

LIFE, DEATH AND THE WASHINGTON REDSKINS

In the end, we are defined in death by who we were in life. The legacy we leave is built....brick by brick.....as we each meander and find our way through this bewildering, occasionally disappointing and yet often exhilarating world.

I, personally, hope to be remembered.....MORE than anything....for simply being a good person. For being someone who could be counted on and trusted. For being the kind of person in which others could find comfort, could count on for a quick smile...and who could be looked to for even and solid advice. For being a loving and committed father, son, husband and brother.....and for always being there when it mattered most.

When I am finally laid to rest, though, I expect I will be remembered by my closest friends for something else as well. For something that...on the surface...isn't worthy of mentioning in the same breath as those traits listed above. And still, this other thing.....this other passion, as it were.....is for some reason just as critical to knowing me as a person. For, as much as anything, it helps to illustrate my ability to show devotion, loyalty, fortitude and faithfulness under all manner of circumstance. And that....I think.....is something to strive for.

You see.....they will know me, too, as a Washington Redskin fan.

I don't paint my face....I don't wear a pig nose to work....and I only have one or two Redskin t-shirts. I have a family and a successful career....and I have no desire to devote a room in my house to the team. But, no matter how much a roller coaster ride it may be, I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing than watching a Redskin game.

This season, to be sure, has been a disappointment. There have been others. But there will always be the draw of the next season....perhaps a winning season....to keep me coming back. No matter how disastrous the year may have been, the promise of the next is all too tantalizing.

I grew up in the Washington, DC area....and now have lived four thousand miles away for more than twenty years. Geography has not diminished my enthusiasm one bit. If anything, the challenge of it has greatened it. I've see fans come and go...turning away when disappointment shows up and returning on the bandwagon of success. But, I've been there through it all....year after year. And the ride.....it doesn't get any better.

I remember so many players and coaches from all these many years.....and I remember more games and plays than I'd ever admit to...none any bigger than John Riggins breaking away in Super Bowl XVII. That was, to me, the defining play of my lifetime. But, just one.....out of many.

This whole experience began for me around the age of five, I'd guess. I'm forty-three now. I figure I've got somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty-five to forty seasons left to watch and cheer and look forward to. I don't want it to end.

But it will.

And when it does.....well.....it does. And, most likely, no one will make any note or mention of the fact that I was a Redskin fan. They'll probably just remember all those other things about me.

And, that'd be okay.

But secretly.....I kinda hope.....that if someone were to visit my grave.....that on my gravestone they'd find one of those little, plastic Redskin helmets.

'Cause, hey....it's who I am.

HTTR