

NFL Crews • Basketball: NCAA Rule Changes • Dale Williams

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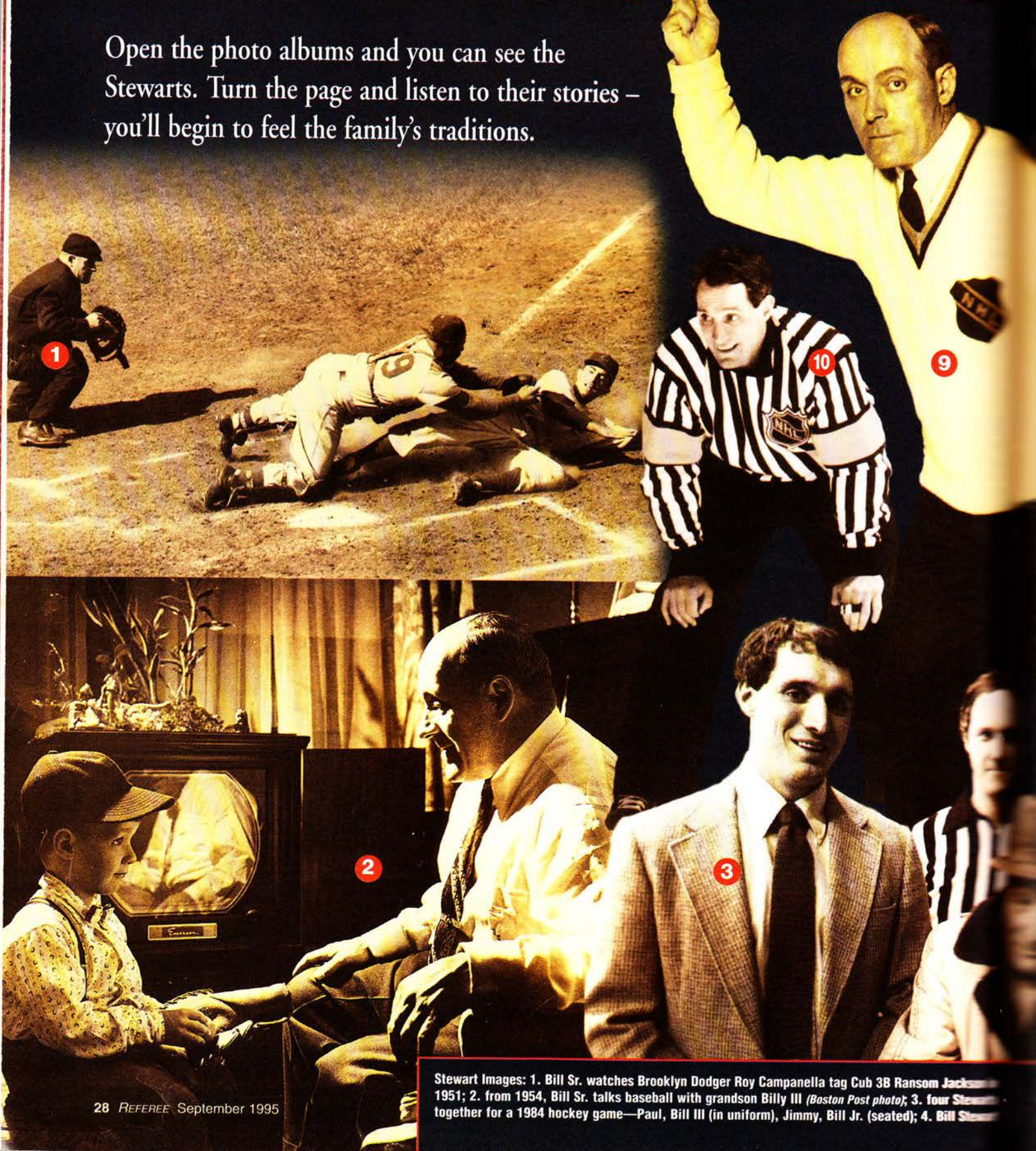
Generation After Generation

THE BOSTON STEWARTS



# A Lot To

Open the photo albums and you can see the Stewarts. Turn the page and listen to their stories — you'll begin to feel the family's traditions.



