of Brooklyn, Mexico, Japan, South Korea and Cuba: "Sandy Koufax became an icon for a whole generation of assimilated Eastern Europeans, and on to Fernando Valenzuela, [Hideo] Nomo and right through Hyun-jin Ryu and Yasiel Puig. What [other] franchise has affected that many people in such an important way? Not to mention what the Dodgers meant to the business of sports with westward expansion."

Tellem, as Nomo's agent, helped guide the pitcher to Los Angeles. "And it was significant that it was the Dodgers," Tellem says, "because the team was at the forefront of diversity and acceptance." Tellem likewise delivered the Japanese slugger Hideki Matsui to the Yankees, and his firm now represents Puig as well as a United Nations of NBA players, among them Pau and Marc Gasol of Spain, Danilo Gallinari of Italy, Gorgui Dieng of Senegal and, most recently, Joel Embiid of Cameroon, the third pick in the 2014 NBA draft.

A quarter century after the Hawks visited Russia, the NBA opened last season with 92 foreign players from 39 countries, more than 20% of the league. "One of the most rewarding parts of this job is to travel abroad and see how these athletes come here—whether they're from Belgrade or from Girona, Spain, or from western or central Africa—and achieve their dreams," Tellem says. "It represents the best of what sports have to offer."

Those dreams of transformation are flattened and framed on Kasten's office wall, where he keeps a home jersey under glass, its script DODGERS looking as if God had signed his autograph in blue Sharpie. "You wouldn't design that logo today, but that ain't ever changing," Kasten says. "We change some things here we think need changing, but there's some things you do not change." He's lost in a rev-

erie, looking at the jersey for a moment. "Look how pristine that is," he says, as if admiring an ancient portrait at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "And the little kiss of red?" (To be fair, there is something almost erotic about those red numbers on the white shirt, like lipstick on a collar.)

In March the Dodgers opened the MLB season with two games against the Diamondbacks at the Sydney Cricket Ground, halfway around the world. "What surprised me in Australia were all the people wearing Dodger T-shirts, Dodger jackets, Dodger hats," says Scully, who was moved by the beauty of the ballpark too. "It was lovely. You would think they'd played baseball there forever. As you looked out at the ground—singular, not *grounds*—it was all brand-new. But off first base and down the leftfield line were two separate grandstands, built in the 19th century, side by side, and you know what it looked like to me, though I've never even been there? It looked like Churchill Downs. It was just so charming."

The Dodgers had agreed to play two games in Australia only if they were the visiting team for both. Kasten would not give up a single home game at Dodger Stadium. But when he learned that Arizona planned to wear its alternate home jerseys in one game, he asked Major League Baseball if the Dodgers could wear their beautiful home whites, because those uniforms—and that DODGERS in script across the chest, with that little kiss of red—are what baseball looks like to the rest of the world.

That world can follow the Dodgers on its tablets and smartphones and iPod Touches, the last two of these designed, as the Regency TR-1 was 60 years ago, to fit in a person's shirt pocket. The Dodgers have the largest Wi-Fi network in baseball, with nearly 1,000 access points. "They're critical," says Kasten, "and I'll tell you why: It's one place where baseball has a surprising advantage over other sports. When you watch a sporting event, you've got your iPad or your laptop on your lap. We all have the second-screen experience. And our phone is there too, so some of us have a third screen. So here's where baseball has an advantage. We have breaks in the action after every pitch. And where some people use that as a criticism of the pace—they don't understand the strategy of every pitch—it's really an advantage baseball has in reaching out to the next generation, the wired generation, the *un-wired* generation. Those people who have grown up demanding

# GO

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the second- and third-screen experience? We relate to that experience better than any other sport.”

Indeed, in the NFL, being at a game is not as good as being at home, in part because being at home is so sensorially sensational. In baseball the MLB.com At Bat app is an all-you-can-eat buffet of video and stats, giving the smartphoned fan not just out-of-town scores but all out-of-town games—televised, live, in the palm of your hand—so that attending the game is as good (and some nights even better) than being at home. “With the At Bat app, you have everything,” says Kasten. “But you gotta have the Wi-Fi.”

