



Padres Press Clips

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A Padre for a decade, Garry Templeton made a home in San Diego

Jeff Sanders

His post-San Diego days lured Garry Templeton to all sorts of locales, starting with New York for one last half-season hurrah with the Mets. He later rode “prop planes” and “dive-bombed” into obscure hubs as a roving instructor for the Padres in the mid-1990s. His years as a minor league manager took him to Cedar Rapids, Edmonton, Salt Lake City, Fullerton, Maui and plenty of stops in between.

San Diego, though, has always been home to the 61-year-old Templeton. He was enshrined in the team’s Hall of Fame in 2015 and will be inducted into the Breitbard Hall of Fame on Thursday, permanently stitching his 10-year stay with the Padres into a rich San Diego sports fabric.

“It meant my life,” Templeton, now a San Marcos resident, said of his playing days with the Padres. “I’ve got to think that I’m one of the fan favorites here after playing 10 years in San Diego. My 10 years served were awesome. I got a chance to play with some great players. I got a chance to play in the playoffs. I got a chance to play in the World Series. I got a chance to build a family and a home. It meant a lot to be here for those 10 years.

“Now I’ve been here for, what, 30-something years. This is home.”

72nd annual Salute to the Champions

- Thursday: 5 p.m., Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine
- 2018 Breitbard Hall of Fame inductees: Claude Gilbert, Robbie Haines, Garry Templeton
- Info: sdhoc.com

Templeton certainly has a home in the Padres’ record book.

He’s the Padres’ only Silver Slugger at shortstop, and he still owns the best fielding percentage (.965) in franchise history at the position. He was both an All-Star and the team

MVP in 1985. Templeton stands second only to Tony Gwynn among club leaders in games played (1,286), at-bats (4,512), hits (1,135) and doubles (195).

The St. Louis Cardinals believed Templeton was destined for even greater things when they drafted him 13th overall out of Santa Ana Valley High School in 1974.

Five years later, the switch-hitting Templeton became the first player to record 100 hits from both sides of the plate in the same season. By then, he was a two-time All-Star who had led the NL in triples for three straight years.

Yet a split seemed almost inevitable even before the events of Aug. 26, 1981 at Busch Stadium.

Templeton had turned off some Cardinals fans when he refused an invitation to the 1979 All-Star Game because he wasn't the starter. Some thought he was a loafer because of the fluidity of his movements in the field. There were contract disputes along the way.

It all boiled over on that August afternoon when Templeton — on a bad knee — did not run to first base after striking out on a ball in the dirt that skipped away from the catcher.

Templeton answered the Busch Stadium boos with an obscene gesture. The profanity directed toward Templeton had ratcheted up to another level when a second obscene gesture prompted Cardinals manager Whitey Herzog to yank his star shortstop off the field and into the dugout, where the two scuffled until being pulled apart.

“Nobody wants to hear the truth of what happened,” Templeton said. “They had come down and started calling me racial names and everything. I grabbed my crotch and ... they caught me on tape. But it's all water under the bridge now.”

The ensuing winter, the Cardinals traded Templeton, outfielder Sixto Lezcano and pitcher Luis DeLeon to the Padres for defensive wizard Ozzie Smith and pitchers Steve Mura and Al Olmsted. Templeton went on to play for a decade in San Diego without controversy, due in large part to early conversations with General Manager Jack McKeon and manager Dick Williams.

With the swap, St. Louis upgraded its defense up the middle. The Padres got a shortstop with more thump in his bat than Smith, a .231 hitter at the time of the trade. Templeton got a new start.

All parties were happy, especially Templeton.

In St. Louis, Templeton had thought that Herzog would tell him one thing and the fans — through the media — another. That wouldn't be the case in San Diego.

“I said, ‘That’s all I can ask — tell me how you feel,’” Templeton recalled. “And that’s what they did the whole time I was here. If they had a problem, they didn’t go to the paper. They called me and told me what was what. That was the main difference with Jack. He was straight up. Dick was the same way.

“I knew I had people in my corner.”

Templeton started at shortstop in San Diego for the next nine opening days. He was a Silver Slugger when the team reached its first postseason — and World Series — in 1984, and a .324 hitter during that playoff run. He was an All-Star the following year. His only regret is that his troublesome left knee kept him from truly living up to his potential as what Herzog called “the most talented” player he ever saw.

