

MENSAJE DEL GOBERNADOR DE PUERTO RICO

RAFAEL HERNANDEZ COLON

EN LA CEREMONIA DE INSTALACION AL PABELLON DE

LA FAMA DEL BEISBOL DE ROBERTO CLEMENTE

COPPERSTOWN, NEW YORK

LEIDO POR JOSE TORRES

AGOSTO 5, 1973.

August 5, 1973.

Vera Cristina, Commissioner Kuhn, Mr. Rodrigo Otero Suro,  
President of the Puertorican Baseball League, distinguished guests, ladies  
and gentlemen;

I am doubly proud -- as a Puerto Rican and as Roberto Clemente's  
personal friend -- to be the bearer of the message that the Governor of the  
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Honorable Rafael Hernández Colón, was to  
pronounce here had not pressing commitments forced him to remain in our  
island.

The message reads as follows:

"We meet today in a solemn ceremony to honor an exemplary human being  
and outstanding athlete whose record fills one page of the Baseball Register and  
whose memory fills all of our hearts.

Roberto Clemente may be gone -- but he lives. And he lives, and will  
live, because, as a Puerto Rican and as a baseball player, he was a man for  
all seasons.

Many things have been said and written about Roberto and many more  
will be; glowing tributes have been and will be paid to his memory; he will  
be enshrined today, for posterity, here in Cooperstown. The San Juan  
Municipal Coliseum carries his name as will the sports city that will be his

living testament to the youngsters and the people of Puerto Rico.

In one of his books, Joseph Conrad wrote something which I believe perfectly describes Roberto. He says:

"Efficiency of a practically flawless kind may be reached naturally in the struggle.....but there is something beyond -- a higher point, a subtle and unmistakable touch of love and pride beyond mere skill; almost an inspiration which gives to all work that finish which is almost art--which is art."

Yes, that was what Clemente was: a consummate artist with a unique personality that harmoniously blended skill as a professional and pride as a man, determination in the game of life and in the sport of baseball with compassion for the underprivileged, forcefulness in action and idealism in thought, deep love for his fellow human beings combined with a profound respect for the principles that when they become realities will make all human beings equal.

That was the man -- and his commitment, his only commitment, was to excellence.

The excellence he sought day-by-day from the first to the last year of his life; the excellence he displayed in the field from the first to the ninth inning of every game he played.

We already miss him much; we will miss him far more in the future.

We will never see him again elegantly outrunning a fly ball, we will never see again a strike thrown from deep right field to home plate to nail down a

runner, we will never see again his rifle-like line drives, like the double with which he got his 3,000th. HIT.....

But we remember.....

And I am sure that as time goes on we will remember him more for the man he was rather than for his baseball record. Because from the combination of his qualities as a man and his skill as an athlete emerged his dream..... a vital society which in its quest towards its highest ideals -- social justice and integral liberty for all citizens -- would display the qualities that participation in sports give us: respect for each other, determination to win cleanly, teamwork by all concerned. A society in which sports would play a vigorous role in promoting those qualities in its citizens, particularly in the young people; a society proud of its heritage, working hard today to make a promising future come true.

Roberto didn't live to see his dream come true but he left behind a great inspiration which will help us in action to meet our purpose. And that, my dear friends, is the highest tribute that can be paid to a human being. That is precisely what we are doing here today, honoring Roberto Clemente -- a great man, a great Puerto Rican, a great fellow citizen.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico -- and we are all watching alive this ceremony on television in our island -- I want to convey to you one message: You can be sure that we will march towards the future. Collectively as a society, honoring Roberto's combination of high ideals to be reached through human excellence. Thank You."

Ladies and gentlemen, that is the message of the Honorable Rafael Hernández Colón, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