Stewart Images: 1. Bill Sr. watches Brooklyn Dodger Roy Campanella tag Cub 3B Ransom Jackson in 1951; 2. from 1954, Bill Sr. talks baseball with grandson Billy III (*Boston Post* photo); 3. four Stewarts together for a 1984 hockey game—Paul, Bill III (in uniform), Jimmy, Bill Jr. (seated); 4. Bill Sr.



# LIVE UP TO

by Dan Herbst



IV, on his uncle Paul's shoulders, "unveils" the Boston ball field dedicated to Bill Jr.'s memory as Helen (Mrs. Bill Jr.) looks on; 5. Bill Jr. before a 1977 game (photo: Boston Globe/David Ryan); 6. Bill III during a break in a 1993 ECAC game; 7. Chip McDonald (1993); 8. Bill III (1993); 9. Bill Sr. (1936); 10. Paul (1994).



Bill Stewart can remember his grandpa's stories. Bill heard them time and again. Stories of big games, great athletes, magical stadiums. Sports are a big part of the family tradition. But while lots of families hand down stories of legendary athletic events witnessed, the Stewart family hands down stories of participation, beginning with Grandpa Stewart, "Bill Sr.," who was a National Hockey League (NHL) referee and a National League (N.L.) baseball umpire.

Back when Bill Sr., William Joseph Stewart, made his debut as the first American-born NHL referee, fans behind goals were protected by wire mesh and the Montreal Maroons skated against the New York Americans. Over half a century later, his grandson Paul is the lone man among the League's top arbiters who has worn both a player's sweater and the referee's distinctive orange armbands.

The acorns off Bill Sr.'s family tree haven't fallen far from their roots. Bill Jr. called college football and ice hockey games (1948-74), and he umpired baseball from 1948 until his 1987 death from congestive heart failure.

William Joseph Stewart III describes himself as "a victim of birth. I was the first-born son of the only son of Bill Stewart Sr.," he explains. "When I was born, the doctor ran to a phone to call my grandfather to tell him he had a grandson. I was 'William the Third,' automatically. I've always been called 'Three' or 'Third.'"

Bill III, Paul's older brother, is an NCAA Division I-AA college football official when he's not skating at the NCAA Division I ice hockey level. His "day job" is as a probation officer working on Boston's street gang unit.

Chip McDonald, the son of Paul's and Bill III's sister, Patricia Anne, is the fifth officiating Stewart to skate at the Boston Garden. He is an NCAA Division I hockey linesman and a Division II and III referee in the East Coast Athletic Conference — when he's not selling concrete for the Boston Sand & Gravel Company.

**BILL SR.: THE GRANDFATHER.** With a resume spanning two centuries and four generations, the Stewarts' sporting history owes much to Bill Sr. He was the hard-nosed product of Fitchburg, Mass., a tough mill town just outside Boston. Born to a silversmith in 1895, Bill Sr. had a multifaceted athletic career which included a stint as a pitcher with the infamous 1919 Chicago White Sox. His services, according to Bill III, grossed \$650 from the team's tight-fisted owner, Charles Comiskey. Stewart was dispatched to the minor leagues (Louisville) in mid-season, where he was 13-11 with a 2.71 ERA; he never did toss a pitch in "the show," yet his demotion proved lucky. He was untainted by baseball's worst scandal, when eight of the so-called "Black Sox" allegedly conspired to throw the World Series to Cincinnati.

Hopes of a return to play big league baseball ended when, while working as a census taker, he slipped off of a porch and shattered his arm. Stewart bounced around the minors before hanging up his cleats after the summer of 1928.

Between the playing seasons, Bill Sr. worked for



## THE OFFICIATING STEWARTS

Here are brief bios of Bill Sr. and his officiating descendants. Information includes each surviving person's age, hometown, relationship to Bill Stewart Sr., occupation and officiating background.

**William Joseph Stewart Sr.** (1895-1964). Multi-sport coach and official. Coached several prep and college hockey teams; also coached the 1937-38 Chicago Blackhawks to the Stanley Cup, indicative of the National Hockey League (NHL) championship. He worked 12 years as an NHL referee, including the first hockey game played in the Boston Garden, and 22 years as a major league baseball umpire (N.L. 1933-54), including four All-Star games and five World Series. Also played professional baseball; spent the first half of the 1919 season with the Chicago White Sox, but saw little game action.

