

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC THEATER



Tom Atkins as
THE CHIEF

by Rob Zellers & Gene Collier



Study Guide

A study guide to Pittsburgh Public Theater’s production of

The Chief

by Rob Zellers & Gene Collier

November 5 – December 14, 2003

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Thank You, Mr. Rooney
by Gene Collier

The coal trucks that bucked and rumbled through the streets of the North Side during the Depression carried more than some prescribed tonnage of bituminous mineral, for coal was much more than that. Coal was currency. Neighborhood kids in Art Rooney's First Ward considered it the resource of a favored pastime, that being a proclivity more officially called petit theft.

The trick in removing a mound of black currency from a filthy moving coal truck wasn't terribly complicated, but some kids had elevated it to a low art, even low theater.

They'd take a brick, a block of wood, a loose cobblestone, and roll it or pitch it or skim it beneath the rear tires of the passing vehicle. If one of the back tires lifted onto it, the hiccupping of the rear axle was often enough to make a valued amount of coal slide off the back of the truck.

For some coal removal artists, the resultant mound of black diamonds on the street represented principally their practiced ability to get away with something, but for others, it was instant solvency. Coal heated houses and fired up stoves, and at Christmas time, could be traded for the cash to buy mom a gift. Even dad if you were flush.

But many of the older people in the neighborhood, having long reached the uneasy dignity of adulthood, knew nothing of this game and suspected less. And when the Christmas season might bring to the street in front of their homes a mound of coal that some harried kid had forgotten to collect, their first thought was often this: Thank you, Art Rooney.

Oh yes Virginia, there is an Art Rooney. There was an Art Rooney, and the notion that there has ever been anyone like him remains dubious to this day, some 15 years after his death.

The legend of Rooney as Santa's little North Side helper, of course, savagely uncomplicates one of the most compelling personal histories of 20th century America. Santa Claus, examined through the myth-making literary mechanisms of cultures across the globe, didn't lay bets, didn't run booze, didn't frequent speakeasys, didn't whistle past whorehouses, didn't play the ponies, didn't cultivate a reputation as even a middling street fighter, didn't play baseball, didn't turn up at Mass with metronomic reliability, didn't display any apparent giftedness for back-alley politics, didn't prop up a lurching drunk called the National Football League and steer it toward legitimacy, didn't foment the structure of the greatest football team of all time, and, unless my research is flawed, didn't attend many wakes.

Mr. Claus, in short, was and is no Mr. Rooney.

I hadn't thought for some time about everything that was real and genuine about Mr. Rooney, nor about everything that was folklore and legend, but that morning in January of 2001 when Rob Zellers of the Pittsburgh Public Theatre approached me and said, "I've been thinking that Art Rooney's life might make an interesting one-man play," I knew I'd just heard a great truth.

The genesis of our collaboration was not very much more or less than that, but the process of putting a singular lifetime into a script called *The Chief* (Rooney's sons named him that after the editor in the Superman TV show), has brought to the surface many similar truths I didn't know I knew.

Thank You, Mr. Rooney *continued*

Atkins, whose father played baseball with the Chief and introduced the Chief to his son, is singularly qualified to bring Mr. Rooney to life on stage.

In what remains perhaps the clearest memory of the creative process, Atkins, Zellers, the gifted director Ted Pappas, and I were to convene at the Art Rooney statue near Heinz Field for a photo shoot upon the announcement that Atkins had agreed to play the Chief and that the Pittsburgh Public Theater would produce it.

As we walked up to the statue, I was going over in my mind the correct way to introduce the great actor to the great photographer John Beale of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Before I'd sorted it out, Atkins was a mile ahead of me. "Hi I'm Tom Atkins," he said striding toward Beale, "what's your name?"

There's nothing terribly memorable about that on its face, except that it is exactly what Art Rooney would have done. Atkins had not only locked into the Chief's karma, but had apparently shared it for generations, and rehearsal was still eight months away.

This is no small achievement, as the Chief's disarming persona was as conspicuous as his legend would become as his beloved Pittsburgh Steelers won four Super Bowls in the glorious 1970's.

I knew Mr. Rooney only for the final five years of his life, but that was long enough to appreciate that he was an American original, the very walking prototype of the immigrant innovator and the ultimate human prism through which Pittsburgh grew to appreciate its gritty history and enduring benevolent image.

When the Chief said, "H' waar ya?", he meant it literally. That was not plastic modernist etiquette or even small talk. He wanted to KNOW about you and your family and he had in a genuine interest in seeing that all was well. Hobos, drunks, sportswriters (you'll excuse the redundancy), politicians, captains of industry, CEO's, they all got the same treatment from him.

Boiling it to the bone, as complicated as the Chief was, his baseline philosophy was that people were great, and Pittsburgh was his Exhibit A. He detested "puttin' on the dog." He'd ride in a Lincoln, but not a Cadillac. Riding in a Cadillac was "puttin' on the dog." They devised all manner of formal public ceremonies in this town to convince the Chief he was great, but to him it only meant he was just like everybody else.

The morning after he died, Pete Elliott, the executive director of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, told the *Post-Gazette's* Ron Cook: "If all people had the attitude of Art Rooney, most of the world's problems would be solved."

He was, for all his sometimes improbable facets, the best evidence I'd ever come across that the most important thing we have in this life is each other.

To have been a small part of bringing that evidence to the stage of one of America's great theaters has been gratifying beyond my most psychotic expectations. It's not terribly unlike waking up Christmas to that mound of black diamonds. Thank you, Art Rooney.

Also published in *The Public*, our show-specific newsletter.

One Man. One City. One Nation.**by Kyle Brenton**

January 27, 1901 – Arthur J. Rooney is born to Daniel and Margaret Rooney in Coulterville, PA.

January 1901 – The country's first billion-dollar corporation, U.S. Steel, is founded.

October 13, 1903 – Baseball's first modern World Series ends at Exposition Park when the Pittsburgh Pirates lose 4-3 to the Boston Pilgrims, who became known the next year as the Red Sox.

March 1910 – The Pittsburgh Courier, which would become one of the nation's leading black newspapers, publishes for the first time.

January 7, 1914 – The first ship passes through the newly built Panama Canal.

November 11, 1918 – After decisive American intervention throughout the summer, World War I comes to an end at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

1920-1925 – Art Rooney plays baseball with brother Dan for the Wheeling Stogies. This prevents him from competing in the 1920 Olympics as a boxer.

May 11, 1922 – The first Liberty Tube opens.

April 24, 1927 – The executive board of the Pittsburgh Symphony is arrested after a Sunday concert, on charges of violating the "blue laws" of 1794. They are found guilty and fined \$25 each.

October 29, 1929 – The "Black Monday" stock market crash signals the beginning of the Great Depression.

June 11, 1931 – Art Rooney marries Kathleen McNulty.

November 1932 – Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeats Herbert Hoover in a landslide in the Presidential election. Roosevelt quickly enacts legislation designed to pull America out of the Depression called the New Deal.

July 8, 1933 – After Pennsylvania repeals its blue laws prohibiting charging admission for sporting events on Sundays, Art Rooney spends \$2500 to purchase a franchise in the National Football League, which he names the Pittsburgh Pirates.

