

# A tale of two Phils: The Tugger vs. the Hustler

By WILLIAM C. KASHATUS

**W**HEN I was in high school, I was so wrapped up in baseball and the Phillies that I cared little about anything else until my coach gave me some important advice.

"Don't strive to be a person of success, but a person of value," he said, using the words of Albert Schweitzer. "The successful person takes more from life than he gives, while the person of value gives more to life than he can ever take from it."

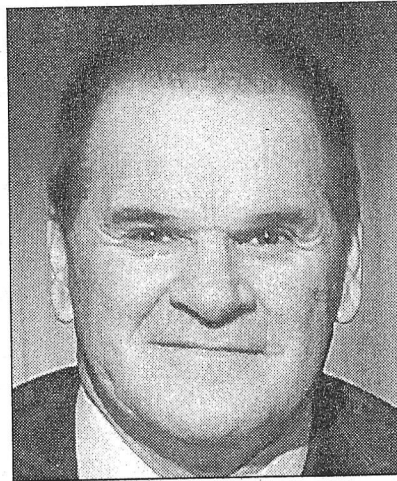
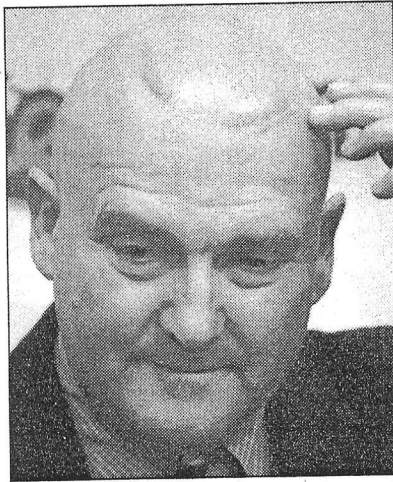
I didn't get it. So he explained: "You can get straight A's, sign a multimillion-dollar contract with the Phillies — and still flunk life!"

Tug McGraw, who died Monday, was clearly a person of value, while Pete Rose, who admitted to betting on baseball, is little more than a "person of success."

McGraw and Rose are indelibly etched into the collective memory of Philadelphians for their gutsy performances in the sixth game of the 1980 World Series:

Rose, for snatching victory from defeat with a split-second catch of a pop foul that glanced off Bob Boone's mitt.

McGraw, for striking out Willie



Photos: Associated Press

Wilson of the Royals to clinch the series. Without either, the Phils would still be waiting for their first world championship. But there's more to life than baseball.

In his 59 years, McGraw managed to get more out of life than most. When his career ended in 1984, he was able to accept it and find meaning in his family, community service, and, us, the fans.

He loved people, especially those of this city. He made countless public appearances and refused money for many of them.

He visited ex-big-leaguers in

nursing homes. Posed for photos and signed autographs until the last fan had gone. At the time of his death, he was working on a project called "You Gotta Believe in Baseball," aimed at promoting the game among youngsters by creating a partnerships between schools and pro teams.

Like all of us, Tug had his shortcomings. But he acknowledged them and tried to make up for them. His value can be found in his selfless humanity.

Pete Rose's life, on the other hand, has become a nightmare.

His inability to move beyond the denial, anger and sadness that comes with the end of every major league career led to his betting on baseball and his being banned from the game in 1989.

Since then, he has spent his time hocking memorabilia on QVC, trading on his name to pay off his considerable gambling debts, serving a sentence for tax evasion and repeatedly lying about betting on the game.

Only now, when the statute of limitations on his Hall of Fame candidacy is down

to its final year, has he come clean, realizing that nothing short of an admission will let him enter Cooperstown.

In his new book, "My Prison Without Bars," he writes: "I'm sure that I'm supposed to act all sorry or sad or guilty now that I've done something wrong. But I'm just not built that way. So let's leave it like this: 'I'm sorry it happened, and I'm sorry for all the people, fans and family it hurt. Let's move on.'" Hardly an act of contrition, but the absolute minimum for reinstatement.

What's sadder is that there's not much to move on to. Admission of guilt does not automatically guarantee baseball immortality for Rose. It might have 10 years ago, but too many writers, ex-major leaguers and fans — like this one, who used to defend Rose — have run out of patience.

Even if he does enter the Hall, he has damaged his credibility so severely that he will never be completely trusted again.

I feel bad for Rose, not because he might have destroyed his chance for a bronze plaque, but because he is flunking life. He used baseball, like he has used us, for nothing more than his own ego. Nothing, not even the 1980 championship or the inspirational example he set on the playing field, can justify that.

Tug, on the other hand, used baseball to enrich our lives. For that he was loved like no other professional athlete in this city, and, rightfully, deserves a place on the ultimate field of dreams.

William C. Kashatus collaborated with McGraw on "Was It As Good for You? McGraw and Friends Recall the 1980 World Series." He can be contacted at [bill@historylive.net](mailto:bill@historylive.net).