“He had great running speed, a great arm, he was a switch-hitter ...” Herzog said of Templeton in a 2010 St. Louis Post-Dispatch story. “He had everything but power; that was the only thing he didn’t have that (Mickey) Mantle had.”

“I think I would have been one of the greatest shortstops to ever play,” said Templeton, who hit .252 with 43 homers, 427 RBIs and 101 steals in parts of 10 seasons before the Padres traded him to the Mets in May 1991. “I hurt my knee in ’82, and I think I had it drained 10 times that year and never had surgery on it. Back then, you couldn’t take time off. Now players can take time off, come back, and still have their job. Back then, if you took time off, came back and another guy was playing good, you didn’t have a job.

“Plus, Dick Williams told me he didn’t have a shortstop.”

Templeton was an All-Star again after he finally got the knee cleaned up. There was no other place he wanted to play after reaching free agency after the 1988 season.

San Diego was his home.

Now, he'll be immortalized here in the Breitbard Hall of Fame, recently relocated to Petco Park.

“Humbling? Is that the word?” Templeton said. “It is truly humbling to be a part of it. Truly a lot of great athletes have come through San Diego. You don't realize it until you go into the Hall, look and see the (plaques) they have for the players. The men, the ladies, the amateurs and everything.

“It is truly awesome. It is a humbling experience.”

Kevin Towers — a pillar to Padres successes that included Petco Park

Tom Krasovic

Kevin Towers, whose effective moves as general manager of the Padres contributed to four of the San Diego franchise's five playoff berths, a trip to the 1998 World Series and voter-approved public funding for Petco Park, died Tuesday morning after a bout with a rare form of cancer. He was 56.

"It's just too soon for Kevin Towers to be gone," said former Padres executive Larry Lucchino by phone. "I will celebrate him for years to come, and I hope the baseball fans of San Diego recognize what a critical, positive figure he was."

The Padres reached new and lasting heights under Towers in his time as GM from late 1995 through 2009.

A franchise record that still stands, the 98-victory season in 1998, led the club into the National league playoffs where it took out two teams that had won more than 100 games.

The four consecutive winning seasons after the downtown San Diego ballpark opened in 2004, in addition to the consecutive National League West titles in 2005-06, were other franchise-first feats that still stand for a team that joined the major leagues in 1969 and won its other playoff berths in 1984 and 1996.

"He led our club with strength, conviction and unwavering determination, and was beloved by all who knew him," Padres owners Ron Fowler and Peter Seidler said in a team statement.

Towers pitched and coached for the Padres in the minor leagues before becoming a scout with the Pittsburgh Pirates and then San Diego.

He rose into the GM role under Lucchino, who'd become CEO a year earlier after coming over from the Baltimore Orioles to team up with incoming owner John Moores.

After the 1995 season, Lucchino asked Towers, the team's scouting director, to help identify candidates for the GM job.

Lucchino interviewed several candidates from outside the club. He said Towers never lobbied for the job but impressed him enough to get it.

Under Towers, the Padres largely underachieved in the pursuit of amateur players. They seldom ventured into high-stakes free agency.

But the gregarious former scout excelled as a high-volume trader who worked deals with no fewer than 32 other GMs in his San Diego tenure. His trades imported mainstays who fueled the pennant-winning club such as Kevin Brown, Wally Joyner, Greg Vaughn, Sterling Hitchcock, Chris Gomez and Quilvio Veras, in addition to later-era standouts Adrian Gonzalez, Brian Giles and Chris Young.

“He had that essential element, the ability to find and evaluate talent — and the energy to go out and get it,” Lucchino said. “People not only liked doing business with Kevin, they liked him because they thought of him as a friend, as a good, decent, funny, reliable friend.”

In vain, Towers pursued a World Series ring throughout a baseball career that spanned more than three decades.

The sting of the Barry Bonds-led Pirates falling out of the playoffs in the early 1990s was the first of several October exits that Towers lamented to friends.

Towers told several friends he craved a World Series title, not only for himself but for San Diego and Padres fans.

It took the winningest of all New York Yankees teams to stop the 1998 Padres in the World Series, days before San Diego voters approved the ballpark funding measure. The Padres since haven't won a playoff game on San Diego soil, let alone returned to the World Series.