March 17, 1936 – The Saint Patrick's Day Flood, in which flood waters crest at 46.4 feet. The flood kills 74, injures more than 300 and leaves 50,000 homeless.

June 7, 1937 – The University of Pittsburgh opens the 42-story Cathedral of Learning.

1940 – Rooney's Pirates change their name to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

December 7, 1941 – The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor draws America into World War II.

1942 – The Steelers post their first winning season at 7 and 4.

One Man. One City. One Nation. *continued*

1943 – Due to a shortage of players during the war, the Steelers are temporarily merged with the Eagles and play as the Phil-Pitt “Steagles.” The following season they do so again, this time with the Chicago Cardinals.

June 6, 1944 – The D-Day invasion of Europe begins.

August, 1945 – The United States drops two atomic bombs on Japan, decisively ending World War II.

January 7, 1946 – David L. Lawrence, friend of Art Rooney, is sworn in as mayor of Pittsburgh. He serves 12 years as mayor.

January 11, 1949 – Pittsburgh’s first television station – DuMont’s WDTV Channel 2 – goes on the air.

June 1950 – North Korea invades South Korea, and America intervenes on behalf of the United Nations.

April 1, 1954 – WQED, the world’s first community-sponsored educational noncommercial television station, goes on the air. It introduces young Pittsburghers to a puppeteer named Fred Rogers, who becomes the host of “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” taped here for more than 30 years.

February 24, 1954 – Dr. Jonas Salk begins the first large-scale study of his polio vaccine at Arsenal Elementary School in Lawrenceville.

December, 1955 – America’s two largest labor unions merge to become the AFL-CIO, which boasts a membership of over 15 million.

September, 1961 – Pittsburgh’s Civic Arena, with its retractable dome, opens.

November 22, 1963 – President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas.

1964 – Art Rooney is inducted into the Professional Football Hall of Fame.

Summer, 1964 – The Beatles “invade” the United States and are greeted by 10,000 screaming fans in New York. They perform in Pittsburgh at the Civic Arena on September 14.

March 8, 1965 – Congress authorizes the use of ground troops in Vietnam. Not long afterward, anti-war protests begin.

November 21, 1966 – David L. Lawrence dies after suffering a heart attack.

July 21, 1969 – Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin become the first men to walk on the moon.

July 1970 – Three Rivers Stadium opens, housing both the Steelers and the Pirates.

December 23, 1972 – “The Immaculate Reception” Steeler Franco Harris catches a controversial pass to take the team to their first ever playoff victory over the Oakland Raiders.

One Man. One City. One Nation. *continued*

December 31, 1972 – Pittsburgh Pirate Roberto Clemente is killed in a plane crash while trying to fly emergency supplies to earthquake-stricken Nicaragua.

August 9, 1974 – Amid controversy over the Watergate scandal, President Richard M. Nixon resigns.

August 30, 1974 – Point State Park, with its geyser fountain, opens.

January 12, 1975 – The Steelers win Super Bowl IX in New Orleans, beating the Minnesota Vikings.

September 1975 – Pittsburgh Public Theater opens its doors on the North Side with a production of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*.

January 18, 1976 – The Steelers win Super Bowl X in Miami, beating the Dallas Cowboys.

January 21, 1979 – The Steelers win Super Bowl XIII over the Dallas Cowboys.

November 1979 – U.S. Steel announces cuts in production and the elimination of 13,000 jobs.

January 20, 1980 – The Steelers win Super Bowl XIV in Pasadena over the Los Angeles Rams.

November 28, 1982 – Kathleen Rooney dies at Allegheny General Hospital.

July 1986 – U.S. Steel changes its name to USX as part of a major restructuring.

August 25, 1988 – Following a stroke, Arthur J. Rooney dies at the age of 87.

Pittsburgh's Irish: How the Irish Affected the Growth and Development of Pittsburgh by D. Joseph Hartnett

Irish immigrants have played a major role in creating the lasting foundations of the cities to which they emigrated. Pittsburgh's history is no different.

Some of the first English-speaking settlers to this region were Scots-Irish Presbyterians, who called the region home by the latter part of the 18th century. They were largely farmers who took offense to the young federal government's excise tax and eventually rebelled against the new government in the Whisky Rebellion of 1794. The Western University of Pennsylvania (which is now the University of Pittsburgh), Grove City College and Geneva College were founded by Scotch-Irish of Pittsburgh. Andrew W. Mellon and Steven Foster are two of the notable Scots-Irish from Pittsburgh.

Irish Catholics first immigrated to this area in the early 1800s. In 1808, these settlers built Pittsburgh's first Catholic Church, St. Patrick's in the Strip District. These immigrants tended to be laborers rather than farmers like the Scots-Irish. They worked their way westward, building the Pennsylvania Canal and the Ohio & Pennsylvania Railroad. As unskilled laborers, many lived in poverty. The Catholic Church provided social services for these immigrants, in part through the Sisters of Mercy who came to Pittsburgh from County Carlow in 1843. Their contributions to the Irish community and the city included Mercy Hospital, Mount Mercy College (now Carlow College) and St. Paul's Orphanage.

Even more poor Irish immigrated to the region during the mid-1800s, when the Great Famine destroyed the potato crop. Although the potato crops in the United States, Southern Canada and Western Europe in the years of 1845-1846 were also affected, the subsistence farmers of Ireland were forced to export corn, wheat, barley, and oats to Britain, which left the potato as the sole dietary staple of the people and their animals. While other affected regions were able to turn to different foods, the Irish were dependent on the potato; the results of the blight were disastrous. In 1845, 40% of the crop was destroyed and the following year approximately 100% of the crop was destroyed. From 1845 to 1850 over 1 million Irish died of starvation or emigrated from the country, mostly to America. Many of these immigrants came to the Pittsburgh region in an attempt to find work in the industries of the time.

During the 1890s, more Irish immigrants poured into Western Pennsylvania, settling primarily at the Point in downtown Pittsburgh. An entire community of Irish sprung up around the old Fort Pitt Block House, calling themselves "Little Ireland." Other Irish communities grew in the South Side, Strip District, North Side, Hill District, Oakland and Lawrenceville. Most of these settlements were crowded and impoverished, leading Pittsburgh politicians to encourage a distrust of these Irish immigrants among the rest of the community. Many factories and mills even hung "Irish Need Not Apply" signs on their doors. Eventually, fraternal groups such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians helped to bring about change in people's attitudes toward the Irish settlers, and civic leaders rallied against low wages and poor working conditions.

The Irish have also been influential in the labor movement of Pittsburgh and the nation. Monsignor Charles Owen Rice, also known as Pittsburgh's Labor Priest, was instrumental in the labor movement. He was a leader in resisting the influence of Communists in labor unions in the 1930s and 1940s. In response to the Communist effort to control organized labor, Monsignor Rice helped in founding the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists; he also served as its chaplain. In the 60s, he worked in the civil rights movement and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King in the "Spring Mobilization for Peace" in New York in 1967.

