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Inside the Wondrous Mind of Bill Murray

BY STEVEN SCHUSSLER

ST. PAUL SAINTS CO-OWNER Bill Murray is full of passion and insight. What follows is the best of our conversation about baseball, life, fame and the Saints' quest to build a new stadium.

SS: What made you such a huge baseball fan? **BM:** I played baseball. I really lived and died baseball in my childhood. When I heard the great baseball players like Ray Boggs—a pitcher for the Boston Braves—saying that if they didn't have a ball they'd hit a stone, that's what I did too. I can still hear my neighbor screaming from getting hit in the head with a rock I'd belted over the fence!

SS: What is the biggest sacrifice you've made? **BM:** My privacy. You become the side effect of your own celebrity. I can deal with losing my own privacy, but it affecting my kids is what I regret. No one can prepare you for what happens with fame.

SS: What is the biggest business mistake you've been a part of? **BM:** I helped a fellow who was making beautiful magnets. Instead of cutting the magnets by hand, he wanted to get a [water cutter]. He said if he had one he could do some crazy numbers more. I was in New York and he was in California, but I liked what he was making so I said okay. It was a fair amount of money, and the inventor had to get a new place for the machine because it took up a lot of room. I went to visit and when I walked in there was the machine, but there were also 13 carpenters building a monument to the executive in charge. I said, "Oh no!"

SS: How did you connect with Mike Veeck? **BM:** We traveled parallel lines. My connection with the Cubs is from birth, his goes back to his grandfather who was the president of the Cubs. Michael was in Florida and we started up with a little Florida team. The Saints have been our greatest achievement. It's the most spectacular experience you can have as a baseball fan.

SS: Who has been an inspiration for you? **BM:** There are two people. The first was my father who was a really tough lad and worked very hard. He'd come home at night and there were a lot of kids and a lot of competition for his attention, so that's why we are a bunch of motor mouths! My brother Brian is also my inspiration. He is ahead of me in show business, as a comedian and an actor. I went and I watched what he was doing for a really long time, never really thinking it was something for me. I just enjoyed it and [picked it up] through osmosis. To this day he believes in me and is someone I can ask for advice. He also loves baseball.



SS: What was John Belushi like? **BM:** John was a magical person. He didn't have to be drinking or partying to be fun—he was gifted. I certainly learned a lot from people that were ahead of me. John's death was a real shame. He influenced a lot of people with his wit and humor in the time that he had.

SS: Talk about another experience that has affected you. **BM:** One of my favorite experiences comes from a victory we had in a Saints championship game. The team was behind and this guy turned to us and said, "There's only one way to make this happen." So we screamed nonstop for five innings and we kept screaming until there was no voice left in any of us. The Saints came from behind and won the game. I never forgot that because it affects me whenever I go to a game and see how important the fans are in determining the outcome. If you keep pushing, something can break.

SS: Do you have any advice, especially for the business world? **BM:** Have fun in order to succeed! What are you going to do for a living? Are you going to work for your dad, are you going to take a traditional sort of job? With my job, the more fun I had, the better I was at it. But how do you make it fun all the time? Pay attention to the whole of yourself. At Second City in Chicago we had to be funny at 9:00 p.m. sharp. It didn't matter what was happening at 8:45 p.m. because the show was live at 9:00 p.m. Work is live too. You've got to have fun at work no matter what's going on in your life.

SS: I've been told that the Saints are looking for a new stadium site. **BM:** Yes, our hope is to get a new ballpark in [Lowertown] St. Paul. Downtown St. Paul is gorgeous and I believe bringing the ballpark there will be a great thing for the city and for the state.

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