“He wanted it bad, oh so bad,” said former Padres scouting director Bill “Chief” Gayton, who collected World Series rings with Oakland and St. Louis.

Towers got his World Series thrills by celebrating the successes of several former Padres underlings and colleagues and other baseball friends.

Two executives he sponsored in San Diego went on to play large roles in ending two of the sport's lengthiest title droughts.

Theo Epstein and Jason McLeod worked as Padres interns in the mid-1990s in the media and community relations departments, respectively. Then in their early 20s, they asked Towers if they could help him out.

“He gave a lot of opportunities to Theo and me — encouraged us to go to see amateur games,” McLeod said. “He allowed us to sit in on meetings. At that time, general managers weren’t allowing young staffers without much experience to sit in on those meetings.”

Epstein became director of baseball operations and a trusted adviser to Towers, while McLeod rose into jobs as a minor league coach and a scout.

Close friends by then, they joined two of the sport’s big-revenue clubs, first the Boston Red Sox in executive roles under Lucchino. Within three years, the club captured its first World Series title in nearly a century. Two Octobers ago and five years after Epstein and McLeod joined the Cubs, the team earned its first World Series title since 1908.

Towers sat with Epstein and McLeod in their Wrigley Field suite during Chicago’s World Series run, about a month before he was diagnosed with a rare cancer of the thyroid.

McLeod said he and Epstein shared tearful recollections Tuesday of Towers.

“He was just a wonderful, wonderful human being,” McLeod said. “He was incredibly instrumental in how our careers got off the ground. The friendship that Theo and I have — if Kevin doesn’t welcome us and encourage us in our early days, who knows if we form the bond that we ended up forming.”

Likewise, Bruce Bochy worked under Towers as San Diego’s manager from 1995 through 2006 and went on to lead the San Francisco Giants to their first World Series title in 2010.

“What made Kevin special was he loved to win — he was very competitive,” Bochy said Tuesday.

Towers was the rare baseball executive who engaged in home run competitions with staffers during spring training. At a Padres field in Arizona, when he out-swatted former major league pitcher Rick Sutcliffe, he paraded around the batting cage with arms upright. He professed a

love for bulldog “competitors,” and for actual bulldogs, which he and his wife, Kelley, adopted as pets.

He was feisty on the golf course and in poker games, Bochy said.

In basketball, rather than allowing a reconstructed elbow to deny him, he became the coach of a Padres-staffed hoops team that competed in a local recreational league.

“He wore a suit to the games, like (famed Los Angeles Lakers coach) Pat Riley,” Bochy said. “Slicked his hair back.”

Towers had a dislike for the rival Los Angeles Dodgers that he didn’t bother to hide around reporters.

Happily discussing the Dodgers’ title drought that dates nearly three decades, he suggested to L.A. sportswriters that the Dodgers were longer on talent and big-market money than heart and character. When incoming Dodgers GM Kevin Malone declared himself the new sheriff in town before the 2000 season, Towers and other Padres leaders dressed up as cowboys and posed in front of an Old West sheriff’s locale. The photograph went on the cover of the Padres’ media guide.

After his dismissal in 2009, Towers worked as a Yankees special assignment scout before becoming GM of the Arizona Diamondbacks in September 2010.

He oversaw the 2011 team that won the NL West, as part of a tenure that spanned nearly four years. He worked for the Cincinnati Reds the past few years, venturing to spring training in Arizona last year despite poor health.

Ultimately if indirectly, Towers got back to the World Series this past October.

In between World Series games, Astros manager A.J. Hinch reached out to Towers, a friend who’d mentored him from afar when Hinch was an executive with Arizona.

Hinch sought to honor Towers by holding up a sign during baseball’s “Stand Up to Cancer” moment during the World Series.

First, he got consent from Towers, whose fight with the anaplastic thyroid cancer had been kept out of the public eye.

“I think ‘KT’ felt like that was the best way to let the rest of the world know what he was battling,” Hinch said Tuesday. “He never really wanted to admit it or talk about it, never wanted to ask for anything from anybody. I think he was just touched.”

Longtime Towers friend and baseball executive Walt Jocketty, under whom St. Louis won the 2006 World Series two rounds after defeating the Padres in the playoffs — the most recent year San Diego won a playoff game — said his term for Towers was “beautiful person.”