MLB Advanced Media generates half a billion dollars in annual revenue, in large part because people now live on their smartphones and other personal electronic devices, which is why the fans visible behind home plate on any televised game are all gazing into their smartphones. And every game is a televised game. “When you come to a game here, you’re uncomfortable if you can’t access your phone,” says Kasten. “And being uncomfortable is not a good thing for our business.”

## VI | “Cha-Ching!”

PEYTON MANNING was recalling at Super Bowl XLVIII that as a child he would go out to dinner in New Orleans with his parents when his father, Archie, was still an NFL quarterback, and the most famous man in that city might receive a few well-wishers at the table after dinner and sign an autograph here and there. But the difference between then and now is this: “There were no camera phones back then,” said Peyton, who added with what sounded like a sigh, “I do miss those days.”

He’s hardly alone in that sentiment. “Digital cameras did not exist when I signed up,” actor Hugh Laurie said on the BBC radio program *Desert Island Discs*. “For example, I heard the other day that there had been more photographs taken in the last 12 months than have ever been taken in the world, ever. Because people are now photographing—I shudder to think what they’re photographing—everything and nothing. No interaction is deemed to have actually happened unless somebody has a picture of it. Nobody is satisfied with having met a person without having a photograph to prove it. I think that is odd, and I think it is so odd that it may be starting to alter the way we think about each other and the way we think about general day-to-day social interaction.”

The selfie—a photographic self-portrait with the often startled object of one’s affection somewhere in the same frame—has become the new autograph. To riders in this year’s Tour de France, looking up from their bikes to see spectators in their path, the selfie was “a dangerous mix of vanity and stupidity,” as U.S. rider Tejay van Garderen wrote on Twitter. “Standing [in] the middle of the road with [your] back turned while 200 cyclists come at you, just to take a selfie. #think”

When the world champion Red Sox visited the White House in April, slugger David Ortiz, the closest the present-day game has to Babe Ruth—at once powerful and “empowered,” beyond the reach of mere employers—presented President Obama with a personalized Sox jersey. Only one of the two power brokers was wearing sunglasses during the ceremony, and it wasn’t the 44th president of the United States, who stepped back from the podium with the presidential seal and held up the number 44 jersey for a bank of news photographers. “All right, come on, let’s get a good picture here, come on,” he told Papi, who reached into his right pocket and said, “Actually, do you mind if I take my own?”

As sports passed from Jackie Robinson to Curt Flood to free agency, athletes were branded less by team than by their own personhood. They had become, in the parlance of marketers and agencies, their own brands. Social media—Twitter in particular—allowed them to bypass magazines and television entirely and speak directly to their “followers,” while “monetizing” from their various “platforms.” And as Hugh Laurie said, this technology had altered the way we think about human interaction. So the President of the United States, who was more used to this than perhaps any American man besides Peyton Manning, said of Ortiz, “Oh, he wants to do a selfie.”

Papi, fiddling with his phone, bought time by saying, “Yessir! Yessir!”

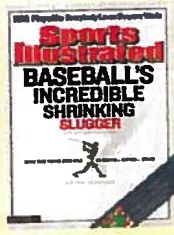
Obama rejoined, “It’s the Big Papi selfie.” To Ortiz’s phone, the President said, “C’mon.”

Finally, smartphone camera reversed into selfie mode, the two powerful figures posed. And just then, while they froze their grins, some knowing figure in the backdrop of players and team officials yelled with the shutter-click, “Cha-ching!”

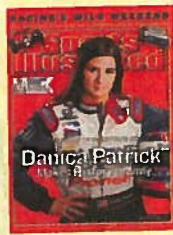
The designated hitter had a deal with the South Korean electronics giant Samsung to promote its brand. Together, Ortiz and Samsung disseminated the selfie to a combined



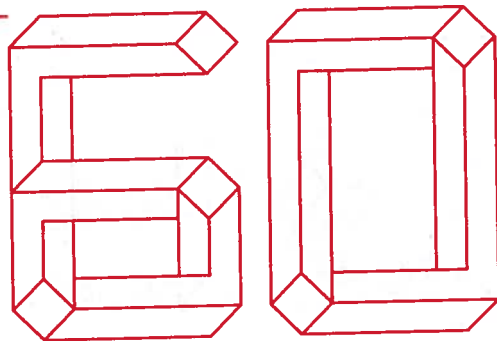
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A N N I V E R S A R Y

5.6 million Twitter followers. Ortiz said he wasn't paid for this particular product placement, but that distinction hardly mattered to White House spokesman Jay Carney, who said, "As a rule, the White House objects to attempts to use the President's likeness for commercial purposes, and we certainly object in this case."

