

What I wanted most when I was eleven was to play shortstop for the New York Yankees. It seemed the logical leap from playing on an all-boy softball team to playing for the Yankees. Heck, I lived in the Bronx, on the Grand Concourse, a stone's throw away from the House that Ruth built. And just like my idol, Phil Rizzuto, my first name was Phil, my initials were PR and I wore his number ten on my uniform. It was only a matter of time before "Scooter" Rizzuto retired and the Yankees, recognizing how much alike we were, would have no choice but to sign me as his replacement.

MEDITATOR.
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DREAMER.
AUTOBIOGRAPHER.*

I read the sports pages, knew all the players by number, could recite team statistics, a player's RBIs, errors, strikeouts and cite obscure references. I even scored every Yankee game whether I attended in person or listened to the play-by-play on the radio.

When Mel Allen, the Voice of the Yankees, announced that White Owl Cigar company was sponsoring a "Why I Like a Baseball Game" contest in twenty-five words or less, I entered. First prize was a coveted seat in the Yankee dugout. I don't remember what I wrote, but I knew I would win. And I did. There I was hobnobbing with Billy Martin and Mickey Mantle, chewing tobacco with Yogi Berra and Casey Stengel, and swapping double play strategies with the "Scooter" himself. But when my Aunt and I arrived to collect my prize and Phil was found to be Phyllis, the dugout seat went to a real boy and I got two box seats behind home plate. It was the most miserable game I ever witnessed not only because the Yankees lost, but because it was the end of my baseball career.

– Phyllis Mass



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**THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
PROJECT**

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today's Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit www.theautobiographyproject.com for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor's Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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