**William Joseph Stewart Jr.** (1919-1987). Son. High school teacher, coach and athletic director. He officiated amateur sports including the top levels of college hockey, football and baseball (1954 NCAA Ice Hockey playoffs, 1971 NCAA Division I College Baseball World Series).

**William Joseph Stewart III**, 45, Dedham, Mass. Grandson. Assistant chief probation officer, Dorchester District Court. Former high school and college hockey coach. Umpired baseball (1974-88), football (1974-present) and hockey (1976-present). Worked NCAA Division III football playoff games in 1986, 88 and 91; 1987 NCAA Division III hockey championship game and a quarter-final playoff game during the 1994 NCAA Division I hockey tournament.

**Paul Gerard Stewart**, 40, Boston. Grandson. NHL referee (No. 22); worked his first NHL game Mar. 27, 1987, in Boston, after working four seasons in hockey's minor leagues; now has worked 29 NHL playoff games. Former high school hockey coach; played professional hockey in the WHL and NHL.

**Chip McDonald**, 27, Roslindale, Mass. Great-grandson. Salesman, Boston Sand & Gravel Company. High school and college hockey official; earlier this year he worked the final prep hockey game played in the Boston Garden. College assignments are primarily in the East Coast Athletic Conference, where he normally works as a linesman in Division I games and as referee in Division II and III games.



George Brown (the father of Boston Celtic founder Walter) as the assistant general manager of the Boston Arena. Bill's hockey officiating started in that building as a last-minute replacement for a scheduled referee. Soon he was working the best college and semipro matches in the area, eventually moving to the top of the sport, the NHL.

Even as his hockey officiating career built momentum, Bill Sr. coached, once leading three hockey teams (Radcliffe College women, Milton Academy boys and MIT men) simultaneously. He even coached the Chicago Blackhawks during a short break in his 12-season NHL officiating stint. That happened during the 1937-38 season and continued until January 1939.

The 'Hawks job came about in part due to team owner Major McLaughlin's desire to hire Americans. A second factor: McLaughlin's admiration of Stewart's fortitude when the ref was called on the carpet for a controversial call by then-NHL president Frank Calder. Grumbled Stewart, "If Mr. Calder wants my job he can have it, but I made the decision and the decision stands!"

Bill Stewart Sr.'s 1938 'Hawks squad won the second of three Stanley Cups in that franchise's history despite finishing the regular season with an undistinguished 14-25-9 record. Yet in the finals, when Stewart's skaters faced the Toronto Maple Leafs, Chicago won the championship series three games to one. Two days later Bill Sr. was umpiring a White Sox-Cubs exhibition baseball game (his 24 years of professional umpiring included 21 seasons in the N.L.). Midway through the following NHL season the Blackhawks "released" the coach and, at the start of the 1939-40 season, Bill Sr. reclaimed his whistle.

According to Bill III, several years before Bill Sr. coached the Blackhawks, he was responsible for the only forfeited game in NHL history. "He made a call and ('Hawks coach) Tommy Gorman called him over to the bench to argue," explained Bill III. "Words were exchanged and Gorman sucker-punched him. My grandfather chased him into the east lobby. Afterward, he had (Boston's) Cooney Weiland shoot the puck into the empty net for a 1-0 win."

Gorman may have been lucky the ref was running on skates. In 1909, Bill Sr. won two gold medals in the Greater Boston track meet, one for running the 220 in 24 seconds flat. Years later, in 1936, Stewart was a third-year N.L. umpire. An irate fan in St. Louis jumped out of the grandstand one afternoon, bent on busting Stewart's jaw. The fan swung, missed, and woke up 10 minutes later in the Cardinal dressing room — victim of a Stewart uppercut. But Bill Sr.

wasn't always so tough. A focused official and accomplished clinician, he'd play to a standing room crowd each winter in Boston, where fellow umpires were anxious to hear Bill Sr.'s updated analysis of the balk rule.