He admired his friend’s gusto for life and for baseball.

“He was always upbeat, always happy, and he lived life to the fullest,” Jocketty said.

Former Padres outfielder and scout Chris Gwynn, a Towers acquisition and hire whose go-ahead double in 1996 fueled the division-clinching win over the Dodgers, said he doubts he would’ve become a scout and Seattle Mariners farm director if not for Towers.

Gwynn said Towers, in his Padres tenure, was deft at adjusting to ever-changing circumstances that included Lucchino’s dismissal and budget slashing relating to delays in ballpark construction.

“He was a guy that could relate to every person,” Gwynn said. “He was very good talking to owners, very good talking to scouts, very good talking to players.”

By Lucchino’s lights, Towers’ legacy includes San Diego’s downtown ballpark and the surrounding development in the East Village and Gaslamp district.

The ballpark lease with the city anchored to San Diego a franchise that joined the National League in the same year as the Montreal Expos, later relocated to Washington D.C.

“When they write the history of Petco Park,” Lucchino said, “Kevin Towers would have to be the first chapter because the baseball success he helped to bring about in ’96 and ’98 in particular were critical to the political success the team experienced and allowed them to collaborate in a public-private partnership that led to Petco Park.”

Kevin Towers was one of a kind, a 'genuine article'

Nick Canepa

The toughest problem with life is the last one. Death. Some accept it, some fear it, some fight it. But it can't be solved.

Despite knowing the inevitability of it, Kevin Towers fought death. Damn right he did. For 14 months, he did. To the end. Just as he fought his way up in baseball, as he fought through his Padres GM job knowing he didn't have the hand or chips other players in his game had, as he fought everything else.

I cannot know. I hadn't seen him in some time. I knew he was sick and it was not being publicized. Not until last October, when Astros manager A.J. Hinch, a former Padres assistant GM, put up KT's name on a Stand Up For Cancer spot during the World Series. But I am hoping that, after a battle with anaplastic thyroid cancer, he passed away Tuesday morning with that wily smile of his.

Damn cancer. He was 56.

KT smiled a lot, which was his poker face. He smiled when things weren't necessarily going good. He had that look. He was a baseball fox.

Kevin was a wine aficionado, to the point of having an article written about him in a magazine for lovers of fruit of the vine.

"He had a huge wine cellar in his Mission Hills house," says Bill "Chief" Gayton, Kevin's good friend who served as Padres scouting director from 2001-2010. After Kevin was fired here, he became Arizona's GM, and one of the first things he did was bring Chief to the Diamondbacks in 2011.

"He loved wine. He loved life."

I remember once walking into then-manager Bruce Bochy's office early in spring training in Peoria. There was a large bottle of wine — empty, naturally — on a cabinet behind his desk.

"KT and I polished that off in a restaurant last night," Bochy said with a smile.

The price? Two grand.

Bochy and Kevin were close. No chance KT would have fired Boch. He was ordered to. It reminded me of when Don Coryell had to fire longtime friend and defensive coordinator Tom Bass. When I met with Don that day, he cried.

It's the business of sports. Maybe it should be like my drill sergeant told me in basic: "Don't make friends."

I was on the phone with Kevin — he either answered phone calls or always called back — the day after Bochy's firing. He was in his office.

"Hey, Nick, let me put you on speaker. Guess who just walked in?" Next thing I hear is, "Say, Nick. What's going on?" It was Boch, who of course was such a lousy manager he one day will be enshrined in Hall of Fame after winning three rings with the Giants.

Kevin, a pitcher, went to BYU, and, with the possible exception of Jim McMahon, if ever there was a student who didn't fit BYU's profile, it was KT.

"I came this close to getting thrown out," he once told me (I will leave out the details). "I was called to the president's office more than once."

He also was terribly superstitious. As an example, he never saw a Trevor Hoffman save. When the time came for "Hells Bells," he was nowhere to be found.

"I don't know where he'd go, down underneath the stadium in a tunnel, I guess," says Gayton, now scouting for Arizona while still residing here. "I'd bet he put his fingers in his ears so he couldn't hear the crowd."

Once, with Phil Nevin (not KT's favorite player at the time although in later years they would be friends) batting late in a critical situation, I spotted him outside the Petco press box, leaning over a rail peering out at the harbor.