Pittsburgh's Irish: How the Irish Affected the Growth and Development of Pittsburgh *continued*

In 1940, David Lawrence was elected the first in a long string of Pittsburgh Irish mayors. He was later elected governor of Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh's Irish heritage had finally become something of which the city was proud.

Today, Pittsburgh's Irish heritage can be found all over, but most visibly during the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. First held on March 17, 1869, it is among the largest in the country. It is held each year on the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day.

**The Main Event: When the Forbes Field Crowd heard the Louis-Conn Fight
by Harry Patterson
Saturday, June 16, 2001**

Imagine the following scenario: the Pirates are playing the Phillies at PNC Park on Wednesday in June 2001. A fight that evening featuring local boxer Paul Spadafora is scheduled to be televised nationally. The Pirates advertise that the baseball game will be halted while the fight is shown to the crowd on the Jumbo Tron. The game will resume afterward...

We all know that would never even be considered in this day and age. Sixty years ago this week, however, such a scenario did play out at Forbes Field.

The day was June 18, 1941, and the game was an otherwise routine meeting of the Pirates and the New York Giants. The fight saw heavyweight champ Joe Louis defending his title against "The Pittsburgh Kid," East Liberty's Billy Conn.

The bout has been called the "Fight of the Century" and it certainly was the biggest sporting event in Pittsburgh history to that point. Six decades later it remains right up there with all the World Series, Super Bowls and Stanley Cups that would come.

Pittsburgh was then in an earlier incarnation as "The City of Champions." Six local fighters held titles over a 10-year span straddling the 30's and 40's. None was more popular than the light-heavyweight champ Billy Conn. Even after all these years, a mention of Billy always sparks a conversation around here in homes, in taverns or on sports talk radio, increasingly among those (such as myself) who were born after the event.

I asked my mother what her memories were. "All of Billy's fights were a big deal, especially that one," she told me, as she spoke of friends and family gathering in the living room and staring at the family's huge Silverstone radio. She suggested I call our cousin Jack, who was 25 at the time. He, too, heard it on the radio. "It was exciting," he recalled "We all thought Conn had it won."

As time passes the fight continues to shift from memory to legend. To get a little perspective I went to the library to check out the Pittsburgh Press and Post-Gazette of the day on microfilm.

The winds of war were rising in Europe, of course, and US involvement loomed. The manpower shortage hadn't yet taken hold and the sports pages were lively. Joe DiMaggio was in the midst of his record-setting streak, Ted Williams would be the last player to bat over .400 and Whirlaway, ridden by jockey Eddie Arcaro, had just completed a Triple Crown sweep. The nation mourned the passing of baseball's Lou Gehrig, who died on the day that Billy boarded a train for his north Jersey training camp.

But in Pittsburgh the news was cover-to-cover Louis-Conn. Even the weigh-in rated banner headlines. The Post-Gazette was featuring a regular column with the byline "by Billy Conn" ("Jason Kendall's Diary" is nothing new). Hundreds of Pittsburghers traveled to New York. Baseball was the only other game in town, but even the Pirates adopted an If-You-Can't-Beat-'Em-Join-'Em approach.

The team heavily promoted the fact that on fight night play on the field would stop temporarily while the radio broadcast of the fight was piped over the Forbes Field PA system. A crowd of 24,738 showed up, nearly four times the season average.

The Main Event: When the Forbes Field Crowd heard the Louis-Conn Fight *continued*

The Pirates team that took the field on Wednesday evening was a pretty good one. Future Hall-of-Famers Al Lopez and Arky Vaughan were there along with Frankie Gustine, Rip Sewell and Vince DiMaggio. Honus Wagner was a coach. Giants' slugger Mel Ott, pitcher Carl Hubbell and manager Bill Terry, Hall-of-Famers-in-waiting, were there too.

In a touch of irony, the site of the fight was the Polo Grounds, the Giants' home field. Game time was 9:25 p.m. (night games started later in those days – something about lights working better in darkness than in twilight). With three and a half innings played, and the Pirates leading 2-1, the game stopped.

The fight began and most of the players went to the clubhouse to tune in, while the fans cocked an ear to the loudspeakers. The voice they heard was that of legendary Don Dunphy. It was the first broadcast for the man who would become the “Voice of Boxing.” One can only imagine how he sounded though the fabled “ballpark echo.”

The local radio station carrying the broadcast was WCAE, which exists today as ESPN Radio 1250, an all sports station.

In the early rounds Louis dominated the fight and Giants' pitcher Cliff Melton headed the bullpen to warm up. He would soon sit back down, mesmerized by Dunphy's call of the blow by blow in a broadcast that later was rated one of the top radio programs of all time.

The delay in the ball game lasted 56 minutes and the play resumed amidst a crowd buzzing over what it had just heard. The Giants scored, forcing extra innings. It was well after 1 a.m. when umpires suspended the game after the 11th inning because of a curfew. For hometown fans, a frustrating 2-2 tie followed an unlucky 13th round, ending the evening at Forbes Field.

Did I mention that Billy lost the fight? Somehow it doesn't seem to matter anymore. I'll leave the analysis to the experts, and I'll leave the last word to Regis Welch, a *Post-Gazette* reporter who covered the fight. Appropriately, it is a baseball analogy he wrote.

“Conn hit a homerun, but was caught trying to stretch it into a five bagger.”

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Interesting Facts about Pittsburgh's Stadiums

Exposition Park: 1891-1909

- In 1875 the first Allegheny Exposition was held in a hall on the flats along the north shore of the Allegheny River. Adjacent to the hall was an open space where horse-races, circuses and concerts were held.
- This ballpark was located on Pittsburgh's North Side, very near the current site of Heinz Field. The home plate was located in what is now the Heinz Field/PNC Park parking lot.
- The site was actually home to three versions of Exposition Park.
- The National League Pirates moved into Exposition Park III in 1891.
- Exposition Park was the National League host for the first modern World Series in 1903.
- The Allegheny River flooded on July 4, 1902, leaving more than a foot of water over large parts of the outfield. The Pirates played a winning double header against the Brooklyn Dodgers with the special ground rule: all outfield hits into the water were singles.
- Exposition Park was noted for its twin spires on the roof of the grandstand behind home plate.

Forbes Field: 1909-1970

- A classic Major League ballpark, Forbes Field was named for General John Forbes, a British general who, during the French and Indian War (1758), captured Fort Duquesne and renamed it Fort Pitt.
- The park was located in the Oakland district of Pittsburgh at the entrance to Oakland's Schenley Park, with home plate located off of Sennott and Bouquet Streets. The Park's surrounding area was originally part of Schenley Farms where it was previously used as a hot house, livery stable, and pastures.
- Forbes Field opened its doors during the 1909 season when the Pirates became the World Champions.
- Beginning in 1921, fans were allowed to keep the baseballs that ended up in the stands.
- A few odd elements from this ballpark include the following:
 1. A hard infield that was feared by many Major League infielders.
 2. The fans in the upper corner of the left field bleachers could not see the plate because the third base stands were in the way.
 3. In the outfield, the bottoms of the light towers and the flagpole were in play.
- The right field roof was 86 feet – a high target for many Major League sluggers through the years. Eighteen homers were launched over the roof by ten different players, two by baseball legends Willie Stargell and Babe Ruth.