BUT THE ULTIMATE specialized, fragmented, Balkanized "platform" belonged to the Dodgers: The team has its own cable channel, the first devoted exclusively—24/7, 365 days a year—to one club. It is an eternal selfie. Sportsnet LA is bereft even of early-morning fishing shows or late-night high school basketball games, because Bill Rasmussen's 24-hour channel devoted to all sports proved almost instantly insufficient. For the privilege of televising Dodgers baseball over the next 25 years, Time Warner Cable paid more than \$8 billion.

The face of Sportsnet LA is 86-year-old Vin Scully, a DirecTV customer who, as the 2014 season got under way, could not get his own games in his own home, given a dispute between the satellite provider and Time Warner Cable, which was merging—pending FCC approval—with Ralph Roberts's Comcast corporation, already the largest media company in the world. So Scully couldn't watch the Dodgers on his own TV when they were on the road. His physical world is contracting as his voice does the opposite, reaching deeper into the world at large on smartphone, tablet, laptop and even—after all these years—television and radio.

"I never think of it," Scully, at Dodger Stadium, says of this dizzying technological age. "For me, most of the game is the same. Bases still 90 feet apart, 60 feet six to home plate."

"It's true," says Bill Rasmussen, relaxing at home in Tampa. "Sports are still the same. There are so many new platforms for delivery. We can watch on the phones

we're talking on right now, or on your iPad. We started ESPN on typewriters, not computers. But fourth-and-one with three seconds left is as exciting now as it was then."

Steve Jobs, in fathering all those iPhones and iPads, famously flouted conventional wisdom. "Don't be trapped by dogma," he told the Stanford class of 2005, "which is living with the results of other people's thinking."

So Rasmussen remembers attending a breakfast in Manhattan to mark the occasion of SI's 40th anniversary, in 1994. He saw John Wooden there—

the Wizard of Westwood was enjoying a Danish—and the ESPN founder screwed up the courage to introduce himself to the most dominant coach in college basketball history. "And John Wooden said to me, 'Oh, ESPN, that's the worst thing that's ever happened to college sports,'" says Rasmussen, who still sounds ever so slightly hurt. "I think what he meant was: Oh, ESPN, that's the worst thing that ever happened to UCLA recruiting."

The Bruins no longer had a monopoly on the nation's attention. Every team was on TV. The infinite platforms have only increased the demand for sports in the 60 years since TV dinners became ubiquitous in 1954. As the buffet grew, so did the American appetite. Which came first, the Big Gulp or the thirst for it? At 81, splitting his time between Tampa and Seattle, Rasmussen still frequently finds himself in airports—their otherwise sad bars and

restaurants mercifully hung with TVs tuned to the many muted channels he spawned. Anonymous in the middle of a rapt crowd of travelers, he feels a bit like Thomas Edison walking unnoticed into an electrified Times Square. "All these people absorbed in ESPN," he says. "I just sit there and smile on the inside."

And yet, whatever the delivery system—TV, transistor, tablet—Scully calls the same Dodgers games he called when Koufax pitched after holding out with a Hollywood agent; the same Dodgers games he called when Andy



While Ortiz and Obama posed for a selfie on Papi's Samsung phone, some knowing figure in the backdrop yelled with the shutter-click, "Cha-ching!"

# GO

A N N I V E R S A R Y



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Messersmith was freed as a free agent. It scarcely matters as he calls a game that Clayton Kershaw now pitches for the Dodgers at an average salary of \$30.7 million, thanks in no small part to cable television, which enriched owners and athletes and agents alike.