Few people realize that in 1938, when Cincinnati's Johnny Vander Meer claimed a place in baseball history by pitching back-to-back no-hit games, Bill Sr. was the plate umpire for *both* games. The second game was another original, the first night game played in Ebbets Field. The teams used yellow baseballs for better visibility; one is carefully secured in Bill III's trophy case.

**BILL JR.: THE FATHER.** William Joseph Stewart Jr., Bill III's dad, was born two days after the 1919 World Series ended. Growing up Bill Jr.



played both football and baseball. He spent summers either playing ball or traveling with his dad. "He used to meet my grandfather on the road," Bill III says, perhaps explaining both why Bill Sr.'s career became a family passion and how Bill Jr. became the key figure in establishing the tradition. "He'd meet my grandfather at the end of the hockey season and give him the baseball bag. He traveled with his father, on the trains, during vacations." It's easy to imagine the hero worship the boy felt for his umpire-dad, along with the opportunity to learn about umpiring.



From 1964, Bill Jr. whistles for an end to the chaos during a high school contest, one of many games he worked at the Boston Garden. (photo: Boston Globe/Charles Carey)



## The Stewart 'Know' Theory

Handed down through four generations, each Stewart understands this simple approach to officiating: "Know the rules; know the players; know the coaches; know the game. There will be no doubt that you are a good referee."

Following World War II, Bill Jr. coached football, ice hockey and baseball at Boston English High School. His officiating career highlights include the 1954 NCAA hockey playoffs and the 1971 College Baseball World Series, which featured future big leaguers Thurman Munson and Fred Lynn. Bill Jr. also was a college football official, which provided another opportunity to spend time with his sons.

"I started going to his games when I was four or five years old," Bill III recalls. "My first trip with my dad was in 1958, to a football game at the University of Maine in Orono." The young boy started asking about officiating when he was "five or six. 'Why did you call this?' Or, 'Why no flag for that?' He'd always explain and you could see the play again, in your mind, just from his description of everything that was happening. He saw so much and I understood so much, just from watching and asking about his games."

Later, as Bill III and Paul started officiating, Bill Jr. was their sounding board. Rules, mechanics, philosophy — any question they offered had an obvious source for an answer. By watching Dad work and listening to him, the third generation Stewarts understood why their father did things as his father had taught years earlier.



Here's a rare shot of five Stewarts together, this time for 1983 prep game. From left: Chip McDonald caught for The Groton School; Jimmy and Bill III umpired; Bill Jr. coached Boston English (his 400th coaching victory); and Paul rounded out the crew.

Thirty years after that first trip to a football game, less than a year after Bill Jr.'s death, Bill III's first Division I college football assignment was on that same field in Orono, Maine. "It was an emotional moment, standing on that field," Bill III admits, "I know he'd of been proud.... It gave me a feeling of accomplishment. I had made it to where he had been."

Bill Jr.'s temperament was ideally suited to his primary line of work, teaching high school and coaching. Relates Bill III: "My father ruled with a thundering, velvet hand. He had a knack for saying something in the right way at the right time to quell almost any disturbance."

Between coaching three sports and officiating all year, Bill Jr. did not have much time at home for his family. He compensated, in some ways as his own father had. Each weekend the boys would jump in the car with Dad. They'd drive, often six hours or more, to that day's game. Bill Jr. would officiate, then they'd drive home. Those long days together forged a lifelong bond. "Among the things he taught us was something his dad taught him," Bill III explains. "We always go out the front door." Translation: No matter how the game has gone, be proud of yourself and your job. It's a "look 'em in the eye" attitude that at times takes courage.

"My grandfather walked out of the Montreal Forum one night, my father with him," relates Bill III. "The fans were after him following a game. He gave my father his hockey bag and tucked my dad behind him. Then they walked out the front door of the Forum, my grandfather with a Nestor Johnson (hockey skate) in each hand. They walked right through the crowd."

On rare occasions when Bill Jr. wasn't working a game, his sons always knew where he was: watching them work. He'd take a seat in the far reaches of whatever grandstand there might be; no matter the distance, the sons could always find Dad. After a tough call or a difficult game, they'd look. "You'd see him and his head would nod," Bill III explained. "You knew you'd done a good job."