Interesting Facts about Pittsburgh's Stadiums *continued*

Forbes Field: 1909-1970 *continued*

- The dimensions of Forbes Field changed several times over the years. Originally the dimensions were 462 feet to center field, 360 feet to left field, and 376 feet to right field; and in 1970 the final dimensions were 435 feet to center field, 365 feet to left field and 300 feet to right field.
- In 1940 floodlights and an electrical PA system were installed. Suspended press boxes were added in 1946, and for the 1959 All Star Game three rows of VIP Boxes were added.
- Unlike many other ballparks, Forbes did not have outfield advertisements; but, in June, 1943 a 32 foot wooden US Marine was erected to promote war bonds.
- The original version of the movie "Angels in the Outfield" was filmed at Forbes in 1951.
- Forbes Field was sold to the University of Pittsburgh in 1958. The final games at Forbes were played on June 28, 1970 as the Pirates swept a double header from the Chicago Cubs, the team that opened the park almost 61 years to the day.
- In addition to hosting the Pirates, Forbes Field was also the home to the Negro League Homestead Grays baseball team, the Steelers (originally called the Pirates), and the University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne, and Carnegie Tech football teams.
- A few physical reminders of the great ballpark still exist today.
 1. The Honus Wagner statue that was erected in 1955 in Schenley Park now marks the home plate entrance to PNC Park.
 2. In the University of Pittsburgh's Forbes Quadrangle, home plate still remains encased in glass.
 3. A plaque marks the spot where Bill Mazeroski's 1960 World Series winning home run left the park.
 4. A portion of the left-center field wall still stands.

Three Rivers Stadium: 1970-2000

- The stadium on the city's North Side was named for the three rivers Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio that converge at Pittsburgh's Point State Park.
- The original conception of Three Rivers proposed a stadium that stretched across the Monongahela above two parking levels – with room for boats to pass underneath. Later designs called for an open-sided stadium with a beautiful view of the Golden Triangle.
- Three Rivers was delayed nearly 15 years with labor struggles while local politicians argued over financing. Envisioned in 1955, the city finally broke ground April 25, 1968.
- Three Rivers Stadium opened on July 16, 1970. The Pirates lost to the Cincinnati Reds 3-2 -the same score as the first game at Forbes Field.
- With their new stadium in 1970, the Pirates also invested in new team uniforms - they were the first in baseball to adopt knit style uniforms.

Interesting Facts about Pittsburgh's Stadiums *continued*

Three Rivers Stadium: 1970-2000 *continued*

- Three Rivers Stadium hosted the first playoff football game ever played on artificial turf.
- In 1971 Three Rivers was the first to host a night game during a World Series.
- The Stadium has hosted four Super Bowl Championships for the Steelers and a Stanley Cup celebration party for the Penguins.

PNC Park: 2001 to present

- The Pittsburgh Pirates opened at PNC Park against the Cincinnati Reds on Monday, April 9, 2001 – losing the opener 8-2.
- A North Side site along the Allegheny River between Fort Duquesne and Roberto Clemente (formerly the 6th Street) Bridges was chosen in June 1996.
- The park is situated between Federal Street, East General Robinson Street, Stadium Drive East and the Allegheny River.
- PNC Park's design is similar to ballparks like Baltimore's Camden Yards and Cleveland's Jacobs Field. PNC Park was the first two-tier designed ballpark in the US since Milwaukee's County Stadium, completed in 1953.
- PNC Park was opened as the second smallest park in the majors, next to Fenway. Boasting only 37,898 seats, each seat provides intimate views of the field.
- The Park provides a dramatic sweeping view of the Allegheny River, The Roberto Clemente Bridge, and downtown Pittsburgh's skyline.

Heinz Field: 2001 to present

- Ground-breaking occurred on June 18, 1999 and construction began in July 1999.
- In June 2001 the H.J. Heinz Company received the naming rights.
- The primary events at Heinz Field are Pittsburgh Steelers and University of Pittsburgh football games.
- On August 25, 2001 Heinz Field opened with the Steelers playing the Detroit Lions to a sold-out (64,450) crowd. The Steelers beat the Lions 20-7.

Resources: www.heinzfield.com, and www.mindspring.com/~gearhead/stadiums.html

Touchdowns to Curtain Calls: The Similarities of Theater and Football **by Rebecca Rickard**

Most people think sports and theater are opposites. That if you are truly passionate about one, you could probably care less about the other. But when you take a look at the structure of a play and a football game, they are surprisingly similar. Let's compare.

Before you can actually perform a play, there are auditions for the roles. Once the show is cast, there are rehearsals. Next you get on stage and have a technical rehearsal in which the components - lighting, sound, and costumes - all come together. You are finally ready for an audience. It isn't much different with football. Tryouts are held for the players. Once the players and their positions are determined, they head to training camp. This is where the players work on their particular positions. Next is the scrimmage game in which all the players play a game to see how it all works together. Finally they are ready for the fans and the real football game.

When a play begins you often hear pre-show music as you walk into the theater. You get a program in which the actors are listed. There is probably an announcement about turning off cell phones, not taking pictures, and locating the exits. Then the play begins. In football, you hear the cheer of the crowd as you enter the stadium, the announcer introduces the teams and their starting lineups, and the national anthem is sung. Then the game begins.

As you are watching the play, there are most likely two acts separated by an intermission. At a football game, there are two halves separated by a halftime. Most plays have a few scenes within each act. Football has two quarters within each half. The leading actor in the play is like the quarterback in football and the supporting actors (with smaller parts) are like the running backs, wide receivers and cornerbacks. Just as the chorus of the play (or musical) works together as one character, the offensive and defensive linemen work together as a wall to block the opposing players. Together you have a cast or a team.

To make sure that all of the actors move where they should be and say the correct lines, there is a director and sometimes a choreographer and music director to help them along. In much the same way, a coach and his assistants teach their team various routes to run and where to throw the ball. Once a show is running, there is a stage manager that calls the cues for the lights and sound, and tells the actors when to go on stage. The offensive and defensive coordinators sit in a booth at the stadium and tell the players when to throw or to run and make sure that the right players are on the field at the right time.

Once the stage manager has the play going and the actors are doing what they are supposed to be, the play becomes interesting. Of course, a play is scripted and the actors know what is going to happen, even if the audience doesn't. In football, even though there are specific routes that players run and specific players that should be thrown the ball, nobody knows the outcome of the game, not even the players. Both theater and football have equal amounts of drama, but they each have a different way of achieving it.

The play is performed and the audience reacts - whether that reaction be laughter or crying or clapping - and the play nears the end. The football fans yell or cheer or clap throughout the game, and it, too, is nearing the end. Now it is time for the actors to take their bow. The curtain call. But what about the players? They don't get a chance to come out one by one and take a bow for their efforts. But, they have something just as exciting: the winning touchdown. When a game comes to the end and the score is close, a winning touchdown is just the thing to get the fans on their feet and applauding. So you see, theater and football aren't really that different.