“What does he get?” Scully says of Kershaw, the figures having numbed him gradually, like the best kind of anesthesia. “He gets two hundred and some odd million? We had Miguel Cabrera here, Detroit played here briefly, and I believe Cabrera gets \$39,000 an at bat.” Scully takes a sip of coffee and says in the closest thing to a rebuke that comes from this extraordinarily well-mannered man: “The median household income in Detroit is \$23,600. That’s how far we’ve gone.”

How far we’ve gone: The Dodgers still offer the Dodger Dog, the Cool-A-Coos and the sundae served in an inverted batting helmet. But they also sell fruit kabobs and sushi and edamame washed down with Ketel One Bloody Marys. Says Kasten, “It’s providing the customer more things that they like.”

There have been stops and starts, progress and regress. But for all the retrofit amenities at the latter-day Dodger Stadium, *How Far We’ve Gone* is still best measured in physical distance. It’s 2,450 miles from 1000 Elysian Park Ave. in Los Angeles back to 55 Sullivan Place in Brooklyn, from the “quiches and smoothies” at Dodger Stadium (Kasten) to the “cigarettes and popcorn” at Ebbets Field (Scully).

The space in between is America, and *How Far We’ve Gone* is really a measure of *How Far We’ve Come*, but also of *How Far We Have to Go*.

## VII

### “Empire State of Mind”

EBBETS FIELD WAS knocked down in 1960 with the same wrecking ball—painted white with red stitches—that would raze the Polo Grounds after the Dodgers and the Giants headed west to meet their destinies, and ours.

The Ebbets Field Apartments now stand at the famous intersection of Sullivan Place and McKeever Place, seven connected buildings, 25 stories tall, comprising 1,300 units, many of their windows and balconies supporting satellite dishes whose faces strain toward the spring sky like flowers to the sun. The apartments have been here longer than the ballpark was, and from what little grass remains grow

dandelions and admonishing signs: NO DOGS ON GRASS and KEEP PETS OFF LAWN and—most famously, in the interior courtyard—NO BALL PLAYING.

The ball playing is done across the street, at P.S. 37: the Jackie Robinson School, with its lively mural of Jackie overlooking a playground with three basketball courts. The classroom thrum of adolescent voices leaks through the open windows at the corner where fans once filed into a ticket rotunda whose marble floor, emblazoned EBBETS FIELD was lit by a chandelier made of two dozen bats supporting frosted white globes painted with red baseball stitching.

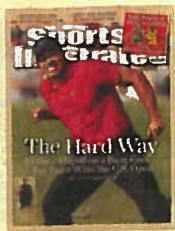
It is all basketball now. Next to the Jackie Robinson School is a city park, the Jackie Robinson Playground, with another full court and three half-courts and two grown men playing one-on-one in scorching heat on May 12, 2014, the biggest sports day that Brooklyn has seen since the Dodgers left.

The Brooklyn Nets are playing the Miami Heat tonight in Game 4 of the NBA’s Eastern Conference semifinals at the Barclays Center, a 30-minute walk away, if you take your time. So stroll five minutes down McKeever, along Ebbets Field’s former third base line, following Robinson’s path stealing home, past the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. From here, if you look right up Washington Avenue, you can see the Chrysler Building, in Manhattan, which once must have resembled a distant Emerald City to those immigrants newly arrived in Brooklyn.

No longer: Brooklyn is now the place to be, not a way station on the road to somewhere else, for ball clubs of the middle class. Turn left onto Eastern Parkway, past the Brooklyn Museum and the Public Library, navigate Grand Army Plaza—the baseball documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, our leading Ebbets Field eulogist, just bought a three-bedroom condo there for \$2.75 million—and then hang a right on storied Flatbush Avenue, pointing straight at the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower. From its opening in 1929, all the way to 2010, that building was the borough’s tallest, at 37 stories. The tower and the four clock faces at its top, each one 17 feet tall, join the Brooklyn Bridge and the Coney Island Cyclone as Brooklyn’s most recognizable physical features. In 2007 the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower was converted into condos by its developer, the wealthy businessman Earvin (Magic) Johnson.

