

VIDEO VIGNETTES

Garland, Hazel

New Pittsburgh Courier (1966-1981); Feb 15, 1975; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Pittsburgh Courier

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OLD BASEBALL STARS don't die. And unlike "old soldiers," they just don't "fade away." Sometimes they turn up on the small home screen as television sportscasters. If however, they are as good-looking, as articulate, and as well-informed about his subject as BILL WHITE, then TV is the place for them to be.

SPEAKING OF WHITE, unless you live in the Philadelphia or New York area, you might have wondered about the whereabouts of the former super star of sports. I am happy to inform one and all that BILL WHITE is not only apparently well and happy, but doing a super job of sportscasting in New York City.

THE FORMER BASEBALL great who while with the St. Louis Cardinals went into the record books when he tied TY COBB's record by getting 14 consecutive hits during a double-header. He starred at first-base with the Phillies before leaving the game. Off-season, Bill was a sportscaster on a Philadelphia TV

station, telecasting everything dealing with sports...football, basketball, hockey, in fact everything "except baseball," he says.

LAST WEEK WHITE turned up on the "TODAY" show, giving him his first shot as an NBC-TV Network sportscaster. After doing the regular sports segment and carrying off the job very well, the show's host, JIM HARTZ did a five-minute interview with Bill. It was then that I learned how the ex-baseball great had been handling himself during the past few years.

WHITE REVEALED THAT he did the regular play-by-play games of the New York Yankees as well as other sportscasting during off-season for NBC. I also learned that he comes from nearby Warren, Ohio and attended Hiram College where he was a pre-med student. He won letters as a baseball, basketball and football star in school and later went on to play baseball for 14 years. White is married and the father of five children, whose future appears to be well in hand because there appears no other route for BILL WHITE than straight to the top in TV.

I AM VERY happy that things turned out the way they did for Bill White. They don't always happen that way. No matter how great a Black athlete is, somehow when his playing days are over, unless he has invested his earnings well, the guy has a difficult time adjusting himself to living on an ordinary low-paying job.

IF YOU DON'T believe that Black athletes are treated differently than their white "brothers", you aren't looking at things in a realistic manner. Take the case of the late, great JACKIE ROBINSON. I don't believe I have to cite the many achievements of Robinson and what an asset he was to the old Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team. Jackie was the main spark plug both on and off the field during the team's hey-day.

BUT WHEN JACKIE began to slow down and his legs began to give way, the Dodgers' front office decided to trade him. Now with STAN MUSIAL it was a different story. Equally great as a baseball star with the St. Louis Cardinals, when Musial's playing days were over, he landed an executive job with the team.

I COULD CITE other cases . . . such as what happened to WILLIE MAYS. I never thought the Giants would let the "Say Hey" kid leave their organization but they did. And while I may be wrong, I doubt very much if HANK AARON were white that the Atlanta Braves would have permitted him to leave without offering the record-breaking slugger everything under the sun.

I STAND TO be corrected if I am wrong and I sincerely hope that I am. I heard Hartz say when he introduced the show Monday, that BILL WHITE would be handling the sports assignments for a time. I was under the im-

pression that the present job on the "TODAY" show was not permanent. If it was a trial, then surely White passed the test with flying colors.

NBC NEEDS TO improve its image, especially on the network level. I don't know why two of the network's best newscasters, BILL MATNEY and LEM TUCKER left to take on similar assignments with the ABC-TV Networks. But when you come right down to it, none of the networks make use of their Blacks as regulars on network news shows, morning or evening.

IT MUST BE very frustrating for Blacks who like MATNEY, spend years working on a network, yet never have an opportunity to anchor one of the big network news shows. While it is true that many whites are treated the same way, it seems to me that at least one Black should prove to be of the stature that he (or she) can anchor a show.

I STILL CAN'T understand why Blacks aren't used as panelists on such network news shows as "FACE THE NATION," "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" and "MEET THE PRESS." While I am always happy to see the very knowledgeable CARL ROWAN sitting in on NBC's "MEET THE PRESS" from time to time, I think that a regular, perhaps MATNEY, TUCKER or former Cleveland Mayor CARL STOKES (now with WNBC in New York) could be used on all such shows.