One-person shows have recently become very popular on Broadway and off. Recently in New York theatergoers could see Tovah Feldshuh as Golda Meier in *Golda's Balcony*, Frank Gorshin as George Burns in *Say Goodnight Gracie* and Kate Mulgrew as Katherine Hepburn in *Tea at Five*. Elaine Stritch (*At Liberty*) and Bea Arthur (*Just Between Friends*) looked back on lives and careers. John Leguizamo mulled over love and sex in his one-person show *Sexaholix*. Kevin Bacon starred as a soul-searching church groundskeeper in *An Almost Unholy Picture*. Pittsburgh Public Theater is no stranger to the one-person show having produced *Fully Committed* as the season finale in the 2001-2002 season and *The Chief* starring Tom Atkins in the current 2003-2004 season.

One-person shows are not a new phenomenon. Charles Dickens himself toured America as a solo act, reading excerpts from his novels. Ruth Draper, the famed monologist, played a wide variety of comic characters in her long and distinguished career.

Basically, there are four types of one-person shows in the legitimate theater: the biographical play, the auto biographical reminiscence, the play with only one character, and the play with many characters played by one actor. The biographical one-person show is the most recognizable version of the genre. Examples of those include Hal Holbrook in *Mark Twain Tonight*, Pat Carroll in *Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein*, and Zoe Caldwell as author and playwright Lillian Hellman in *Lillian*. Julie Harris was a terrific Emily Dickinson in the *Belle of the Amherst* and a less memorable Isak Dinesen in *Lucifer's Child*. Robert Morse made an amazing Broadway comeback as Truman Capote in *Tru* and Mary Louise Wilson chewed up the scenery playing fashion doyenne Diana Vreeland in *Full Gallop*. Christopher Plummer scored as actor John Barrymore in *Barrymore*, but that was actually a two-character play that included the offstage role of the stage manager. Most of the actors in these works received extravagant praise and multiple awards. They were not only on stage alone all night, they conjured up celebrities from our collective past and (with the help of makeup, wig and costume designers) and brought them to life before our eyes. When the curtain went up on Zoe Caldwell as Lillian Hellman, there was a collective gasp from the audience. It was as if Hellman herself was seated in that armchair, eerily swathed in cigarette smoke.

The autobiographical reminiscence, often *scripted* by the actor himself, has the actor *playing* himself (and often his family, his colleagues and some of the folks he met along the way). The basic premise is "I don't need to step into anyone else's skin. My life experience is so interesting that me playing myself will suffice." And often, this is the case. Lynn Redgrave's *Shakespeare for My Father* was about her growing up as part of a theatrical dynasty, while Pamela Gien's *The Syringa Tree* was about the author/actress growing up in South Africa amidst apartheid. Playwright David Hare and monologist Spalding Gray have taken unusual life experiences and transformed them into stunning arias that they perform, respectively, as *Via Dolorosa* and *Swimming into Cambodia*. In *God Said Ha!*, comedienne Julia Sweeney turned surviving cancer into a hilarious and touching look at her career and her family, and Claudia Shear used her one-person show, *Blown Sideways Through Life*, to discuss her many occupations, which finally led her to become a celebrated actress and playwright. Charlayne Woodward has essentially chronicled her entire life from birth to present day in a series of autobiographical reminiscences, which include *Pretty Fire*. All of the above performers served as their own playwrights. Where some of us are content to spill our guts to our therapist or fill the pages of our diary, these thespians feel compelled to stand stage center and act out their foibles, aspirations, and neuroses in front of a paying audience. It takes ego, courage, stamina, and I'm sure, quite a few rewrites.

Going Solo *continued*

The play with only one character is the loneliest. Imagine having no one with whom to exchange stage business and bits of dialogue. However, the isolation of an actor or a character can be wildly theatrical in the hands of a master playwright. Witness the character of Krapp in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*. Now an old man, he sits and ruminates on his past by playing a tape recording he made of himself 30 years earlier. The woman in Jean Cocteau's *The Human Voice* uses a telephone as a lifeline to her departing lover. The woman in Willy Russell's *Shirley Valentine* speaks to her walls.

The play with only one actor playing many characters is probably the most dazzling. Ethan Sandler starred in the in Public's 2002 production of *Fully Committed*, in which he played 40 roles! Lily Tomlin pulled a similar stunt when she played absolutely everybody in Jane Wagner's *The Search for Intelligent Life in the Universe*, as did Patrick Stewart in his one-man *A Christmas Carol*. Ditto Anna Devereaux Smith in *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, both of which are socially relevant one-person plays based on historical fact. Smith interviewed real people, turned their words into a play, and then *became* them. Now *that's* theater!

Thespis would be proud!

Who's Who in *The Chief*

Charles W. Bidwill, Sr. (1895-1947) *Football* Bidwill was the owner of the Chicago's Cardinals from 1933-1946. The Cardinals were not a successful team during the 1930s and early 1940s despite Bidwill's efforts and were overshadowed by the town rival, the Chicago Bears. In 1944 the Cardinals and the Pittsburgh Steelers merged for a year to ease the financial strain and labor crisis created by World War II.

Rocky Bleier *Football* In 1968 Bleier suffered from a knee injury when he was drafted in the 16th round. Few thought that he'd make the Steelers' 1968 roster, but he did. He missed the 1969 season due to military service in the Vietnam War; during his year in the service he was shot in the left leg and a grenade exploded under his right foot. He returned to the Steelers in 1971, and in 1972-73 he played primarily on special teams. Bleier played as the team's starting fullback in 1974 and remained in this position until he retired in 1980. In 1976 Bleier surprised many when he joined Harris in the 1,000 yard club. It was only the second time in NFL history that two runners from the same team had accomplished this feat in the same season.

Melvin (Mel) Blount *Football* Blount was a major reason why the Steelers were the dominant team of the NFL in the 1970s. Possessing ideal size, speed, and quickness, he was a third-round draft pick of the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1970. He was named the NFL's Defensive Most Valuable Player in 1975, and he played in four Super Bowls and five Pro Bowls.

Terry Bradshaw *Football* Bradshaw led Pittsburgh to four Super Bowl titles in the late 1970s and in 1980. He was awarded the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player in 1979 and 1980 and was the regular season Most Valuable Player in 1978. He is currently a Fox Sports studio analyst.

Jim Brown *Football* Brown, a Syracuse University graduate and an All-American Choice in 1956, was the Cleveland Browns' number one draft pick in 1957. He was named to the All-NFL team eight times and was the NFL's Most Valuable Player in 1958 and 1965. Brown was also the NFL's Rookie of the Year in 1957 and played in nine straight Pro Bowls. Brown's number, 32, was retired by the Cleveland Browns. He was the second youngest player ever inducted into the Hall of Fame at age 35 closely following Gayle Sayers, who was inducted at age 34.

