



Gil Hodges: A Hall of Fame Life

Mort Zachter

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In descriptions of athletes, the word “hero” is bandied about and liberally attached to players with outstanding statistics and championship rings. *Gil Hodges: A Hall of Fame Life* is the story of a man who epitomized heroism in its truest meaning, holding values and personal interactions to be of utmost importance throughout his life—on the diamond, as a marine in World War II, and in his personal and civic life. A New York City icon and, with the Brooklyn Dodgers, one of the finest first basemen of all time, Gil Hodges (1924–72) managed the Washington Senators and later the New York Mets, leading the 1969 “Miracle Mets” to a World Series championship. A beloved baseball star, Hodges was also an ethical figure whose sturdy values both on and off the field once prompted a Brooklyn priest to tell his congregation to “go home, and say a prayer for Gil Hodges” in order to snap him out of the worst batting slump of his career.

Mort Zachter examines Hodges’s playing and managing days, but perhaps more important, he unearths his true heroism by emphasizing the impact that Hodges’s humanity had on those around him on a daily basis. Hodges was a witty man with a dry sense of humor, and his dignity and humble sacrifice sometimes masked a temper that made Joe Torre refer to him as the “Quiet Inferno.” The honesty and integrity that made him so popular to so many remained his defining elements. Firsthand interviews of the many soldiers, friends, family, former teammates, players, and managers who knew and respected Hodges bring the totality of his life into full view, providing a rounded appreciation for this great man and ballplayer.

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