Across the street from that tower is the great rust-colored hulk of the Barclays Center, whose flagpole out





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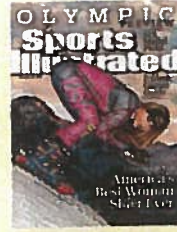
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front once stood sentry over Ebbets Field, then convalesced at a VFW Post in East Flatbush for 47 years and was finally placed outside the home of the Brooklyn Nets in 2012. A small dedication ceremony was presided over by Jackie Robinson's daughter Sharon and the Nets' Jerry Stackhouse, who wore number 42.

In a few hours the Nets and the Heat will tip-off on a court awash in Twitter handles and URLs, the herringbone floor evoking the grand prewar apartments of Eastern Parkway. Jay Z will be seated courtside with his wife, the global pop star Beyoncé. They are two miles from Shawn Carter's childhood home on the J and Z lines of the New York City subway system, in the Marcy Houses projects, from which he started selling the drugs that financed his forays into hip-hop, the American art form that was born in the Bronx, in the rec room of a high-rise at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, at DJ Kool Herc's house parties, in August 1973, and then spread like ripples in a pond to the five boroughs and beyond them to the world.

Directly across this broad intersection—kitty-corner to the Barclays Center—is another of Jay Z's old apartments, name-checked in his hit "Empire State of Mind," in which he raps, "Took it to my stash spot, 560 State Street." That stash spot, apartment 10C, with its view of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower, sold in March for \$930,000.

A banner hanging outside a bar on Flatbush Avenue bears the Nets' logo and the slogan BROOKLYN WE GO HARD. Don't look too closely at the banner, which also advertises the Ping-Pong and air hockey tables inside, lit by TVs tuned to ESPN. "Brooklyn We Go Hard" is the hook to a 2008 track, "Brooklyn (Go Hard)," by Jay Z, who conflates his own past with Brooklyn's: "I Brooklyn Dodger them/I Jack, I Rob, I Sin/I'm Jackie Robinson/Except when I run base I dodge the pen." A line later we're in the present day: "Now when I bring the Nets I'm the black Branch Rickey."

The Nets are where the Dodgers would have been had Robert Moses allowed them to be, across the street from

the Atlantic Avenue subway station and the Atlantic Center mall. Chuck E. Cheese's and Target and Buffalo Wild Wings have turned this block of Brooklyn into every American suburb, with comfort food for the suburbanites coming here. On the number 3 train, the Metropolitan Transit Authority ads note, "Since Barclays Center opened, subway traffic to Atlantic Avenue-Barclays Center is up 63%. Long Island Rail Road Travel is up more than 300%. Bravo, You!" (And, by implication: Screw You, Robert Moses!)

Four hours before tip-off, fans are already filing in and out of the Nets Shop, which is next to a separate Nets Lifestyle Shop—which carries not jerseys but everyday apparel emblazoned with the Nets' logo, designed by Jay Z. On the Daily News Plaza, at the Geico Main Entry, men in suits and women in hijab study their smartphones, an international choir bent to one hymnal.

This is where the Atlantic Terminal ingests and disgorges its railway passengers, where Walter O'Malley's dream—of building an indoor sporting palace—has been realized by developer Bruce Ratner and Russian oligarch Mikhail Prokhorov, the Nets' owners. For almost nine years Jay Z also owned a (microscopic) piece of the team, but he divested himself of his "vanity stake"—one-fifteenth of 1%—in 2013

to become something more glamorous than a rapper or owner or athlete: He became a sports agent.

Before Jay Z opened the Barclays Center with the first of eight consecutive concerts on Sept. 28, 2012, *The New York Times* described the arena as "a symbol of Brooklyn's cultural and economic renaissance, a sign the borough has come back from the long slide that started when the Dodgers left in 1957." Not everyone has witnessed this renaissance. Dodgers owner Kasten grew up in New York City and graduated from Columbia Law School and says, "I've been to Russia five times in my NBA days, so I've been to Russia more times than I've been to Brooklyn." But on this afternoon, at least, the corner of Flatbush and Atlantic feels a little like the crossroads of the world in the 21st century.