Primo Carnera (1906-1967) *Boxing* Carnera, an Italian Boxer who became the world's heavyweight champion, was a remarkable individual standing at six feet, seven inches tall and weighing 270 pounds. He was the biggest heavyweight champion in boxing history; he enjoyed a sizeable advantage over most opponents (who were 60 pounds lighter and seven inches shorter than him). One of the most important dates in Carnera's life was February 10, 1933 when he knocked out Ernie Schaaf in 13 rounds. Schaaf passed away a few days later.

Billy Conn (1917-1993) *Boxing* A Pittsburgh native, Conn was the world light heavyweight champion from 1939-41. He nearly upset heavyweight champ Joe Louis in the 1941 title bout, but was knocked out in the 13th round.

Howard Cosell (1920-1995) *Journalism* A former ABC commentator on *Monday Night Football* and *Wide World of Sports*, Cosell energized TV sports journalism with an abrasive "tell it like it is" style.

Who's Who in *The Chief* continued

Jimmy Coyne *Politics* A mentor of Art Rooney, Sr. and a Pennsylvania State Senator from 1925-1936.

Buck Crouse (1891-unknown) *Boxing* Pittsburgh native who fought many of boxing's greats such as Stanley Ketchel, Battling Nelson, and Harry Greb. Buck also fought such noteworthy fighters including George Chip, Mike McTigue and George "KO" Brown.

Lennie Dawson *Football* Dawson was one of the most accurate passers in football. He led the Kansas City Chiefs to a Super Bowl victory in 1971.

Jack Dempsey (1895-1983) *Boxing* Dempsey was a world heavyweight champion from 1919-26, losing the title in 1927 to Gene Tunney in a rematch when he floored him in the 7th round, but failed to retreat to a neutral corner.

Bill (Bullet Bill) Dudley *Football* Dudley wanted to play football at Virginia Polytechnic, but was rejected because of his small size. He was accepted to the University of Virginia football team, where he was an All-American halfback in 1941. Joining the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1942, he was named to the All-Pro team. After serving as a bomber pilot in World War II, he returned to the Steelers for part of the 1945 season. Dudley was traded to the Detroit Lions due to differences with Coach Jock Sutherland. He played for Detroit until 1949, joined the Washington Redskins for two seasons, sat out the 1952 season, and returned to the Redskins briefly in 1953.

John (Frenchy) Fuqua *Football* Fuqua played seven out of his eight seasons in professional football with the Pittsburgh Steelers from 1970-1976.

Harry Greb (1894-1926) *Boxing* Greb, a middleweight champion, had excellent stamina and constantly threw punches from all directions, hence his nickname "The Human Windmill." Greb was considered a dirty fighter, using his elbows, thumbs and head as much as his fists. He defeated some of the best fighters of his time even though throughout much of his career he fought with a physical disadvantage, blindness in one eye. Greb is the only man to have defeated Gene Tunney, decisioning him in 1922 for the light-heavyweight title. Tunney, who beat Greb in four later matches, went on to beat heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey.

Joe Greene *Football* Nicknamed "Mean Joe," Greene led the Pittsburgh Steelers to four Super Bowl titles in the 1970s. In 1971, he combined his efforts with L.C. Greenwood, Ernie Holmes, and Dwight White to form the "Steel Curtain," which took Pittsburgh to four Super Bowl victories and six division titles. He played for the Steelers from 1969-1981 and was a five time All-Pro.

L.C. Greenwood *Football* Considered one of football's great all-time defensive linemen, Greenwood played with the Pittsburgh Steelers team from 1969-1981. He always wore oversized golden shoes (instead of the standard black) and as a result received the nickname, "Hollywood Bags." He had unusual speed for a person of his size (6'6). Recurring knee injuries forced his retirement before the 1982 season.

George Halas (1895-1983) *Football* Halas was a coach and sports executive known as Papa Bear; he is considered by many to be the Father of Professional Football. Born in Chicago, he attended the University of Illinois and in 1920 organized the Chicago Bears (originally the Decatur Staleys). He also helped to found the American Professional Football Association, which later became the National Football League.

Who's Who in *The Chief* continued

Jack Ham *Football* A Johnstown, Pennsylvania native and an All-America at Penn State, Ham was the 34th player taken in the 1971 NFL Draft. Ham played for the Steelers from 1971-1982. In 1975, the Football News named him the Defensive Player of the Year.

Franco Harris *Football* Harris was a key player of the Pittsburgh Steelers from 1972-1983. He began his pro football career as the Pittsburgh Steelers' number one draft pick and the 13th player selected in the 1972 NFL Draft. Harris voted All-AFC in 1976 and 1977. He also played in nine Pro Bowls and was named All-Pro six times.

Jack Kemp *Football* First great quarterback of the Buffalo Bills. In 1965 he was awarded the AFL's Most Valuable Player Award in a season that led the Bills to a 23-0 championship. Kemp later became a US Representative and in 1989 he was named the Secretary of the Department Housing and Urban Development.

Walter Andrew Kiesling (1903-1962) *Football* Kiesling's 34 year career in professional football consists of professional player, assistant coach, and head coach. He was awarded All-NFL in 1929, 1930, and 1932. He was an assistant and head coach with the Steelers for 14 seasons, leading them to their first winning season in 1942.

Jon Kolb *Football* Playing with the Steelers from 1969-1981, Kolb's consistent play was a vital factor in the team's success. He was regarded as a top rated offensive tackle in Steeler history but has not truly received much recognition. He had more career starts than any active Steeler lineman. Kolb was also rated as one of professional football's strongest players, bench-pressing an impressive 550 pounds.

Jack Lambert *Football* Lambert was a key player for the Pittsburgh Steelers from 1974-1984, leading them to four Super Bowl titles. Six time all pro from 1975-1976 and from 1972-1982.

David (Davy) Lawrence (1889-1966) *Politics* Lawrence was Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh from 1946-1958 and Governor of Pennsylvania from 1959-1963. Many believe today's city of Pittsburgh would not be what it is if it weren't for the leadership of David Lawrence.

Bobby Layne (1926-1986) *Football* During Layne's 15 years in professional football, he was a quality quarterback who brought leadership, competitiveness, and guts to the game. He led the Lions to four division and three NFL titles in the 1950s. In 1957, Buddy Parker left the Lions to coach the Pittsburgh Steelers. Layne and the Lions won the NFL championship that season. One year later Layne joined Parker in Pittsburgh through a trade.

Joe Louis (1914-1981) *Boxing* World heavyweight champion from 1937-1949, Louis' reign of 11 years and eight months is the longest in division history. He defended the title 25 times and retired in 1949, but Louis returned to lose the title against Ezzard Charles in 1950.

Sid Luckman (1916-1998) *Football* Luckman led the Chicago Bears to four NFL titles in the 1940s. Sid was named NFL MVP three times and was a key player in leading Chicago to a 73-0 victory over Washington, which is still the most lopsided game in league history. Bears owner George Halas traded two players and a draft choice to Pittsburgh to acquire Luckman in 1939. He spent 14 years as a part-time coach with the Bears and other teams after retiring in 1950.

