

Joe Mauer 2024 Induction Ceremony speech transcript

Jane Forbes Clark 00:01

Ladies and gentlemen, Joe Mauer.

Joe Mauer 00:20

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

00:34

As tough as it is to get into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, it might be just as tough to sum up what this game, this honor and this moment truly means to me. Even if I had all the time in the world, I'm still not sure I could properly put it into words. But today, I am grateful for the chance to try my best to describe what it means to be here with all of you.

00:59

For as long as I can remember, the game of baseball has been a central part of my life and the life of my family. I grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota, with my parents, two older brothers, and my grandpa, Jake Mauer.

01:16

Much of my early childhood was spent watching Twins games and pretending to be a big leaguer in my backyard and at various neighborhood parks with my brothers. Many of those parks were the same fields that fellow Hall of Famers Dave Winfield, Paul Molitor and Jack Morris played on as well.

01:39

How lucky and unique it was to have three big leaguers and future role models hail from my same city. Watching them as a kid was my first glimpse of hope that maybe I could make it in baseball as well.

01:53

It'll never be lost on me that the same guys I pretended to be in my yard are men I grew up to know personally, and I even had one of them become my manager.

02:03

Long before my big league days, my parents coached all of our little league teams throughout the years. Rides to and from games consisted of conversations on good sportsmanship and ways to improve, and our dinner table talks were more of the same. In our home, baseball was a family affair.

02:22

My dad and grandpa loved the game, and they loved to share their knowledge of the sport. They were the first to see a potential in me and believed in my abilities long before I did. They taught me that being

successful takes a lot more than just athletic talent. At a young age, they instilled in me the values of hard work and dedication. They raised me on the golden rule of treating others the way you want to be treated, and always showing respect to my teammates, coaches, umpires and opponents.

02:53

They were my first and greatest role models, coaches and mentors, and they supported me every step of my baseball journey. From the very early days of homemade pitching machines in the garage to lengthy voicemails left after my big league performances, their guidance never wavered. Even at the end of my career, as my grandpa's eyesight was failing, he would stand right next to his TV in a batting stance and go through my every at-bat as if he was swinging alongside me.

03:31

I hope they are both looking down this afternoon with pride knowing that all their time and hard work helped me get to this podium, standing here as a Hall of Famer. From day one, they led by example and truly walked the walk – a path I was blessed to follow.

03:48

Another very important person who was there every step of the way was my mom. She is the ultimate example of humility. Truth be told, she's the best athlete in our family, but she never wanted to take any of the credit for it, and the skills and knowledge she passed along to me and my brothers. I want to thank you, mom, for always being there, for being my greatest cheerleader and fan, and for always reminding me to have fun. You taught me that I could be a fierce competitor, but that it's far more important to be a good person. The example you set helped mold me into who I am today, and for that, I am more grateful than you'll ever know. I love you, mom.

04:41

I want to give a nod to the sky, and also thank my grandparents, Mike and Phyllis Tierney, for never missing a game in the course of my career. And for the baseball fans out there who love numbers, that's 81 home games times 15 years, adding up to 1,215 games. Even if I wasn't in the lineup, they still showed up to cheer on their beloved Twins. They were a wonderful example of dedication and support, going back to my very first days at tee ball.

05:06

I want to thank my brothers, Jake and Bill. You were my first teammates and opponents, and I credit them for giving me thick skin. If I wanted to play with the older kids, then I needed to prove to them that I could, and you two were always willing to give me that chance. I want to thank you for never taking it easy on me and for your support from the backyard days throughout my last game. I'm lucky to have you both as role models and friends.

05:35

I was very fortunate to have a family who always nurtured my love of baseball. They were my first support system. But I was also fortunate to have a lot of great coaches over the years, and one in particular was my high school baseball coach, Jim O'Neil. For those who wondered why I rarely swung — please, please.

06:00

For those of you who wondered why I rarely swung at the first pitch, it dates back to the advice he gave me my senior year at Cretin-Derham Hall. He once told me, "Joe, when you step into the box, you're most likely going to hit the ball, so why not wait for the pitch you want." Simple advice, but I credit him for helping me develop a plan every time I stepped up to the plate and giving me the confidence to hit deep into counts. He taught me patience and control, and I carried those lessons with me throughout my career. Thank you, Jim.

06:35

I want to thank scouts Mark Wilson, Joel Lepel and former Minnesota Twins general manager Terry Ryan for coming out and watching those many high school games and for taking a chance on me as an 18-year-old catcher. The draft was talented that year, back in 2001, with several players close to major league ready, and you took me. Seen as an unpopular choice by many, I was determined to prove to everyone that you made the right decision, and your trust and belief in me helped me gain confidence in myself, especially in those early years.

07:09

Navigating that chapter in my life where I was faced with major decisions at a young age was made easier for me by the help of two men who I revere as some of the greatest mentors and confidants – my agents, Mr. Ron Shapiro and Mr. Michael Maas. From the first time we met at 18 years old, I knew you were special. I knew you had my best interests at heart. Your wisdom, advice, support, professionalism and friendship has guided me throughout my entire career, both personally and professionally, and I credit much of my growth as a ball player and person to you both. I want to thank you for being the role models I needed at 18 and for continuing to be the first people I call for advice till this day. You have become family to me, and I'm so grateful for your influence and guidance through this journey. Thank you.

08:02

I'd like to thank the Pohlrad family for allowing me to wear one jersey my entire career, and being able to play at home in front of my family, friends and amazing Minnesota fans. I wanted to be a Twin from day one, and that decision never wavered in 18 years. Thank you for that opportunity and your belief and support in me through it all. It was truly an honor to be a part of your organization and represent my hometown team.