**THIRD, FOURTH GENERATIONS.** The current Stewart adult generation is comprised of siblings Jimmy (age 37), Paul (40), Bill III (45), and Patricia Anne (50), whose son Chip McDonald is 26. Jimmy is the anomaly, a non-officiating Stewart male. "I'm in a different kind of refereeing business," Jimmy explains. His job: A federal Drug Enforcement Administration agent assigned to a multi-jurisdictional task force in the Chicago area, covering O'Hare and Midway airports and the Amtrak railway system.



Jimmy Stewart is quick to mention that he did umpire for a couple of years, and that his dad wanted him to try for a job in pro baseball. Instead, he pursued his own law enforcement dream.

He's been involved in several major drug busts, including one that confiscated 165 pounds of heroine (estimated street value: \$1.8 billion) and was reenacted on the television program *Top Cops*. Jimmy confided of his officiating family: "I think they're more envious of my job than I am of theirs."



Bill III's officiating resume begins tracking his career in the mid-1970s, though in the '60s, as a teenager, he umpired and refereed with his father. In 1974, already established as a high school hockey coach, he began officiating prep baseball, football and hockey as the seasons cycled. There have been NCAA Division III football playoff assignments, but his real flair is on the ice. He has worked major college hockey since 1984 and his post-season assignments include the 1987 NCAA Division III ice hockey championship tournament and the 1994 NCAA Division I quarterfinal contest between Boston University and Wisconsin.

For each contest in each sport, he carries in his bag his father's whistles and has a small container that also includes Dad's indicator. "If that box could only talk," offers Bill III, "there would be some great stories."

He says his most memorable assignment might have been when, as a teenager, he joined his dad and an inmate in calling a football game involving the Norfolk Men's Prison Colony. Recalls Bill III: "Dad would go to prisons at night and teach them to be baseball umpires and football referees. My pay for that game was a plate of hot dogs and beans in the prison cafeteria. What I learned from that was that I didn't want to go to prison because the food wasn't that good."

Being hard-nosed is a prerequisite in Bill III's dual lines of work. Of his police duties he notes: "I know how to talk trash on the street pretty good... to get out of some bad situations." In fact, being tough is as close to a family heirloom as the Stewarts get. Bill III recalls the time that his grandfather umpired a New York-Penn League game between Johnstown and Elmira. "He was a broad-chested man. In that game he was charged by six guys. He fought all six of 'em. He got his start in the National League two weeks later."

Says the obviously proud Bill III: "When we put on that black and white shirt, we're following in the footsteps of two great sports officials. We have a lot to

live up to."

**BATTLING BRAVADO.** Paul Stewart sums up his athletic career as long on desire, short on talent. With tongue only slightly planted in his cheek, Paul offered the following self-scouting report:



"Skating, okay; shooting, okay; stickhandling, none; passing, not bad; ice time, very little." But he inherited Bill Sr.'s battling bravado and he loved hockey.

His brief cups of coffee in the majors included two seasons in the old World Hockey Association and appearing for Quebec in 21 NHL games during the 1979-80 season. As a defenseman he

netted but two NHL goals while spending 74 minutes in the penalty box.

Driven to reach his goals, Paul recalls a childhood in which he felt "a deep passion for the game. I decided early-on what was important to me. When a lot of guys would go to a movie, I'd go find some ice."

A hard-nosed player, Stewart knew that he was "better at basketball and football than I was at hockey." Inspired by his hometown Boston Bruins and by his love of the game, he was determined to meet the challenge. Says Stewart, "Everyone told me, 'You can't do it.' I never believed them. I love my enemies more

*"We always go out the front door." ...  
It's a "look 'em in the eye" attitude  
that at times takes courage.*

than my friends because my enemies spur me on. I grew up in a household in which overcoming obstacles and accepting challenges was the norm. I was raised with the idea that you can do it if you have the talent and are willing to work. Heck, you can do it even if you don't have the talent. I was more determined than 'Rudy' (the title character in a 1993 movie)."

It was an era of "tough guy" hockey. Every team had an "enforcer" on its roster. "I knew that if I was to achieve my goal (of reaching the NHL) that I had to play that way," says Paul. The detour from law breaker to law enforcer began after playing in the 1982-83 Eastern League season for the Cape Cod Buccaneers, owned by noted wrestling promoter Vince McMahon. Paul saw playing as a "chance to make a few extra bucks" while that winter coaching Dennis Yarmouth High School.

