

Deseret News

Stay focused, Murphy tells Scouts

By Zack Van Eyck, Staff Writer

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Dale Murphy isn't remembered for being the Atlanta Braves' all-time strikeout leader or for striking out four times in a game more than once.

And few fans would be aware of the time he struck out so miserably he walked to the dugout and joked to his teammates, "If that ball hadn't taken a bad hop, I would've hit it." There were plenty of lowlights in the 18-year Major League Baseball career of the former Brigham Young University student and current resident of Alpine. But through it all, Murphy stayed focused on his goals, used humor to soften the rough edges and never lost his courage.

What many fans remember about Murphy are his two National League Most Valuable Player awards (1982 and 1983) and five Gold Gloves (1982-1986). Perhaps they recall Murphy hit at least 20 home runs for nine consecutive seasons and is one of only four Braves players to have his jersey number retired.

As hundreds of Salt Lake area Eagle Scouts, their parents and Scoutmasters learned Saturday morning, Murphy's career was not without its ups and downs. Life, too, will offer its challenges to the 2,252 young men in the Great Salt Lake Council who achieved the status of Eagle Scout in the past year. At the council's 9th annual Breakfast for Champions to honor those youngsters, Murphy told them they should be well prepared to succeed in whatever they choose to do.

Story continues below

"I would counsel you to stay focused on what's important - your faith, your family and your friends," said Murphy, the guest speaker for the event, which attracted about 1,200 to the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City. "Having courage at all times is one of the greatest assets you can have. . . . Never, ever lack courage.

"Be happy, be thankful. Have a good sense of humor. . . . Humor will help you through some challenging times."

Murphy, who began his baseball career as a catcher, shared many comical anecdotes from his playing days. On one particularly bad day, Murphy kept throwing the ball into centerfield while trying to throw out runners at second base. A reporter then asked Murphy's father what he thought of his son's throws.

"Great," Murphy said his father replied. "If somebody was trying to steal centerfield."

To illustrate the value of focus, Murphy told a story about how one opposing catcher tried to distract home run king Hank Aaron. The catcher noticed Aaron was holding his bat with the label facing down and pointed it out to the great slugger. Aaron, Murphy said, turned to the catcher and told him, "I didn't come up here to read."

"Hank Aaron knew why he was up at the plate," Murphy said. "He was going to hit the ball. He was not going to let anything distract him."

Successful players, the ones who had long careers like he did, continued to work hard and never let up, no matter how much success they achieved, Murphy said.

"I can think of only one player that made it to the Major Leagues on talent alone. He made it, but he didn't last," said Murphy, a 41-year-old father of eight. "Those who are going to make it have to learn how to give a little bit extra."

Murphy told his audience that even in competitive situations it is important to serve others. He helped younger ballplayers learn the game, even though they could have taken away his job, just as older players assisted him when he was coming up.

Murphy, who has recently been called as an LDS mission president, was honored as America's Champion for 1997 and was presented with a large replica of an eagle. Past honorees have included BYU football coach LaVell Edwards, NFL quarterback Steve Young and former University of Utah defensive end Luther Elliss.

The council also honored Gary Jenkins of East Millcreek, who has supervised 250 Eagle Scouts in his four decades as a Scout leader, and Michael Arsenault of Farmington, an Eagle Scout who has earned all 131 merit badges.

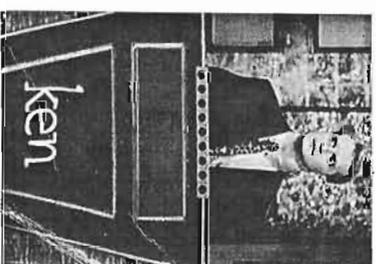
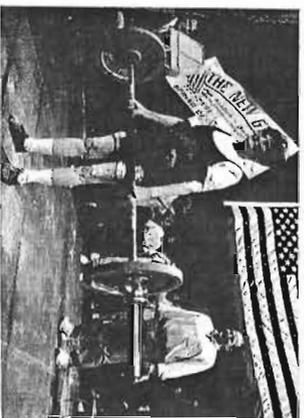
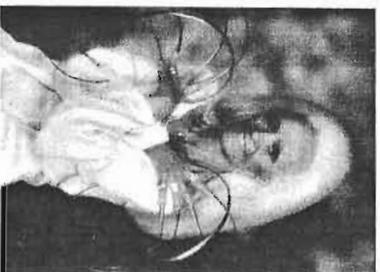
Proceeds from the breakfast will support the council's service to disadvantaged youth.