### FULL CIRCLE

The Barclays Center is just where Rickey wanted his new Brooklyn park.

# SI

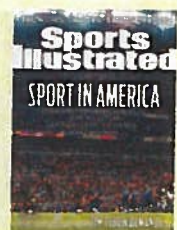
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Yet the last century is never far away, just a short walk from the Barclays Center, a mile to the northwest: First, on Montague Street, where there's a TD Bank with a giant color mural of Ebbets Field in all its glory on the wall behind the tellers. It was on this spot, in a building since torn down, that the Dodgers had their offices from 1938 to '57 and that, on Aug. 28, 1945, Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey met on the fourth floor to change baseball history by putting both their names to a contract.

Stand on the sidewalk outside the bank and gaze up at the airspace where the office used to be, and modern Brooklyn immediately intrudes. A blue Ford Explorer reverses onto the sidewalk, trailer-hitch-first, to retrieve a stainless-steel falafel stand at day's end, the driver laying on his horn to clear pedestrians. Brooklyn We Go Hard.

Then walk three blocks toward the waterfront—with its views of the Statue of Liberty and the Freedom Tower—to 98 Montague Street. There the Hotel Bossert still stands in all its glory, where the Dodgers held their victory party on the night of Oct. 4, 1955, the crowd behind sawhorses serenading the team with "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and Scully arriving with the lady who would one day start *Sesame Street*.

The biggest sporting event in the borough since then is at the Barclays Center tonight. Many of the NBA's biggest stars—LeBron James, Dwyane Wade—are entering the way the Dodgers now exit an airplane: single-file, in headphones. They are among the most famous people on earth. When Arn Tellem attended an Adidas presentation in the spring, he was astonished to see an aerial photograph of 50,000 people waiting to meet Bulls star Derrick Rose at the opening of a small shoe store in a provincial city in China. "The streets were closed off," says Tellem, "and I thought of the neighborhood Derrick came from in Chicago, and the very shy young man he was when I met him, and how his popularity over there now is totally surreal.

"But that's the power of sports. In that presentation, they said more people now play basketball in organized leagues in China than there are people in the United States. And what LeBron and Kobe and Kevin Durant and Derrick Rose mean over there . . . they are another version of American culture. The best of America—whether it's jazz, rock music, whatever you like—changes the world for the better, brings people together and makes the world smaller."

As they enter the Barclays Center, James and Wade are pursued by a camera from TNT. Turner Network Television is another of Ted's offspring, and it will broadcast the game to an eager audience in North America and overseas, which is why the NBA in 2014 made an undisclosed settlement with the Silna brothers, whose perpetual TV deal had earned them more than \$1 billion. The Nets are heavy underdog, trailing two games to one, and will go on to lose the series four games to one, despite the highest payroll in the history of the NBA, more than \$184 million in salary and luxury tax. On the Nets' bench, gloriously unremarkable, sits Jason Collins, their reserve center and the first openly gay athlete in the four major North American sports leagues.

Collins came out in a cover story in *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* on May 6, 2013. On the morning of publication, he stood in Tellem's kitchen in Pacific Palisades. When the story was posted to the Internet at 8 a.m. Pacific time, Collins's phone began to ring. Within two hours he had taken calls of support from President and Mrs. Obama, Bill and Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice, among many others. Yet for all the rhetorical comfort Collins received, another nine months would pass before the 35-year-old free agent actually joined an NBA team, when the Nets signed him to a 10-day contract. Collins sent Tellem a text that read, *Arn, thank you for everything. I'll remember the events of yesterday for the rest of my life.*

"As an agent," says Tellem, drily, "it is rare that you get an expression of gratitude from a client." Half a century ago he would lie in bed with *SI* and read about social change through sports. Perhaps another teenager was doing that now.

After Collins signed, "the first thing I thought was that it was Brooklyn," says Tellem. "For someone who grew up steeped in history, reading books about Jackie Robinson, the significance of Brooklyn was foremost in my mind. Brooklyn was the perfect place for him."