Who's Who in *The Chief* continued

Owney (The Killer) Madden *Organized Crime* In New York's Hell's Kitchen, Madden controlled bootleg liquor, nightclubs, taxicabs, and laundries. He also had a stake in Harlem's popular Cotton Club and in heavyweight boxing champion Primo Carnera. In 1931, he became a representative of the Irish Mob in New York. Vincent "Mad Dog" Coll was the greatest threat to Madden; it came as no surprise when on February 8, 1932 Coll was shot to death. He was imprisoned in 1933 for 12 months.

George Preston Marshall (1896-1969) *Football* In 1932 Marshall, a laundry business manager in Washington, D.C., decided to become part owner of the new NFL franchise, the Boston Braves. When the Braves' first-season losses peaked at \$46,000, his three partners pulled out, but Marshall remained with the team. In 1933, he renamed the team the Redskins and in 1937 moved them to Washington D.C. From 1936-45 the Redskins were very successful, winning NFL championships in 1937 and 1942.

John (Johnny Blood) McNally (1903-1985) *Football* McNally was an unpredictable player on and off the field. McNally still had a year of college remaining when he decided to start his career in professional football. To protect his eligibility, he needed an alias, a common practice in the 1920s. As McNally and his friend passed a theater where the movie, *Blood and Sand*, was playing, McNally exclaimed to his friend, "That's it. You be Sand. I'll be Blood." An excellent runner, he scored 49 touchdowns 14 seasons with five NFL teams. He was the Pittsburgh coach in 1937-1938 and assistant coach in 1939.

James Michener (1907-1997) *Literature* Acclaimed novelist with more than 40 titles to his name, some of which are "Mexico," "Chesapeake," and "Alaska." Michener did not find his calling as a writer until he was in his 30s. By that time he had been around the world - from Pennsylvania to the Pacific in World War II. His first book, a collection of short stories called "Tales of the South Pacific" won the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for literature and was later adapted into the Broadway musical "South Pacific."

Chuck Noll *Football* He coached the Pittsburgh Steelers to four Super Bowl titles in the late 1970s. He retired after the 1991 season. He ranks fifth on the NFL's all-time list with 209 wins including playoff games in 23 years.

Tip O'Neill (1912-1994) *Politics* O'Neill was a Democratic leader and a speaker of the House of Representatives from 1977-86. An Irish-American 'New Deal' liberal, he was one of the last Democratic leaders from the old school of politics. O'Neill entered the Massachusetts state legislature in 1936 and the US House of Representatives in 1952. He was considered a plain-speaking, authoritative, and generous person.

Buddy Parker *Football* From 1957-1963 Parker was the Steelers co-coach with former quarterback Bobby Layne. With defensive tackle Ernie Stautner and running back John Henry Johnson, Layne and Parker were able to advance the Steelers as divisional championship contenders.

Dan Rooney *Football* Rooney has been the owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers since 1975. He began working for the Steelers organization directly following his graduation from Duquesne University in 1955. In 1973 he was appointed Chairman of the League's Expansion Committee that added Seattle and Tampa Bay to the NFL in 1976 and was named Chairman of the Negotiating Committee in 1976. In 1982 he contributed to the negotiations for the Collective Bargaining Agreement for NFL owners and the Players Association. More recently, he played a key role in the labor agreement reached in 1993 between the NFL owners and players.

Who's Who in *The Chief* continued

Carroll Rosenbloom (unknown-1979) *Football* Owner of the Los Angeles Rams and later the Baltimore Colts. Won six division titles. Under Rosenbloom the Colts had 16 consecutive winning seasons, including the Super Bowl victory in January 1971.

Pete Rozelle (1926-1996) *Football* Rozelle was commissioner of the NFL from 1960-1989. Rozelle is credited with making the NFL the most successful sports league in the US. When he took office, 12 teams were in the NFL; by the time he resigned, there were 28 teams. He also negotiated large television contracts to broadcast every game played each season. Rozelle persuaded team owners to share revenues between teams and negotiated the merger between the American Football League and the NFL.

Andy Russell *Football* Russell played professional football in 1963 and from 1966-1976. He spent 1964 and 1965 seasons in the Army. After a groin injury in 1973, he came back to have one of the finest seasons of his career. He never missed a game and was voted Most Valuable Player in 1970 by his teammates; he also won the 1973 Whizzer White Humanitarian Award for his outstanding contributions to his team, community and country. He was a defensive captain and a Steeler player representative.

Ernie Schaaf (1908-1933) *Boxing* He compiled an impressive record that included wins over Tommy Loughran, Max Baer, and Tony Galento. On Friday, February 10, 1933, Primo Carnera of Italy, outweighing Schaaf by 43 pounds, knocked him out in the 13th round. Schaaf died a few days later at the age of 24 after lying in a semiconscious state since Carnera's knockout.

Kenny (Snake) Stabler *Football* He was at the forefront of the Oakland Raiders' glory years under Coach John Madden. In his ten years with the Raiders, the left handed quarterback from Alabama was named to the Pro Bowl five times and in 1977 led the Raiders to the Super Bowl victory over Minnesota. While a Raider, Stabler set a record of 143 attempts without an interception and completed 1,182 passes for a Raider record.

John Stallworth *Football* Stallworth played for the Pittsburgh Steelers for 14 seasons from 1974-1987. He was first paired with Lynn Swann and later with Louis Lipps to make the Steelers passing offense one of the best in the league. He was the Steelers' fourth-round draft pick in 1974 and played in four Super Bowls. Stallworth was also a two-time Steelers Most Valuable Player.

Ernie Stautner *Football* During Stautner's 14 year career from 1950-1963 with the Steelers, he never played for a winning team. Undersized for a defensive lineman, he was incredibly persistent and tough. He made enough of an impact to be selected to the Pro Bowl nine times and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1969. Recognized by all opposition as one of the toughest linemen in the field.

Jack Tatum *Football* Tatum was a legendary safety for the Oakland Raiders and was an essential team player in the 1972 playoff game against the Steelers known as the "Immaculate Reception" game. He was instrumental in the Raiders winning their first world championship in 1977.

Harold Joseph "Pie" Traynor (1899-1972) *Baseball* The pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates during the 1920s and 1930s, Traynor was an amazing third baseman and a skillful hitter. Pie's quick reflexes and accurate arm has ranked him fifth among all third basemen of all time. He is one of only eight players to have his number retired by the Pittsburgh Pirates. He received his nickname "Pie" because of his fondness for pastry as a child.

Who's Who in *The Chief* continued

John Unitas (1933-2002) *Football* A Pittsburgh native, Unitas was a ninth-round draft choice of the 1955 Pittsburgh Steelers, but was cut before he even threw a pass. Soon Unitas became a legendary hero and an exceptional field leader who thrived on pressure. Leading the Colts to the 1958 and 1959 NFL titles. Unitas was voted the Player of Year and Most Valuable Player three times. His record of at least one touchdown pass in 47 consecutive games may stand forever.

Mike Wagner *Football* Wagner played from 1971-1980 as the defensive back for the Steelers. Wagner made an interception in the 1975 Super Bowl that clinched the Steelers' win. He was selected to Pro Football Weekly All NFL first team and UPI All AFC second team after that season.

