

Dear Robbie,

Greetings. I am William C. "Bill" Stutt, Naval Academy, Class of 1949. I write to you on behalf of my late teammate, classmate, and roommate, J.H.L. "Lee" Chambers, who received the Turnbull Award way back in 1949.

Lee graduated from the McDonogh School in Baltimore and then from the Naval Academy. He had a fantastic lacrosse career at Navy. I think he is still their all-time leading goal scorer (they didn't keep assists back then). He was part of two National Championship teams (1946, 1949) and was a four-time All-American. He is a member of the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame (inducted 1975). He served in the U.S. Navy upon graduation and later in the Marine Corps before resigning to assume leadership of a family design business headquartered in Baltimore.

Lee was super modest. He acknowledged his awards but never really talked about them. He also received the U.S. Naval Academy Athletic Association Trophy for being the most outstanding athlete in his class of 1949.

Lee played crease attack. His size, strength, and hair-trigger reflexes enabled him to be a prolific scorer. He was not a dodger. The head of his stick was the size of a defensive stick (back then – much bigger than a normal attack stick) with little or no pocket. He would often receive a pass and shoot, all in one motion without cradling. Because of his success and the close quarters with defensemen around the crease, Lee endured a lot of illicit contact

which the referees didn't see. But he never complained.

We played with a rectangular crease back then. I am not sure how playing with a circular crease would have affected Lee's play—just interesting to note, I think. Our offensive philosophy was “pass and cut,” with minimal dodging. This style fit Lee perfectly.

I should say that our sticks back then were very unique. Today they are much more uniform. We would spend hours at the Bacharach and Rasin store loft in Baltimore selecting three or four sticks that we thought had the best balance and feel.

Our coach, Dinty Moore (an all-time legend) had the annual challenge of developing part of his team from athletes who had never played before coming to the Naval Academy. Typically, they were defensemen of athletic talent who also played football. Those of us who had some stick skills from high school played midfield and attack. During our preseason, we had endless stick drills before starting scrimmages. Unlike the plebe coach (and later highly successful varsity coach, and another legend, Willis Bilderback), Dinty never had set “plays.” The closest we got to “plays” were extra man drills. Interestingly, the Navy football coach, recognizing Lee's athletic abilities tried unsuccessfully to recruit him to play tight end in football, much to Dinty's chagrin, fearing his “Leecham” might get injured.

One of Lee's highlights would have been his play in the 1947 North-South all-star game at Hopkins' Homewood Field in Baltimore when he scored seven or eight goals in a 14-14 tie. Lee scored

two goals in the last three minutes to tie the game and then scored again with 48 seconds to go after the North had gone up once more! Our games with Army were always special. Both coaches, Dinty and Morris Touchstone at Army, always had Frenchy Julian as referee. I believe Frenchy was from Canada. He was fair and tolerated heavy contact.

Playing with Lee and the rest of my teammates at Navy was a very special time for me. We worked very hard but we also had a great time playing the game. A few of those friendships remain with me today—some sixty-five years later.

Lee played the game hard and fairly. He was a model of what we should all aspire to be as a player and teammate. It was a joy to play with him. In the really close games we could usually count on Lee for a goal or two that would make the difference ... I suspect Lee would encourage you to perfect your talents through lots of practice.

On behalf of J.H.L. Chambers,

Bill Stutt  
USNA 1949