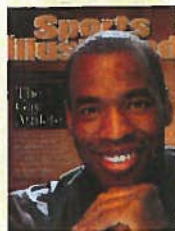
Robinson is still everywhere in these parts—in the landmarked house at 5224 Tilden Avenue, where he and Rachel lived from 1947 until '49, and in the Mets' Citi Field "rotunda," based on the one at Ebbets Field, only this one as a gathering place to buy merchandise. His name is on the Jackie Robinson Parkway, which runs past the Cypress Hills cemetery, in Brooklyn, where he resides in eternal repose, his legacy visible in all places except—in some cases—sometimes appears—on a baseball field.



7/30/12



4/22/13



5/6/13



12/16/13



4/21/14



8/11/14

## VIII

### "Good Enough to Eat"

"ALL THE KIDS in the inner city want to play basketball," Vin Scully says. "Get a pair of expensive sneakers, a hoop and a ball. Baseball has tried so hard. They've been trying to break through that shell [of African-Americans not playing baseball], and they just can't seem to do it. They've spent a lot of money trying. I don't know how many fields the Dodgers have built—Frank McCourt built some, and you know Peter [O'Malley] built baseball fields all over the world, in Ireland, in China. But they can't break the inner city. For the black kids, their heroes are Magic Johnson and all the other great basketball players. I don't think those kids ever think about baseball. I read a column in San Francisco when we were there for Jackie Robinson Day, noting the percentage of African-Americans in major league baseball is only 7.8 now. It's gone backward."

It saddens Scully—he seems to wilt a little talking about it—though not for long, because organist Nancy Bea Hefley is warming up for another game at Dodger Stadium, with another perfect evening on a low boil. The sun is setting somewhere beyond the San Gabriel Mountains, and before it the second sun of the Union 76 ball. It is Scully's cue to go. He will tell stories on the air for four hours tonight, so that the pregame interrogator feels as if he's just asked Sinatra to give a full concert backstage before showtime. And showtime is rapidly approaching in this beautiful ballpark that is at once state-of-the-art and suspended in time.

"That look—those bleachers, those palm trees, those San Gabriel Mountains—that's eternal," says Kasten, who looks out on this from his office every day. "Same as it was in black-and-white with Tony Kubek and Curt Gowdy doing the *Game of the Week*."

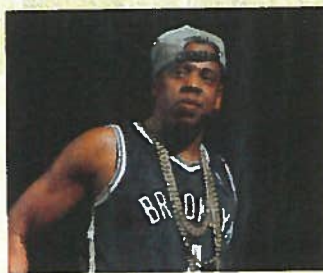
There is no longer a *Game of the Week*—there are 15 games televised every night, and before one of them a few days from now Scully will describe the heavens above him, scudded with pink clouds at dusk, as "a cotton-candy sky beneath a canopy of blue—good enough to eat." That's exactly what this night looks like too, another ballpark comestible, a batting-helmet sundae, good enough to eat.

On New Year's Day 1954, the Tournament of Roses parade was broadcast on NBC—now owned by Comcast—and sports began its *Wizard of Oz* transition from black-and-white to living color. On New Year's Day 2014, the Tournament of Roses parade was broadcast on NBC and led by grand marshal Vin Scully, who sighs, "This year at the front of the parade, next year at the back with a broom."

Scully excuses himself—"I have to go write my ad libs," he says—and heads to the broadcast booth, dressed formally in a pressed pink shirt, gray jacket and gray necktie. Soon he will enter the homes of hundreds of thousands of Southern Californians and untold others around the country and even the world, all listening or watching on their various devices—their second and third screens—which is why he opens every broadcast with, "Hi, everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to

you, wherever you may be."

As for him, he is always here, where he has always been. Vincent Edward Scully—St. Vinny of Wherever You May Be—will be sitting at a microphone on Aug. 16, 2014, for the Brewers versus the Dodgers in Los Angeles, just as he was on Aug. 16, 1954, for the Phillies versus the Dodgers in Brooklyn. Sixty years and a continent separate those two games, between which everything changed and—he is quick to say, surveying that beautiful ball field—"nothing much has changed at all." □



Brooklyn, the borough that gave us the Dodgers, Jackie and Jay Z (above), again feels a little like the crossroads of the world in the 21st century.