

## Monday with Mikey: May 29, 2017

(Spoiler Alert: MWM is a bit longer today. It's a transcript of the address I am offering at a Memorial Day service later this morning.)

Today is Memorial Day. I'd like to share with you a poem called:

### *Decoration Day*

Sleep, comrades, sleep and rest  
On this Field of the Grounded Arms,  
Where foes no more molest,  
Nor sentry's shot alarms!

Ye have slept on the ground before,  
And started to your feet  
At the cannon's sudden roar,  
Or the drum's redoubling beat.

But in this camp of Death  
No sound your slumber breaks;  
Here is no fevered breath,  
No wound that bleeds and aches.

All is repose and peace,  
Untrampled lies the sod;  
The shouts of battle cease,  
It is the Truce of God!

Rest, comrades, rest and sleep!  
The thoughts of men shall be  
As sentinels to keep  
Your rest from danger free.

Your silent tents of green  
We deck with fragrant flowers  
Yours has the suffering been,  
The memory shall be ours.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned these words in 1882 in commemoration of soldiers who had given their lives during the American Civil War. By that time, May 30th had been designated as "Decoration Day" by the Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans' group composed of Union Soldiers who had survived the ravages of the War Between the States. But we haven't always observed Memorial Day on the same date – or called it by the same name.

600,000 soldiers and sailors from both the Union and the Confederacy died during the Civil War – and after the Great and Horrible Contest was decided, families of the war-dead on both sides sought to commemorate – and come to closure with - their losses. Southern groups named their observances "memorial" or "remembrance" days, and held ceremonies on May 5<sup>th</sup>. In the former "Union" states, May 30<sup>th</sup> was chosen because NO battle of the Civil War had been fought on that particular day during the over-four year conflagration.

The custom of honoring The Fallen hails back to Ancient Times, when relatives met annually to tend to and decorate their graves and recount the struggles that led to their deaths. The custom of Decoration/Memorial Day began on April 25, 1866 in Mississippi and July 3, 1868 in Pennsylvania.

After the First and Second World Wars, as nations around the globe sought to remember those who had fought and died, we in the United States began to include those who had died in all of America's wars and conflicts. The day celebrated in countries other than ours is called Remembrance Day.

Congress passed the Monday Holiday Bill in 1968, and Memorial Day officially (and for some, controversially) shifted to the Fourth Monday of May in 1971.

### **But what is Memorial Day?**

To answer that question, let's explore what it's *not*:

- Memorial Day is NOT the first day of Summer. That's somewhere around June 21<sup>st</sup>, the Summer Solstice (give or take a day or two).
- Memorial Day is NOT the day after which it's okay to wear white to social affairs. Nor is it actually the first day a hurricane can strike us here in Florida.
- Although several major sporting events are held – for convenience and advertising revenue purposes – on Memorial Day or during its three-day weekend, it is actually NOT set aside to watch Indy Cars race or Lacrosse teams vie for the national championship.
- Memorial Day is NOT the day we honor our living Veterans – active, former, and retired. Veterans' Day is celebrated annually on November 11<sup>th</sup>, which is also known as Armistice Day – the day The Great War ended.
  - I am a US Navy Veteran.
  - My Great Grandfather, John Oscar Clark, was a "doughboy" Army Captain in World War I.
  - My father is and my uncles were veterans during the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts.
  - And my two dear sons, Ted and Rick, are currently serving our nation. Ted is a Surface Warfare Lieutenant in the Navy, and Rick is a Reconnaissance Captain in the Marine Corps.
  - But none of us – during all those generations – has given our very lives for the cause of freedom. We are veterans, and we have our own special day.

Memorial Day IS the day set aside for all of us – each and every one of us – to *pause and remember* the men and women who have given their lives in defense of The United States, for Freedom, and to preserve The American Way. They have come from all walks of life, encompass every race and religion, and represent manifold political affiliations. From Crispus Atticus, the first casualty in the Boston Massacre, to the patriots who are fighting and dying this very day in foreign lands, we:

- Reverently remember their sacrifices,
- Honor their courage and selflessness, and
- Hope that someday, there will be no more wars to fight.

I'm sure most of us are familiar with the letter written by President Abraham Lincoln to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, consoling her for the loss of her sons on the field of battle. Although it was discovered some years later that only two of her five sons were actually killed, Mr. Lincoln's words were nonetheless eloquent, heartfelt, and genuine:

**I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.**

**I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.**

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

*A Lincoln*

I'd like paraphrase the words written by Julia Ward Howe in *the Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Please excuse the gender and denominational specificity:

**In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea with a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;  
Ashe died to make men holy, let us live to make men free - While God is marching on!**

Finally, there is a custom in many English-speaking countries of wearing a poppy on one's lapel to show our remembrance for those fallen heroes. The Flemish Region is one of the three official regions of the Kingdom of Belgium—alongside the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region. Colloquially, it is usually simply referred to as Flanders, and it was one of the primary sites in the First World War, which is also known as "The War to End All Wars." The custom rose from the words of the poem *In Flanders Field* by John McCrae:

#### **In Flanders Fields**

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you, from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow,  
In Flanders fields.

*Mickey*

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A few "District Quickies"-

- Club TRF Chairs & Presidents: Please be sure to send your club's Annual Fund and Polio Plus contributions to TRF in Evanston ASAP.
- District Training Assembly is THIS COMING SATURDAY: If you're a club leader, you NEED to go to DTA!
- D6950 Conference is only 3 ½ weeks away – sign up on DaCdb TODAY!.
- Attached is the flyer for this year's "Rotary Day at the Rays."



**Rotary District 6950**  
Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties  
Florida's Nature Coast / Amusement



# RAYS 2017



## Rotary Day with the Rays XVII



**SUN, AUGUST 20**

VS. SEA

START TIME: 1:10 P.M.

GATES OPEN: 11:10 A.M.

Lower Box Tickets w/ Hat are \$45  
Lower Corners Tickets are \$25  
Upper Reserved Tickets are \$25

Deadline to purchase is Thursday, August 10th, 2017.



All prices include \$10 to the Rotary Foundation in the name of the purchaser. Tickets are purchased through Gene Beil; checks should be made payable to "Beil & Hay Trust Acc't".

If you purchased a Lower Box ticket, you can choose your hat at the Redemption Center, located in the first base food court, by the 3rd inning by showing your ticket stub.



### ORDER FORM

For more information contact Gene Beil at: 727-868-2306 or [kiwimate@msn.com](mailto:kiwimate@msn.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How many tickets would you like?

\_\_\_\_\_ Lower Box tickets x \$45 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Lower Corners tickets x \$25 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Upper Reserved tickets x \$25 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Accessible seats (circle):    Yes            No

Payment Information:

\_\_\_\_\_ Check

Make checks payable to:

Beil & Hay Trust Acc't

Mail check and order form to:

Beil & Hay, PA

12300 US Hwy 19

Hudson, FL 34667

**RAYSBASEBALL.COM 888-FAN-RAYS**

Offer not available through Tropicana Field box offices, International Plaza ticket outlet or Ticketmaster. Tickets subject to availability. No refunds or exchanges. Prices subject to change