
Retrospective: Stylus to Cooperstown: A Baseball Dream Fulfilled

KRISTINA ABICCA

Kristina Abicca's article, "[Navy Women Riding the WAVES: An Analysis of the Changing Generational Discourse for Females in the Navy](#)," was published in Stylus 7.2 in Fall 2016.

When I first began writing my *Stylus* research article, I never thought that it would bring me to Cooperstown, NY. But 3 years later, I was interning at the National Baseball Hall of Fame thanks, in part, to my experiences writing for *Stylus*.

Back in Orlando, in the spring of 2016, I took an English composition course. It was taught by Professor Angela Rounsaville in the Burnett Honors College. Our semester-long assignment was to write a full research paper on a topic of our choice, pertaining to writing and rhetoric. During class one day, Professor Rounsaville showed us the UCF Community Veteran's History Project and suggested that it may be a source of inspiration for research. When I got back to my dorm that day, I listened to more interviews on the project's homepage. There were hundreds of audio interviews with Central Florida veterans describing their experiences in past wars. Each story was captivating, particularly those from female veterans.

The Veteran's History Project became the springboard for my research article. The topic of my article was a comparison of the language discourse of female Navy veterans who served during World War II and the Persian Gulf War. I analyzed interviews of six women and connected their rhetoric to underlying gender roles in society at the time. Continuing to tell their stories was extremely fulfilling, so I was thrilled to learn that *Stylus* wanted to publish the article. Now more people would be able to read about the amazing women who paved the way for future generations in the armed forces.

Fast forward 3 years, to the spring of 2019. I was completing my student-teaching internship in a high school chemistry classroom and about to graduate with my degree in Science Education. That spring, I applied for a dream internship at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in the Education department. Since childhood, I have loved the game of baseball, from learning its history to analyzing player statistics. After being asked for an interview, I started preparing myself for potential questions. I spent time reviewing my teaching philosophy and experiences in education. Additionally, I sharpened my knowledge on baseball history in anticipation of a possible trivia question. Much to my surprise, a few minutes into the interview, my supervisor asked about a line on my résumé titled, "Published in *Stylus*, A First-Year Writing Journal." He said, "This is interesting. I see you were published in a magazine. Can you tell us about your research article?"

I began explaining why I wrote the article: to tell the stories of female Navy veterans and understand how their experiences affected future generations of women. After responding, I realized this was exactly why I wanted to work in the Education department at the Hall of Fame. I wanted to keep the diverse stories of women and men in baseball alive. Although *Stylus* wasn't the only part of

my application that helped me earn the internship, it differentiated me from other candidates, and showcased necessary research and writing experience for the job.

When I got to Cooperstown, writing never stopped following me. On the National Baseball Hall of Fame’s website, I published another research article about Ty Cobb. Because of my English composition classes at UCF, my research skills easily transferred to the largest collection of baseball archives in the world. I even connected my love for baseball with my love of science, writing about Ty Cobb’s own book, *The Science of Hitting*.

One of my favorite job duties at the Hall of Fame was assisting with Author Series presentations. Each week, a famous baseball author would visit Cooperstown and give a presentation describing their new book. Jane Leavy, author of *The Last Boy* and *Big Fella*, was particularly inspirational. She detailed her intricate research process and shared experiences interviewing famous players such as Mickey Mantle and Sandy Koufax. My conversation with Ms. Leavy that day encouraged me to practice writing continuously, so that I may be able to one day capture an audience’s attention as she does through her stories.

Throughout my internship, I learned so much more about the history of our national pastime, from women in baseball to the sport’s role in the Civil Rights movement. In addition to research, my job duties included working with school groups to tell the stories of baseball’s immortal figures, such as Jackie Robinson, Babe Ruth, and Lou Gehrig; giving presentations from the archives collection; and revising lesson plans for teachers who want to incorporate baseball in the classroom. With every task, I needed my strong foundation in writing to push me forward.

My advice to future composition students at UCF is to never stop writing. Whether you are studying to be a scientist, an engineer, a teacher, or an artist, practice writing every day. Your words are powerful, and they can open doors to experiences you never thought possible. If you have practiced enough, your writing skills will be there when you need them the most. The day will come when you need your writing to be strong and convincing, either to further your dream or prove your point. And when it does, you will be ready to hit it out of the park.

Kristina Abicca



Kristina Abicca graduated from UCF in Spring 2019 as a Top Honors Scholar with a degree in Science Education (Chemistry track). One of the highlights of her undergraduate experience was student-teaching in a high school chemistry classroom. Here, she was able to collaborate with teachers on labs and lessons and instill in students a lifelong interest in chemistry. After graduation, she was accepted into the Frank and Peggy Steele Internship Program at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY. She continues to further her education toward a

master’s degree in the sciences. In her free time, she enjoys cheering on the UCF Knights at football games, following professional baseball, and spending time with family and friends.