I asked KT: "Are you sick?" He said: "Nah, I can't watch this guy hit."

He wouldn't go to Denver with the team. He didn't think real baseball was practiced there. Good for him.

KT was 34 when Padres President Larry Lucchino hired him in 1995, a baby in baseball's crusty old-boy network. But he was all grown up, smart, did good things with the little given him, getting the team to the playoffs four times and the World Series in 1998.

Lucchino, the smartest sports executive I've known, liked bright, young people. Witness Larry making 28-year-old Theo Epstein his GM while with the Red Sox.

KT was a wizard in trades, but there always was a problem and little luck with drafts, which blew up with the team using 2004's first overall pick on troubled Mission Bay High shortstop Matt Bush.

I'm going to let Gayton do some talking here because Chief was with Kevin for so long and there are misconceptions about KT. The Bush thing, for example. He was forced into it.

"We did due diligence on Bush," says Chief of Matt, who after all his problems, turned his life around and has become a closer with the Rangers. "But we were in on Jered Weaver, Justin Verlander and Stephen Drew. Then Kevin had a meeting with (owners) John and Becky (Moore) before the draft, and it wasn't positive.

"I asked Kevin what the chances were of getting what we want. He said, 'Five, maybe 10 percent.' It was all about money. In fact, up that point, it always was about money with the draft. The following year, we did better.

"I know all the delays (two years) in building the new ballpark really impacted what we wanted to do."

Tuesday's news hit Gayton hard, as it did me. I'd heard Kevin was getting better.

"He got stronger," Chief says. "I had both hips replaced and he and Kelley (Kevin's wife) came over on Halloween to visit. He had a walker and an oxygen tank, but really, he looked awesome. But he hadn't been answering my texts lately. He really was a private guy."

Kevin was different than most any general manager I've met. He was flat honest. Maybe too honest. One year he ripped the Dodgers. I don't think he really regretted it.

Man, this really was a good guy. Genuine article.

“No matter what we were doing, he always took calls from the media,” Gayton says. “No way I wanted to be a GM after working with him. He was so accommodating. Near the end, I told him, ‘Kevin, go ahead and fire me, we’ll still be friends.’ He just said, ‘Nah, you’re fine.’”

“All the years we worked together, there was only one time he lost his cool, and I can’t tell you what that was about. He was such a competitor, sheesh. If we were walking down the street, he’d want to be the first to the corner.”

“I always told him, ‘I love you.’ It wasn’t until last year that he told me he loved me. I guess I wore him down. He liked you, I know. Every time you’d come around, he’s say, “Oh, (blank), here comes Nick.’ ”

I’ll take that.

He is up there, folks, on my Rushmore. I can safely say, on the record, that Kevin Towers was one of the best people I’ve known — not just in sports — but in my life. RIP.

How Kevin Towers and his huge personality helped shape The Cubs Way

Patrick Mooney

All these years later, the ridiculous cover to the San Diego Padres' 2000 media guide still encapsulates gunslinger GM Kevin Towers.

Wearing a cowboy hat, a trench coat, a black kerchief around his neck, blue jeans, black boots and a holster on his right hip, Towers posed with owner John Moores, president/CEO Larry Lucchino and manager Bruce Bochy. The sheriff's badge in the top right-hand corner announced: "BEST IN THE WEST OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS."

San Diego trolled Los Angeles Dodgers GM Kevin Malone, who declared "There's a new sheriff in town" when he took that job near the end of a 1998 season in which the Padres reached the World Series.

Towers didn't take himself too seriously or play it safe when he saw an opening or pretend that overseeing a professional sports team is like running a covert CIA operation.

The man known simply as KT loved the action. That made Tuesday's news so difficult to stomach, leaving the Major League Baseball community in mourning after Towers died of thyroid cancer at the age of 56.

"He really was a larger-than-life personality," said Jason McLeod, the Cubs' senior vice president of scouting and player development. "He meant so much to a lot of people. He gave so many of us opportunities, brought a lot of us together as friends."

Those connections helped launch Theo Epstein near the beginning of his Hall of Fame career, shaping what would eventually become The Cubs Way. Epstein and McLeod both started working for the Padres in the mid-1990s — as a PR guy and an intern in baseball operations, respectively — and watched the way Towers ran his department and interacted with everyone around the team.

