



I moved to Houston in 1964 where the baseball team was known as the National League Colt 45s and they played in an open stadium south of the city. The following year, the team moved to the Astrodome, nicknamed the “Eighth Wonder of the World” and the team was renamed the Astros. It was fitting as NASA and the space program were just down highway 45 going towards Galveston.

Because the stadium was closed in, an artificial turf was installed for the games to be played on. Above the scoreboard was an area where two bulls snorted, pistols fired and music played when the Astros hit a home run. The Astros center fielder Jimmy Wynn was nicknamed the “Toy Cannon.” I knew when Wynn batted, there was a pretty good chance the hit would be a home run.

My favorite player was 2nd baseman Joe Morgan who used to quickly lick two fingers just before taking his batting stance. I was a true fan and even sent him a Get Well card when he was in the hospital. All the girls loved right-fielder Rusty Staub with his red hair and the handsome pitcher Larry Dierker. Bob Aspromonte was the tall, lanky 3rd baseman. One had to be a die-hard fan -- the Astros weren't very good, but we still loved the team. Dad and I attended several games and even sat through the

longest shutout ever played. The Astros beat the Mets as Houston scored the only run in the twenty-fourth inning at one-thirty in the morning!

When I moved away in the 80s to the DFW area, I didn't get to see the Astros games since I was living in an American League city. My parents were still in Houston and my mom morphed into a huge Astros fan with her favorites -- pitcher Nolan Ryan and shortstop Craig Reynolds. The ‘Stros were actually doing a lot better making it to two National League Championships and one Division Championship game in that decade, but typical of the team, they lost all three of those games.



One Christmas, I found the perfect gift for her – an Astros Cabbage Patch doll waving a pennant. Also included was a cute little Houston batting helmet.

My niece Jennifer was very impressed that Santa brought her Grandma such a special gift.

In 1989, my mom's Astroworld came crashing down. Nolan Ryan had signed with the Texas Rangers! Ironically, my parents moved to an assisted living in North Texas the following year. Mom reluctantly adopted the Texas Rangers, but her heart was still with the Astros. Her collection of Nolan Ryan baseballs, baseball cards and the Astros doll were displayed on a bookcase.

Hanging in her closet was her yellow, orange and red striped Houston jersey. Meanwhile the team moved from the antiquated Astrodome to Enron Field. The bulls, pistols and fireworks were replaced by a whistling locomotive over the outfield.



Mom passed away in 2003. This year Houston not only got to the World Series but they were there as the underdog. The series went seven games with Houston shutting down the Dodgers in game seven 4 -1 and finally winning the big prize. Nolan Ryan is back with the ‘Stros as their executive adviser. Something tells me there's an angel in Heaven celebrating the World Series Championship win and who is happy Nolan is back where he belongs.

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