

The Greatest Ever

Give a boy a stick he can hold

Give a boy a ball he can toss

And you've given him something that's better than gold

The pleasure of playing lacrosse.

Attributed to

Douglas C. Turnbull, Jr.

Lewis met the Jones family for lunch at the Mount Washington Tavern in Baltimore. He had previously arranged for a special guest to meet them there. At exactly 12:00, Lewis led Robbie to an older gentleman and introduced him.

"Stewart, this is Robbie Jones."

"Hi, Robbie, I'm Stewart McLean. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Robbie's eyes lit up, as did his parents'.

"John, Catherine, Mary, this is Stewart McLean, Naval Academy Class of '48, the first recipient of the Turnbull Award."

"It's quite an honor to meet you, Mr. McLean," offered John Jones.

"Stewart, please. And the pleasure is mine."

“I suppose Jim has shared with you the nature of our relationship?” said Mary.

“He has, and it sounds like a truly remarkable one at that. I wasn’t aware that Doug and Jack had passed down a stick to Jim and then to your son.”

“I thought it would be fun to meet Stewart since he actually knew Jack and Doug and saw both of them play. Would you mind sharing a little bit of your relationship with the Turnbull brothers with Robbie and Catherine?” Lewis asked.

“Not at all. Well, it’s been quite a while since anyone has asked me about those two men. They were truly special, as were their parents and sisters.

“I grew up not far from here in the Mount Washington part of town. I played lacrosse at St. Paul’s School. After playing for Hopkins, both Doug and Jack played for the Mount Washington Club. For many years—decades, really—Mount Washington was the best team in the country. We idolized those guys. I was lucky because their field was only a five-minute walk from my house and a ten-minute walk from school. I got to see both of them play quite a bit. By then Doug was

playing mostly defense. Jack played everywhere. He faced off and played attack. He was tenacious but fair in everything he did. They were fun to watch. They were always gentlemen on and off the field. We would talk to them after games, and they always took the time to throw around with us.

“Doug was the only four-time first-team All-America for fifty years. A player named Frank Urso from Maryland earned his fourth award in 1975. I remember reading that Doug presented the certificate to him. He was genuinely happy for the young man. Then another player from Hopkins, Del Dressel, accomplished it again in the mid-eighties. Doug worked for many years as an executive at the B&O Railroad here in Baltimore. He was always active in the game.”

Lewis picked up the story, “Mr. Turnbull was inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1962—the year I graduated from high school. Many people consider Doug to be the greatest player ever. If you ask him, though, he would be the first to tell you that Jack far surpassed his abilities. The only reason Jack wasn’t also a four-time first-team All America was that he graduated in three years! So did Doug, by the way, but he

kept playing while he worked on graduate studies. Had Jack used his fourth year, he certainly would have equaled Doug's accomplishment."

Lewis continued, "He often told me how he had used the stick religiously—throwing against his family's barn, working his skills and then working them some more. He decided to share the stick with his younger brother Jack—actually as a precocious four-year-old Jack had already helped himself to the stick. Doug didn't fight it because the stick created a special bond between the brothers.

"I was extremely fortunate to have had a forty-five-year correspondence—maybe two or three letters per year—with Mr. Turnbull that has made me who I am today. Well, two or three letters per year for forty-five years has turned into about 120 letters from him. Mr. Turnbull also sent me a book every year on my birthday. My parents were always grateful that he thought so well of me that he encouraged me to read. They were great books, too! The amazing thing is that he sent me a book every year until he died—not just when I was a kid or in school. So I have accumulated quite a library, more than forty books—actually, it's more like ninety because he sent me the set

called *The Harvard Classics*, which includes about fifty volumes, on my graduation from college. Each book was specially selected by him, and he always inscribed a thoughtful and personal comment and an inspirational quotation in each. It's quite a collection of letters and books, which meant a lot to me at the time but obviously means even more to me the older I get.

"I learned a lot about the game of lacrosse. What its true spirit was and is. Mr. Turnbull was able to offer me advice about things in my life every step of the way. His role in my life has been incredible—and has very much made me who I am today. He was a truly great man."

McLean took his cue to continue.

"Robbie, did you know that Jack was a member of the United States Olympic Team?"

"No, sir," Robbie responded. Then he suddenly connected the figure of the Olympic rings.

"Did he do the carving of the rings on the stick?" he asked of Lewis.