Ironically, in the Eastern League, synonymous with fisticuffs, Stewart kept a clean slate. Explains Paul, "I



couldn't fight (because) all of my high school kids were watching me."

After that season Stewart phoned NHL vice-president of officiating Ian "Scotty" Morrison to say he intended to become a referee. That caught Morrison by surprise. "He was," understates Stewart, "incredulous." Morrison suggested that Paul enroll in NHL referee Bruce Hood's officiating school in Milton, Ont. The blue collar ethic that helped Stewart reach the NHL as a player served him well in a striped shirt. Paul still uses the same skates as when he carried a stick, a fact prompting some of the sharper tongues in the NHL to note that he didn't exactly wear out his skates during his bench-warming days.

Despite the occasional laughs, Stewart takes his duties seriously. He admits to "getting into occasional theological disputes with my peers. I see things that I can't justify as being a penalty even though, according to the black and white, they are a penalty. My standard was given to me by (Hall of Fame referee) Frank Udvari. If it had been done to me and I would have been pissed, it's a penalty. If it had been done to me and I wouldn't have been too concerned, I let it go. I have a sense of justice regarding what is fair and what's not. I think the players understand that. I rely on my sensation of feel. I do it a lot like the World War I flyers: by the seat of my pants."

With NHL assistant director of officiating John McCauley as Paul's unofficial "mentor," he worked his way up the minor league ladder. "He was as father-like as any man that I have ever known," says Paul about McCauley. "I was devastated when he passed away (unexpectedly on June 2, 1989, following gall-bladder surgery). Not a night goes by when I don't find three empty seats: One for my grandfather, one for my father, and one for John McCauley. I know they're watching me and that they help the puck bounce for me."

Aside from the love of officiating, there is a family philosophy that traces all the way from Bill Sr. through Chip. Says Bill III, "You are the official, you're in control of the game but you aren't the game." Adds Chip: "We played (hockey) and we have a feel for the game. We understand how (it) should be played and we're fair."

That feel is important because Chip alternates between top-level college fare and working scholastic action. The hard-body contact accepted by collegiate athletes can beget retaliation when a high school player

who can skate launches a firm check on a rival who isn't an accomplished skater. "There are differences in what you can let go and not let go," Chip notes. "You've got to call things a lot tighter at the high school level."

Chip's biggest thrill has been an assignment that helped him add a chapter of his own to the Stewart family legend. His great-grandfather (Bill Sr.) was the first man to referee a hockey game at the Boston Garden; Chip worked the last scholastic hockey contest in the Garden, the 1995 Massachusetts Division 1-A title game in which Catholic Memorial High School edged Boston College High, 2-1. "It was up and down the ice all night and the kids played hard," he says. "It was a pleasure to do that game. And it was

an honor for me to be the fourth generation of my family to skate on that ice. It was a privilege, but I also feel I earned my way out there too."

Over the decades there have been any number of important thoughts handed down from Stewart to

Stewart, but when Paul tries to sum up all of it he arrives at a simple statement: "We've never seen officiating as a job. It's something we love to do."

Bill III recalls his father's two favorite bits of advice, also quite simple: Work hard. If you do, they can't complain. And always keep your head up. Don't ever drop your head, because if you do they'll know they got to you.

With Chip, Paul and Bill III established in various sports, are there more Stewarts on the officiating horizon? Bill III's son is 14, but he's already broken the Stewart mold: His name is William Scanlon Stewart (Scanlon is his mother's maiden name), ending at three the generations of William Josephs. What's more, he prefers basketball to hockey. "No matter," said grandfather Bill Jr., when told of the child's name. "Remember one thing. As long as he's in Boston, he'll always be Bill Stewart."

But if this Bill Stewart does reach for a striped sweater or an umpire's mask, his father is determined to see that whatever pressure there is will come from outside the family. "I'll say to him the same thing my father said to me," explains Bill III. "If you do it, that's fine. If not, whatever you do, do the best you can." (Dan Herbst is a freelance writer living in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. Referee managing editor Scott Ehret contributed to this story.)



**"We've never seen officiating as a job. It's something we love to do."**