08:37

I'd like to thank my managers, Ron Gardenhire and Paul Molitor, two men who I greatly respect and admire. You were both highly effective in your approach, and I learned so much under your guidance. You created an atmosphere for players to thrive in, and I want to thank you for your wisdom, support and friendship throughout my career. Thanks, guys.

09:02

I was also fortunate to be surrounded by an incredible coaching staff who shared with me wisdom and insight of this game and worked tirelessly every day to get the best out of me and my teammates. The

same can be said about the fantastic trainers and doctors who kept me healthy and able to do my job. I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Walt Wilson and Dr. Bob Brown of the Mayo Clinic for always putting my health and safety first, and for not only being there for me, but taking care of my entire family. You are a blessing to us all, and we are so grateful to have you guys in our lives.

09:35

I also wouldn't be able to go out and do my job without the support of the clubhouse staff. Those guys did so much work behind the scenes so I could focus solely on getting ready to play the game. They became confidants and lifelong friends, and I appreciate you fellows more than you know.

09:55

I especially want to thank my teammates, many of them who are here today, for your support, encouragement and the amazing brotherhood you provided me for so many years. It was an absolute honor to suit up alongside you and battle it out every night. You each brought something different to the table and collectively taught me so much about this game, but also about life in general. Many of us grew up together, starting out as young ball players trying to navigate a new world, to becoming gray haired dads who planned golf trips around our kids' schedules. And I'm grateful for the lifelong friendships I've been given to by this game. Thank you for being here today and for sharing with me a milestone that you all had a role in helping me achieve.

10:46

I also want to thank the Minnesota Twins fans. You guys came out today. Thank you. Thank you for your many years of support throughout my career, with a special thank you to all who have traveled here today. You were there for my highs and lows and believed in me and our team through it all. Your energy and cheers brought life to our games, and it was truly an honor to play at home in front of such an incredible and loyal fan base.

11:21

To my extended family and friends, those of who traveled here to join us in this incredible moment, and for those of you watching at home, thank you for your support, not only today, but throughout my life and career. It means the world to me and I'm lucky to have amazing people like you in my life.

11:38

And Maddie, I cannot thank you enough for all that you do for me and our family. You wear many hats. You are an incredible wife, mother, mentor, role model, keeper of everyone's schedules, and as I call you, the curator of fun in our family. And somehow you manage to do this, do it all with patience and grace. You've been a staple of love, support and guidance, all while holding down the fort so I could go out and play the game that I love. The kids and I are so grateful for all that you do, and so blessed to have you in our lives. Thank you for everything, honey. I love you.

12:21

I also want to thank my in-laws, John and Ginny, for all the help that they provided Maddie and the girls when I was gone on the road. I knew I could always count on you for being there for them and it put my

mind at ease when I was out there. Thank you for all the love and support you've always shown me, and I love you both as well.

12:37

Maren and Emily, you two gals mean the world to me. You've always been my little cheerleaders, and no matter the outcome of a game, you always seem to put a smile on my face. You've helped me see things with a new perspective and are a constant reminder of what's truly important in this world. I'm so proud of you both. It's been a joy to watch you grow into the incredible young ladies you are. I want to thank you for keeping me on my toes and for teaching me new things every day. I love you so much, and I'm so blessed to be your dad.

13:21

And Chip, I love you so much too, buddy. I'm so grateful to have you as my little sidekick. Just like your big sisters, you bring so much joy and light to my life, and you remind me daily to slow down and appreciate the little things. You were born just two days after I retired, and although you missed my playing days, I now get to relive my childhood love of baseball through your eyes. Seeing your excitement as I watched you hold Babe Ruth's bat at the museum back in January was a full circle moment that brought me back to my days of pretending to be a big leaguer in our backyard.

13:57

I now get to coach your team and have car rides to and from games where we talk about how baseball is about so much more than winning or losing. Playing this game takes grit. It teaches the important lessons of hard work, patience and dedication, because in baseball, you will inevitably fail more times than you succeed. You need to learn to make adjustments and have a strong determination to keep going, even when it's tough. These are all values I want to instill in my children, and learning this game is a great place to start.

14:32

I wouldn't be standing here today without the vote of the baseball writers. I want to thank those of you who filled in my name on your ballot and felt I was worthy of this incredible honor. You are the data trackers and historians of this game, and because of your dedication, I not only have treasured articles and stories about my playing days, but my career now has a permanent place in the history of this game. I am truly honored, humbled and grateful by your acknowledgement and appreciation of my craft.

15:02

I also want to congratulate Adrian Beltré, Todd Helton and Jim Leland and all of your families on this incredible moment. I am honored to be joining you in this year's Hall of Fame class, as I have the utmost respect for each one of you and how you guys conducted yourselves, both on and off the baseball field. You are all highly deserving of this honor.

15:33

I also want to thank the Hall of Fame members who are here today to welcome us into this incredible fraternity. You have all left a mark on this game and has acted as leaders and role models for the

younger generations, myself included. Thank you for the support you have shown me since receiving the call back in January. It is an honor to share this stage with all of you.

15:52

I want to give a big thank you to Jane Forbes Clark, Josh Rawitch, Jon Shestakofsky, Whitney Horn and the entire hall of fame staff for all that you do to make this induction ceremony the wonderful an event that it is, but also for your hard work and dedication in preserving the history of this game. The magic and memories you provide to all who have traveled here today for the love of baseball is unlike any other place. Thank you for what you do all year long in creating a place to honor, remember and learn about the people, players and moments that make this game such an important part of history.

16:39

To stand here today and say that I'm now a small part of baseball's history is a statement that will never, never fully sink in for me. This moment is truly a dream come true. Thank you again to all who believed in me, supported me and helped me achieve this remarkable honor. Thank you.