Terms like "old school" and "gutsy" diminish what are really subtle analytical skills needed to do the job. Some of the core beliefs in Epstein's front office that helped end the 108-year drought — an open structure, a passion for amateur scouting, the belief in makeup and clubhouse chemistry — have roots in San Diego.

"KT was great about really hearing a lot of voices," McLeod said. "Just getting different opinions in a way that kept it light. A real baseball guy, a scout's scout, too. He loved projecting, but he had a very good feel for people, a really good feel for how people are wired.

"It wasn't just the tools. He was really banking on the person."

The same way the Cubs bet on Anthony Rizzo and Kris Bryant and what's become a perennial contender. During the early stages of the Wrigley Field rebuild — when no one

knew if The Plan would actually work for the Cubs — Towers memorably summed up what drove Epstein.

“He’s got zero fear,” Towers said during the middle of his run as the Arizona Diamondbacks GM (2010-2014). “He’s a great friend, but he would step on my neck, slice my throat to win. That’s just who he is.”

Those money quotes made Towers a go-to guy for reporters who waste a lot of time standing around the clubhouse and staking out the lobby during the winter meetings, only to get well-rehearsed clichés. That energy and unpredictability made Towers so popular among players, scouts, executives and the media.

McLeod remembered the sushi-and-bowling nights during spring training in Arizona, where Padres staffers would gather around Towers to drink sake bombs and pitchers of beer and then go to the next dive bar. McLeod also remembered a renaissance man who could talk music and fine wine, a natural leader who didn’t feel threatened or become territorial and stayed involved until the end as a special assistant for the Cincinnati Reds.

“He could hold court at the winter meetings, like the stories that have been out there,” McLeod said. “And you could have a really intimate, emotional conversation with him as well. He was so instrumental to a lot of people in the game.

“Obviously, Theo and myself included as young 20-somethings — he gave us both great opportunities and gave us some rope. He encouraged us to go scout amateurs around Southern California when we didn’t really know what we were doing yet.

“Just an incredible personality and a guy who really, really enjoyed life.”

The days of gunslinger GMs are pretty much gone — just look at how many free agents are still out there during Super Bowl week — as Ivy League front offices are consumed with Big Data and groupthink. But Towers’ presence will still be felt for however long this run goes at Wrigley Field.

“That’s the thing that set KT apart in this game, and in life,” Epstein told The Athletic’s Ken Rosenthal. “There are so many instances in this game where people look to squeeze every last bit of value out of a transaction, or every last bit of self-interest out of an interaction. KT was the opposite. He was never that way.

“Whether it was how he treated people, people he just met, friends or how he approached his job, he wanted other people to be happy, too. He wanted things to be fair. He didn’t look to extract every last ounce of self-interest. That’s how he approached his job. That’s how he approached life. It’s what made him so universally loved. Who wouldn’t want to be around someone like that?”

San Diego Padres Will Have To Wait Until 2020 For Potential Shift Back To Brown

Demetrius Bell

When it comes to the current slate of logos and uniforms in Major League Baseball, you could absolutely say that the entire league is in really solid shape. There aren't really any uniforms that could be considered objectively ugly. It only took the Arizona Diamondbacks one season to fix the glaring issues from their most recent uniform redesign, so teams are well aware of when they make uniform mistakes and are willing to fix them as soon as they can. So if there's a problem with how a baseball team looks nowadays, it isn't because their current look is ugly. Instead, it's because it could be boring.

That's where the San Diego Padres come into the mix of things. While San Diego's uniforms are far from being considered "ugly," there is just nothing exciting or interesting about their uniforms. They don't have the advantage of history and tradition like the Yankees or Tigers to be able to get away with such a plain uniform design that's plain even for baseball's design standards.

With that being said, the Padres are sitting on an ace in the hole when it comes to their history of colors. In fact, if you're a Padres fan then you get to see it for every Friday home game that they play. I'm talking about their brown-and-yellow alternate uniforms, which are far-and-away the most interesting uniforms that they have worn in a long time.

The uniforms are proof that the team could easily build an identity around the unique color scheme and have it look good as well. It would also be distinctive as well, since they would be the only team in North American sports with a brown-and-yellow color scheme. The Padres would be in a position where you could flip on the television and instantly recognize which team they were. You can't say that about what they wear right now, which is a real shame since we get a taste of what could happen with their visual identity every now and then.