"Yes, Robbie, he did. But I should add that he participated in *two* Olympic Games—

one in lacrosse in 1932 when he captained the team that won the gold medal. He was also a member of the 1936 U.S. men's field hockey team which competed in Berlin, ironically in front of Hitler."

Everyone's eyes lit up.

"Robbie, I think if you look carefully at the carving on the stick, you'll see that there are actually two sets of rings, one superimposed upon the other," Lewis offered. "Jack carved one set after each Olympiad."

Robbie mentally confirmed the fact, "Yes, I thought it looked like two sets!"

McLean continued, "Robbie, if you have half as much fun as Jim and I had playing lacrosse, you'll be one lucky young man. I think Jim would agree that lacrosse has added something special to our lives. It has provided us with life-long bonds with our teammates and coaches and, in many cases, with some of our opponents as well. It is truly a special game." Lewis nodded.

After lunch, Lewis drove Robbie and his family to 2111 Sulgrave Avenue in the Mount Washington part of town and identified it as the Turnbull home. Robbie gazed in awe as

Lewis stopped to extend their look. They continued on.

McLean met the family at the Lacrosse Museum and National Hall-of-Fame adjacent to The Johns Hopkins University's Homewood Field. Lewis walked the family to the field and gave them some sense of the history of Johns Hopkins lacrosse and his experience playing on the field.

"This is one of the most historic fields in the game of lacrosse. Many people liken it to Yankee Stadium. Johns Hopkins has won some forty-two national championships in lacrosse. Playing at Navy-Marine Corps Stadium was always a thrill, but it was also an extraordinary privilege to play here. I'll never forget the game I played here in 1965 when we beat Hopkins in front of their Homecoming crowd of over 7,000. It was particularly special for me due to my relationship with Mr. Turnbull."

They walked back to the Museum. Lewis paused before the magnificent, life-size bronze sculpture gracing the front entrance. Stretching their sticks for a ball two Indians are frozen for all time.

Robbie stared at the statue, poring over the detail. He noticed the players wearing only

breechclouts, moccasins, and war paint on their arms, legs, torsos, and faces. One of the players, the one with the ball in his stick, was jumping. Robbie wondered if the fact that one native had a left-handed stick while the other had a right-handed one was a coincidence. Probably not. He thought of Red Hawk playing the game in this fashion.

The boy read the inscription on the dedication plaque:

DEHONTSHIHGWA'ES

(Creator's Game)

The game of lacrosse was given by the Creator to the Ho-de-no-saunee (Iroquois) and other Native American people many ages ago. It is from the Iroquois that the modern game of lacrosse most directly descends. May this sculpture forever honor the Iroquois and the origins of Lacrosse.

Donated by Emil A. "Buzzy" Budnitz, Jr.

Lacrosse Hall-of-Fame Class of 1976

June 4, 1992

Robbie's eyes lit up the instant he walked through the doors of the Museum. Lewis allowed the family to soak in the sights

and sounds at their own pace. Robbie and his sister were particularly fascinated by the display case holding a variety of ancient sticks, all in different shapes and sizes, representing different tribes. They also saw the magnificent three-foot-high Turnbull Trophy, housed in its own case. Robbie craned his head to locate the names of Lewis and McLean. His heart jumped when he was able to get the right angle to read Lewis's.

When the parents saw Robbie fixated on the trophy, they came up behind and realized the significance of his gaze. Lewis offered, "Stewart is too modest to point this out, but that's his name inscribed on the top."

McLean proudly led the group to the Hall-of-Fame room, pausing at the entrance to point out the plaque dedicated to his Navy coach, William H. Moore:

*The Lacrosse Hall-of-Fame room pays
tribute to*

"Dinty" Moore

*who served as the first president of the
Lacrosse Hall-of-Fame Foundation 1960-*

67...

*for his ongoing contribution to the
preservation and promotion of the sport.*

*This room serves as a legacy to his
leadership and vision.*

McLean then pointed out the plaques of Moore and his high school coach, Howdy Myers, among the greats enshrined. "I was extremely fortunate to have such great coaches, Robbie. Oh, and let's not forget Captain Lewis," McLean concluded as he gestured toward the 1981 inductees.

John and Mary Jones were as enthralled with the museum as their children. Lewis and McLean patiently answered their questions that arose during the next two hours.