



Remarks for the Renaming of the Monessen-Donora Bridge  
At Donora War Memorial Park May 4, 2012 2:00 P.M.  
Stephen V. Russell, General Chairman Mid Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame

Mayor Lignelli, Senator Solobay, Representative Daley, distinguished guests, the Musial Family, the Donora Historical Society, friends of the Mon Valley:

As the general chairman of the Mid Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame it has always been a great joy to know that Stan was the first inductee back in 1951. He was also in the inaugural class of the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame in 1963. I had the great honor of knowing Stan through my Dad, Jimmy Russell of Fayette City. Stan came up to the Big Leagues in 1941 and my Dad in 1942. When Cardinal Stan would come into Forbes Field he would frequently ask my Dad for a ride up to “the Valley.”

In the past ten years, since the release of no less than four biographies on the life of Stan Musial, I have been motivated to study his life even further. Revered baseball general manager Branch Rickey said of Stan, “It would do the youth of this generation well to make a study of this man’s life.” As an educator I have used Mr. Musial’s life as an example to my charges. With this research I came across some memorable quotes from an interesting array of people.

Stan Musial certainly symbolizes everything about citizenship which was so eloquently stated in the Congressional Record in 1956 by Pennsylvania Representative John P. Saylor: “We salute Stan Musial not only for his greatness as a ballplayer but also because he has remained the quiet, modest, humble, dignified, religious, refined and sympathetic person that he was in the days of his boyhood in a small town of western Pennsylvania. Musial has epitomized Cold War America’s best-one who made it in a competitive system because of hard work, diligence, and sobriety. America can use more men and boys of Stan Musial’s caliber and if the rest of the world were so fortunate as to have a predominance of this type of character, the only defense programs would be those planned by opposing managers to stop Stan Musial.”

In school Stan was a favorite of his teachers and was recognized by coaches and especially astute educators like “Moon” Clark, James K. Russell and Dr. Michael “Ki” Duda. They became his mentors throughout his early years and marveled at his athletic prowess, work ethic, mindset, and sunny attitude about life and how blessed he was even with how little he had.

As Musial became a professional athlete more accolades are worth remembering: Manager Eddie Dyer said, “He’s the greatest kid I ever met, unselfish and a team player all the way.” *Sports Illustrated* proclaimed - “Musial must have been invented by Horatio Alger.” National League president Warren Giles called Stan Musial an “inspiration to our youth.” Commissioner of Baseball Ford Frick summarized Musial’s impact on the great game when it was the National Pastime, “If I had to pick out the man who is most typical of the things baseball stands for... an individual performer, citizen, and good guy - my candidate would be Stan Musial.” Modest beyond a fault he himself said, “I can’t throw like Bob Feller, field like Joe DiMaggio, or hit like Ted Williams.”

In summary Stan Musial was known for his consistency in a game of inconsistency. He was so consistent that he seldom experienced a slump. He treated his body like one who kept his automobile fine tuned and perfectly running and I remember my Dad speaking about Stan’s body care of getting the right nutrition and rest. He kept his weight and his waistline in check. He married young and settled down to keep his focus on baseball. Life never became drudgery with his beaming smile and positive personality. Polite, patient and proud, he was everyone’s favorite be it fan, peer, or manager. He was a Sir Galahad in baseball britches. He was a super star without an enlarged ego. He was a dedicated team player never asking for special favors or second guessing.

It is truly fitting to name this bridge for Stan so when this generation and future generations see the name Stan Musial they will make an effort as Branch Rickey said to study this man’s life. In that sense Mr. Musial will continue to inspire, to teach and offer what being a celebrity citizen can be in this the Great Republic.