Byron Whizzer White (1917-2002) *Football* White signed with Pittsburgh in 1938 for the then largest contract in professional football history (of \$15,800). In 1939 White was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship and returned to the NFL in 1940. Retiring from football in 1941, White was later named to US Supreme Court by President Kennedy in 1962. He stepped down from Supreme Court in 1993.

Dwight White *Football* White played for the Steelers from 1971-1980. Because of his aggressive and physical playing style White was nicknamed "Mad Dog." In 1974 he had been hospitalized all week with a viral infection and came out to play a great game in the Pro Bowl.

Fritzie Zivic (1913-1984) *Boxing* He is considered one of the dirtiest fighters (for using his head, elbows, and thumbs as efficiently as his fists) in boxing history, but he is also considered one of the best. A Pittsburgh native, Zivic turned pro as a featherweight in 1931, and by 1936 he was in the top ten of the welterweight division. He often fought with other Pittsburgh boxers such as Billy Conn and Charley Burley.

Resources: Pro Football Hall of Fame, <http://www.profootballhof.com>. Pittsburgh Steelers History, <http://www.geocities.com/nflmania69/SteelerHistory>. Information Please Halls of Fame, <http://www.infoplease.com/whowho.html>. Player Profiles, <http://www.geocities.com/nfljunkeez/PlayerHistory>. Pro Football Reference, <http://pro-football-reference.com/players>. International Boxing Hall of Fame, <http://www.ibhof.com>. Sports Directory, <http://www.hickoksports.com>.

Creating a Collaboration by Kyle Brenton

Seventeen years ago, Rob Zellers left a career teaching English and coaching high school football and basketball to become the oldest intern in the history of the Pittsburgh Public Theater. He now serves as director of education and outreach, a position from which he has touched the lives of literally thousands of students throughout the region. Gene Collier began as a baseball B-writer, traveling to National League cities and filing correspondent reports. Since 1984, he has been a columnist, first for the Pittsburgh Press, and now for the Post-Gazette. In January of 2001, the two of them met and began writing The Chief. The Public's Resident Dramaturg Kyle Brenton sat down with them before rehearsals began to find out how this dynamic duo got started.

Kyle Brenton: So, gentlemen, why don't you start by telling me a little about how this project first came to be.

Gene Collier: Almost three years ago, my son was in the Public's Shakespeare Contest, and Rob had arranged a class at Carnegie Mellon for the kids. Rob came up to me and we started chatting—we had met a couple of times before through the Contest. He asked me if anyone had ever written a biography of Art Rooney. Now that was ironic for me, because I had planned to write one myself some years earlier. I had approached the Rooney family and they were very enthusiastic about it. So was I, at least until I realized what an enormous and complicated story it was. On top of that, my kids were still young, so I had to finally let the book go, since there was no way I would have time to do it right. But when Rob suggested that the Chief's story could become a one-person play, well, it wasn't as though I thought it wouldn't be any work, but it seemed like a lot less work to me. It turned out to be more work than I had imagined, although it was a good time.

Rob Zellers: It was an idea that had been eating away at me for some time. I first moved to Pittsburgh in the 80s, when the Chief was in his final few years, and I started hearing stories about him. Of course, I had been very much aware of Art Rooney when I was growing up in Youngstown, Ohio as a Cleveland Browns fan.

KB: I'm not sure we're allowed to print that.

RZ: Well, I'm not anymore.

GC: So Rob told me about this idea, and I said I thought it was a good one and that I'd love to collaborate with him on it. The minute I said that I thought, "Oh my god, what are you saying?" I had no right—I couldn't even believe that I had said it! But Rob agreed. He could have said, "*Uno memento, por favor*. This is my play. I was just asking..."

RZ: I knew it wasn't going to happen as long as I was working by myself. I had a feeling that, if there were another person, that might make it work. I knew Gene from his columns, and that day, in that moment, I just made the approach.

KB: What came next in the process?

Creating a Collaboration *continued*

RZ: Gene still had a lot of research material from the book he had planned to write, and I had my own files, so we pored through all of that. We interviewed people who had been close to the Chief: his sons Art Jr. and Dan, Roy McHugh, Myron Cope, Ed Kiely. The list goes on. Gene and I made plans to meet and talk, but we didn't really know how to go about writing the play. Frankly, I was envisioning the two of us together the whole time, one of us on the keyboard, the other pacing and reciting—

GC: Yeah, cooped up in a room saying, “No, not that!”

RZ: Like George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart.

GC: But we were both so busy that that was impractical. So, I don't know who said it first, but one of us said, “Look, I'll write, and I'll show it to you. Then you write and show it to me.” And that was how we did it. Of course we met many, many times to look at what we had written and to change things, but I would say the majority of the creative process was done separately, was it not?

RZ: I agree. We'd pass it back and forth, talking over the phone and via email. Remember, at this point we still didn't know each other very well, so it wasn't like two lifelong buddies. We were getting to know each other as we wrote.

KB: How much rewriting would you say you've done since you got started?

RZ: We did so many rewrites; over and over, for two years we wrote this thing. I've kept all the older versions.

GC: Property of the Rob Zellers Presidential Library.

RZ: Yeah, “my papers.” There's just so much material. You're reading the newspaper one day and there's a big story about Billy Conn, and there you go. Everybody has a Chief story. Elsie Hillman called him King Arthur—I love that.

GC: It persists. Somebody told me this within the last 48 hours. “This guy I know was the Chief's paper boy. He used to walk up to the house on Lincoln, and the Chief would come out in his bathrobe, smoking a cigar. He had wads of bills in both pockets: twenties on one side, hundreds on the other. He asked what the guy's name was, and this was a black guy with an Irish name. The Chief says to him, ‘Are ya Irish?’ Guy says no, I don't think so. Chief says, ‘Well, here's twenty bucks anyway.’” This was happening to us all through the writing process. Still is. And as great as all the stories are, we never hesitated to get rid of one, because they always kept coming.

RZ: You know, so many people want this story told, so many people are happy when they hear we're doing this, but they want it told right. I still think Ed Kiely threatened us a little bit if we didn't tell it right.

GC: Somebody said to me the other day, “Pittsburgh is really wrapped up in this guy. What if people don't like it?”

RZ: I worry about that. But we care too much about the Chief and his story to do a careless job.

Creating a Collaboration *continued*

GC: Jim Rooney, the Chief's grandson, told us we wouldn't do this right unless we show that he wasn't always a saint, so we've tried to pull him out of that Pittsburgh hagiography a little bit. Dan himself said to me that his father used to say, "You know, in my life I've touched *all* the bases," and that's how he wanted to be remembered. And I think that's what we've done. Of course, doing the play at all is unavoidably a little flattering.

KB: Any chance you two might collaborate again?

GC: Have we talked about doing something about Billy Conn? Did I say that out loud?

RZ: Yeah. If the right thing came along, sure I'd do it again.

GC: Course, we'd have to have the money up front this time...

RZ: We'll need a commission. But how about this, Gene, more than one person?

GC: Well, I don't think I can do that. I can only write a one-person play.

RZ: I'm obsessed now with writing dialogue for at least two characters.

Also published in *The Public*, our show-specific newsletter.