

Harwell 'tunes in' to writing

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Harwell had started working for WSB when his plans for a newspaper career had fizzled. He had worked as correspondent for the Sporting News at age 16 and served as a fill-in employee at the Atlanta Constitution while going to high school and Emory University in Atlanta. But he couldn't find a full-time newspaper job.

"I'd been in speech class at Emory with a fellow who was a program director at WSB," Harwell said. "He knew I was interested in speech and sports, and it was his idea to combine the two."

Harwell made it to the big leagues as a broadcaster in 1948 with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Following stints with the New York Giants and Baltimore Ori-

oles, Harwell joined the Tiger announcing crew in 1960.

HARWELL SAID he never tires of the travel involved, even though it means 25 road trips during the regular season.

"Most people hate the travel and that sends them into retirement," Harwell said. "But I have people I know in each town. We go to a town twice each season, and I get to visit with them, have some fun, and somebody else pays for it."

"I enjoy living out of a motel, eating in restaurants. I look upon it as an adventure."

Harwell and his wife, Lulu, have been married for 44 years. She wrote his book's introduction, where she

points out that baseball is only one side of Ernie Harwell.

He also is a songwriter who has had 46 of his songs recorded, by such artists as B.J. Thomas, Mitch Ryder and Homer and Jethro. And he is an inventor, holding a U.S. patent on a bottle cap opener and having invented a World Series Fact Wheel.

"Ernie's idea of a roaring good time is relaxing at home with a few close friends and family," Lulu Harwell wrote.

Family includes sons Bill and Gray and seven grandchildren. Bill is an insurance salesman in Farmington Hills; Gray runs a Christian ministry called Family Restoration in Fort Mill, S.C.

DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS Harwell has spoken to the baseball chapels of various major league teams

and devoted a chapter of his book to the chapel movement. He sees the informal clubhouse worship services as a way of changing lives.

Tiger pitcher Frank Tanana is a good example. He just won the Danny Thompson Award for the fellow who won the best Christian award for the past 12 months. "He was sort of wild and didn't know what direction he was going in, and he changed because of the chapel."

Although Harwell is still going strong behind the microphone, he knows one day he'll have to retire from the broadcast booth.

"I foresee it, but I don't look forward to it. As long as I'm healthy and as long as they want me, I'm going to keep working. I've been blessed by the Lord with good health, and you have everything when you have health."

"People come to the point where I can't do it. I don't want to hang around. But it's a great blessing to have your health and have a job that you really enjoy."

Playing fields sought for teams

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road, he said, when other sites have been used up.

Bailey, president of the Farmington Soccer Club, suggested a small portion of the 212-acre Spicer property could be used for youth sports.

"It don't think we want to assume it should all be passive."

City council members thanked the youth sports representatives for their comments.

"Municipal government, like the wheels of justice, just can't operate and respond that quick," council member JoAnn Sorenson said. "Turnaround is not going to be easily done, but I think it can be done."

Other council members agreed they needed to learn about the youth sports organizations' needs.

"It's incumbent upon the organizations to educate us," council member Joan Dudley said.

Book brings game alive

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"Writing the book was always in the back of my mind. I'd been procrastinating, mainly," said Harwell from his Tiger Stadium office Tuesday. "Right after the (last) World Series, I just sat down and wrote it and kept going. I didn't want to write anything much that had to look up. I didn't want to write a lot of play-by-play, detail or a lot of statistics. I wanted to sound as human as I could and offer little insights people might not get otherwise. I wanted to let them see through my eyes."

"I just kept hacking away in my study on my Underwood manual typewriter," added the Baseball Hall of Famer who completed his national bestseller the first week of December.

FOLKS YET to meet Harwell who suspect he's a recluse were convinced of it by the time they finished his 221-page hardcover (Diamond Communications, Inc. \$14.95). The vignettes are spins in a conversational style are akin to tales he might tell a golf partner while sauntering down a fairway.

The broadcaster, who aspired to be a pro baseball player and a newspaper writer, shares nuggets of knowledge related to him during morning walks by "that silver-gray mop and that rugged wrinkled face," Detroit Tiger Manager Sparky Anderson.

"Most of all I learned that Sparky Anderson is a master psychologist," said Harwell. "He had the right fire and some of the best in the Tigers." Right after the (last) World Series, I just sat down and wrote it and kept going. I didn't want to write anything much that had to look up. I didn't want to write a lot of play-by-play, detail or a lot of statistics. I wanted to sound as human as I could and offer little insights people might not get otherwise. I wanted to let them see through my eyes."

Harwell is a great entertainer.

He takes you to Memorial Stadium for the Baltimore-Cincinnati 1970 World Series; has you eyeball-to-eye-

ball with a livid Leo Durocher, cringing in a broadcast booth wracked with technical difficulties as a Nellie Fox interview is taped and re-taped, and pouring over pictures of a toothpick-wielded Ted Williams, nattily-attired Ty Cobb and baseball patriarch Connie Mack.

He recalls 19-game losing streaks and introduces you to one-time Tiger President Bill DeWitt, also "known as 'Old Bubble Eyes' because some felt that he looked like a fat frog within a business suit."

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