

# Julia Ruth-Stevens Talks about Her Famous Father

The Babe, The Great Bambino, The Sultan of Swat, The Colossus of Clout; George Herman Ruth has been known by quite a few names over the years. But there is one person who knows him by a different name. She calls him Daddy.

In 1929, Julia Ruth-Stevens was adopted by Ruth after he married her mother. Julia, now 97-years-old, recalls what she was thinking and what she felt when she found out that Babe Ruth was going to be her new father.

"I couldn't have been happier," Julia said. "It was so wonderful because he had been around for quite a while and I loved him and he loved me and it was just absolutely the greatest moment of my life."

Julia later added that there are possibly two other moments that would be up there with that one. The first being when Ruth walked her down the aisle for her wedding. The second was a very different situation and perhaps a very little known story.

"I was very very sick in the hospital," Julia said. "What I needed was a transfusion of blood. They didn't have blood banks in those days and Daddy said 'Test me'."

As it turned out, Ruth was a match for Julia and was more than willing to give her the blood she needed.

"He gave me the direct transfusion, I was on one gurney and he was on the other," Julia said. "It made me feel so good that I had Daddy's blood."

While almost everyone remembers Ruth as a ball player, perhaps the greatest that ever lived, Julia remembers him as a Father.

"He was just the best I could ever have asked for. He was so good to me," Julia said. "Mother was kind of frail and she didn't have a lot of stamina, and lots of times when he would have taken Mother along to a dinner or maybe a football game or something like that, he would take me and I would be his companion, and that was just great."

Even with all the time they spent together away from baseball, it was just impossible for Julia or anyone to ignore the superstar career that Ruth had. She remembers her family spending time with other great players like Lefty Gomez, Bill Dickey and Earle Combs. And for every memory Julia has of Ruth as a father, she has a great story of him as a ballplayer.

"I couldn't go all the time because I was in school but I saw him quite a lot of home runs," Julia said about watching her father play. "It was a big thrill, especially when he had rounded the bases, was headed towards the dugout and he was still trotting and he would lift his hat and wave to the crowd. And they just loved it."

And why wouldn't they? The fans at those games were seeing such incredible individual success, the likes of which had never been seen before and have not been seen since. Ruth was hitting more home runs than entire teams at that time.

But his greatness couldn't be measured by his statistics alone. Some of the moments and the stories surrounding Babe Ruth sound like they are purely urban legend and could not possibly be true. One of the most notable of them



is the famous "called shot," where Ruth pointed out to the bleachers and said he would hit the next pitched ball out there. Sure enough, Ruth delivered. Julia was not present for that game but she remembers the aftermath.

"It was amazing the way he could come through," Julia said. "I know several writers had asked him what he would have done if he hadn't hit that homerun, and he said 'Well I guess I would have felt like a damn fool'."

That clutch home run is one of the more well known Babe Ruth stories, and with good reason. But one of Julia's favorites is one that is not quite as famous, but perhaps equally as impressive.

"One afternoon they were playing and the score was tied and they were going into extra innings," Julia said. "The traveling secretary was walking up and down the dugout saying 'Oh my goodness we're going to miss that train, we're going to miss that train'."

According to Julia, Ruth approached the secretary and asked him what was wrong. The secretary explained that if they missed their train they would have to stay overnight and it would wreck their whole schedule.

"Daddy said 'Oh'. He got up the next time he came to bat, he hit a home run, they won the game, and they caught the train," Julia said.

Ruth built his career on being able to deliver in big moments like that. Perhaps that was one of the biggest reasons for his popularity. Ruth was always trying to create a memory for his fans, whether that was by getting them an autograph or creating a memory for them by coming through with a clutch home run.

"He was always so conscious of wanting to give back to his fans as much as he could," Julia said. "He said 'After all, they're the ones that pay my salary'."

All of those statistics, great moments, famous quotes and love for his family, fans and the game of baseball have left people all over the world with an image of Babe Ruth as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, athletes of all time.

Today he is remembered in movie references and baseball trivia. He is also the name that allows children all over the world to play the game that he loved. Babe Ruth League gives children the opportunity to excel in America's pastime.

"I think he would be so happy," Julia said about Babe Ruth League. "He would just be sorry that he couldn't be at all the same places where they were playing."

Ruth was and still is an icon of athletic greatness. So much so that it can be difficult to come up with a comparison or even the words to describe him. Julia Ruth-Stevens does a great job of doing both.

"There was only one Babe Ruth, and there will never be another one," Julia said. "He is a legend. He was a legend in his own time and definitely now that he's been gone for so long. He's definitely become a legend."