If you're hoping for the team itself to come to this realization, then you'll have to keep on waiting. Padres Executive Chairman Ron Fowler confirmed to a local radio station that the team won't be able to undergo a serious change to their uniforms until 2020. Fowler then proceeded to slam the brown look by referring to it as "baby poop" in an effort to paraphrase Tony Gwynn's opinion on the look. He did proceed to say that some of the brown options that he's seen are "very classy" and that he'd let the "market" determine what happened.

The hope here should be that the Padres finally realize that they're sitting on a brown pot filled with yellow amulets of gold. Their brown-and-yellow All-Star gear from 2016 sold extremely well and their current brown alternate uniforms are a splash of color in a bland desert of navy blue-and-white. There's no guarantee that we'll see the Padres return to brown-and-yellow for 2020, but it would be a more-than-welcome change of pace for their identity.

Gwynn Biography Debuts on MLB Network Tuesday

“Mr. Padre” looks beyond the numbers to why Gwynn was a revered man

By Bill Center

“Mr. Padre” says it all.

And, still, it just scrapes the surface of the hour-long feature on the Padres’ Hall of Fame outfielder debuting Tuesday night on the MLB Network.

“Mr. Padre,” which is part of the MLB Presents Series, looks well beyond the numbers and examines the man who was San Diego’s beloved baseball icon.

“Everyone in San Diego has an understanding and knowledge of my father,” said Tony Gwynn Jr. after watching with his family a premiere showing of “Mr. Padre” at Gwynn’s beloved San Diego State last Friday night.

“But this pulled the curtain back. I don’t think even people who thought they knew what my dad was about and what he valued has seen him to this extent before. My mom (Alicia Gwynn), my sister (Anisha Gwynn) and I all thought they did a fantastic job.

“There were four or five scenes I hadn’t seen before.”

The background sound track to “Mr. Padre” was the sound of the Hall of Famer’s uncontrollable laugh—that swelling of joy that started deep in his soul and bubbled out. Even in the darkest days before his death, the laugh was still there.

“Mr. Padre” celebrates all corners of Gwynn’s life from the time he was a youth, to when he met Alicia, to his days at San Diego State . . . all the way to the gut-wrenching final hours before he passed way too soon from cancer on June 16, 2014.

To this day, I cry when I am reminded of Tony’s death. But soon I am back to thinking about who Tony still is—not only a great ballplayer, but a great husband and dad, a great friend and someone who remained here for San Diegans throughout his career.

“Mr. Padre” captures that and so much more through stories shared by Tony Jr., former Padres manager Bruce Bochy and coach Tim Flannery, former teammates John Kruk and Greg

Booker, his agent and friend John Boggs and others who had a chance to share time with Tony Gwynn.

“The thing that stands out most with me was the one with Ted Williams and Bob Costas after the strike shut down the 1994 season,” said Tony Jr.

Gwynn was coming off a .394 season when he sat down with Williams and Costas.

“My dad talks about how talking with Ted opened his eyes up to what more he could do,” said Tony Jr. “That was 12 years into his career. Basically, he was re-inventing himself as a hitter . . . more home runs, more RBIs. He didn’t hit under .350 after that.”

Tony gets emotional when going over the premier.

“I broke down five minutes into it and again at the end when they showed the transformation of his face. But there were so many laughs. They captured my dad in a way I didn’t know was possible. They found a focus on the little things that made him him. It didn’t have to be a game-winning hit, signing a ball with a kid and giving high fives to Little Leaguers was just as big a part of him.

“And they got the smile and the laugh. That was my dad. He loved life. He loved people. He loved San Diego and how the people here connected with him. He loved it all and was humble and sharing.”

“Mr. Padre’ further cements the type of guy my dad was. Everybody making the film did such a good job. This gives you the opportunity to share behind the scenes.”

Jeff Tuminaro, a co-producer of “Mr. Padre,” appeared on 1090-radio Tuesday morning.

“From afar, we knew Tony was a beloved figure in San Diego,” said Tuminaro. “It was deeper than we thought. We could have done two hours . . . I wish we had more time.”

“Mr. Padre” will be shown at 5 and 9 p.m. Tuesday on the MLB Network with continued showings later.