

**Remarks prepared for Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Postal Service
“Major League Baseball All-Stars” First Day of Issuance Ceremony
National Baseball Hall of Fame
Cooperstown, NY
Friday, July 20, 2012**

Thanks for that great introduction.

Thanks also to Jeff Idelson and his terrific staff at the National Baseball Hall of Fame for the help they gave us to make this a successful event.

And welcome to everyone joining us for this wonderful event on the worldwide web.

On behalf of the United States Postal Service, it's a pleasure to be here today to dedicate our new stamps commemorating four outstanding Hall of Famers.

This event, and the players who are with us today, bring back so many great memories.

For instance, what a pleasure it is to meet Tony Gwynn — “Mr. Padre.” The quality I admired most watching you play was your dedication to improvement.

You have always been a student of the game, and today, you continue to contribute, not only as a coach of a successful collegiate

program, but — through your foundation to help underprivileged children — to the community at large.

I would also like to thank Kathy Bleuer, your Postmaster here in Cooperstown. Kathy, would you please stand? Kathy leads a great Postal team here in Cooperstown that does a wonderful job – not just for this year's event, but for every Hall of Fame Induction weekend.

My memories of baseball when I was a kid start with Forbes Field. That's where I saw players like Willie Mays, Henry Aaron, Joe Torre, Roberto Clemente and of course, Willie Stargell, one of the players we're honoring today.

I saw Willie Stargell hit a home run in 1964, during my first game at Forbes Field.

I also saw Nelson Briles win Game Two of the 1971 World Series at Forbes Field — a 2-hit shutout against the Baltimore Orioles that helped the Pirates with their title run that year.

Those are some of my great baseball memories. I'm sure most of you also have your own memories of the game.

The Postal Service has been around for a long time. We began delivering mail in 1775 under the leadership of Benjamin Franklin — the nation's first Postmaster General.

Few American institutions are as old as the U.S. Postal Service. But baseball comes close.

There are several accounts of the game's origins, including this one: In 1791, the town of Pittsfield, Massachusetts passed an ordinance to protect its windows by forbidding its citizens from playing a version of today's game within 80 yards of the town's meeting house.

I know glass windows were expensive and rare in the 18th Century. And now we know windows destroyed by errant balls have always been a part of the game.

Of course, the citizens of Pittsfield couldn't have known that a mere 240 feet wouldn't offer much protection from balls hit by the sluggers we honor today.

Baseball reflects our culture in so many ways:

- It's a game based on rules and tradition, where ambitious players with discipline and talent can succeed.
- Baseball's roots are rural; but as our country grew, the game became "the national pastime" because it's played at the highest level in many of our great cities.
- We have landmarks like the Lincoln Memorial and the Statue of Liberty to remind us where we came from and how far the future can take us. Baseball also has monuments that celebrate the game's past

and future — Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, the new Yankee Stadium — and its Hall of Fame.

Baseball has a powerful grip on the heartstrings of America. Its manicured diamonds grab our attention the first time we see them. Its hold on us strengthens as we play and learn the game through our young years.

And then — after nearly all of us realize there's no chance we'll hit the winning home run in the World Series — its tradition and timelessness keep us returning to stadiums each summer, season after season, year after year.

Writer Roger Khan said baseball is for “the leisurely afternoons of summer and for unchanging dreams.”

Today, on a leisurely summer day, the Postal Service honors the memory of four great players whose unchanging dreams and exceptional skills propelled them to success.

Our latest Forever stamps — called “Major League Baseball All-Stars” — are a salute to the accomplishments of Ted Williams, Larry Doby, Willie Stargell and Joe DiMaggio.....truly remarkable men.

We're pleased to honor baseball and these four excellent players, especially since the sport reflects so much of what is unique in American culture.

But there's another reason we've dedicated so many stamps to this wonderful sport — our employees like baseball, and so do the people who buy our stamps.

I guess the Postal Service is a little bit like Chicago Cubs legend Ernie Banks, whose love for baseball is reflected in his famous quote, "It's a lovely day for a game — let's play two."

This also is a lovely day. It's a special privilege to be here with you in this wonderful place, honoring four great players and enjoying the history of baseball. Thank you.

Now, can we please have the ceremony participants join me to unveil the Major League Baseball All-Star stamps?