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lion people at the time. Pakistan's Rover Scouting program is part of the Boy Scout program for young men over age 18. (CN 8/17/91)

Youngest to Earn All Merit Badges. The Boy Scouts of America doesn't track ages for earning merit badges, but it appears that Christopher Haskell, Elk Ridge, Utah, First Ward, is the youngest to earn all 120 offered badges by age 13. (DN 7/29/03)

Hollywood Honors Scouting. In Disney's feature-length movie about the Boy Scouts, "Follow Me, Boys," co-star Vera Miles, Hollywood, California, Stake, played not only the wife of the Scoutmaster (played by Fred McMurray), but as "mother" to dozens and dozens of Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America honored the film production company and actors for depicting in a realistic manner the positive influence Scouting can have on a community and a boy's life. (CN 4/8/87)



Howard C. Moore, Deseret Morning News

Vera Miles, star of Disney's "Follow Me, Boys," was a frequent visitor to Salt Lake City.

Most Merit Badges. Who earned the maximum number of merit badges first? Since the number of available merit badges has changed, the records have been difficult to nail down. Here are those we know of:

1958: Byron G. Mills, 22nd Ward, Salt Lake, Utah, Stake, is believed to be the first LDS Scout to earn all 101 Boy Scout merit badges. He completed his last merit badge, Agriculture, in December 1958 after a seven-month effort to grow two varieties of cotton. (CN 2/14/59)

1974: Craig Carson, 16, and his brother Chad Carson 15, Ogden 55th Ward Ogden, Utah, Weber Heights Stake, each earned all 127 merit badges. (CN 9/14/74)

1981: Kent Bates, 15, Heber City 5th Ward, earned all 119 offered merit badges. (CN 1981)

1984: John T. Alquist, 15, and his nephew, Joshua J. Peterson, 14, both of the Hunter 6th Ward, each earned all 119 offered merit badges, plus two no longer available, for a total of 121 by 1984. (CN 2/12/84)

1988: Steve Sweat of the Iona, Idaho, 1st Ward, earned all 119 offered merit badges. (CN 2/28/88)

1988: Art Finch of the Idaho Falls, Idaho, 25th Ward earned all 121 offered merit badges. (CN 12/17/88)

1990: Troy Jens Pugh, Ferndale 2nd Ward, Bellingham, Washington, Stake, earned all 126 offered merit badges. (CN 7/14/90)

1993: Michael Arsenault, 17, of Oakridge 1st Ward, Farmington, Utah, Oakridge Stake, earned all 131 offered merit badges. (CN 5/29/93)

1993: Jared Toone, Crystal 1st Ward, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Stake, earned all 127 offered merit badges. (CN 7/19/93)

1996: David Wilson, 15, South Hill 3rd Ward, Puyallup, Washington, South Stake, earned all 124 offered merit badges. (CN 9/21/96)

1996: Jacob Walters, of the Hyrum 3rd Ward, Hyrum, Utah, North Stake, earned all 124 offered merit badges. (CN 9/21/96)

Youngest Eagle Scout? Who is the youngest to receive the Eagle Scout award? In 1985, the youngest was David Heidenreich who, at age 12, had completed all the requirements for his Eagle. He was presented his Eagle by his father, Richard Heidenreich, who was the Scoutmaster. They were members of the Freeport Ward, Rockford, Illinois, Stake. (CN 2/24/85)

Highest-altitude Boy Scout Camp (1930 World Record). As of 1930, the highest official Boy Scouts of America Scout camp continues to be Camp Steiner at 10,400 feet above sea level in the Uinta Mountains of Northern Utah. The camp was acquired for the Boy Scouts in 1930. Today, more than 55,000 Scouts use the facility each summer. (DN 2/6/02)

Largest Encampment. More than 9,000 LDS Boy Scouts and leaders, the largest such gathering ever, came together at Camp Pendleton, California, for the Sept. 3-6, 1982 "Mormon Trails Encampment." Sunday sacrament service required 100 priests, 100 teachers and 300 deacons to bless and pass the sacrament. Opening day was 100 degrees in the shade, prompting the sale of 120,000 soft drinks, 80,000 chocolate malts, 50,000 chocolate milks, 81,000 big stick Popsicles, 75,000 cartons of milk, 15,000 cartons of orange juice, 30,000 bags of chips and 25 tons of ice. (CN 9/11/82)

Cub Scout Officer. The highest position held by a Mormon in the Cub Scout program was chief executive over the entire program. Rodney H. Brady, at the time the Los Angeles, California, Stake president, was appointed "Top Cub" in July 1977. His task was to oversee the 1.9 million Cubs in the United States and their 625,000 leaders, plus prepare for the 50th anniversary celebration of Cub Scouting in 1980. (CN 8/6/77)

First Cub Scout Three-Time "World Athletic Champs."

Gregory Weichers, Derek Schiffman, and Kevin Armstrong of Pack 353, Union 5th Ward, Sandy, Utah, Willow Creek Stake, won the 1978 National