



Flo Thomasian Snyder

Flo Thomasian Snyder has that comforting, familiar look of someone you know well. Part of it may be that she's a dead ringer for Nancy Regan, but a much larger part has to do with the warm charm and endearing innocence the 79-year-old maintains. From 1958 to 1968, Snyder put those charms to use as a chronicler of major league baseball's arrival on the West Coast (both the Dodgers and the Giants made the move from New York to California in 1958). The way she tells it, "Los Angeles and San Francisco were ripe for the Major League. It changed the face of baseball forever."

And it's not presumptuous to say that the move also changed Snyder's life forever. Determined to be part of California history, Snyder, at just 22, approached the newly christened Los Angeles Dodgers and joined as one of the team's few female employees. "I was bold. Betty Freidan and Gloria Steinem came after me," she says good-naturedly of her entry into "the wild west of major league baseball."

Snyder can rattle off the dates of games and famous appearances with the ease and efficiency of sliding into home plate. There's the 1959 exhibition game that drew 93,000, a record-setting attendance, and the three World Series Championships she saw during her tenure with the team. There are the pranks and antics of the legendary pitchers Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale, the time Joe DeMaggio left her speechless, and her 1958 trip to Cuba on the Dodgers' private plane, just following the end of the Cuban Revolution.

"Of all the experiences in my life, the greatest was going to Spring Training," she says. When the *Los Angeles Times* heard about her, a self-proclaimed "young single girl going down to Dodgertown to stay with those hunks," the paper invited her to pen a behind-the-scenes sports column, yet another example of how Snyder paved the way for women of her era. "I was the only person in the world who knew the personal side of all these players, their funny side, their human side," she says. (Ask her to tell you the one about the unusual dessert only served down in Dodgertown).

Fortunately, Snyder has compiled her experiences, memorabilia, and rare photographs into *Lady in the Locker Room: Madcap Memoirs of the Early LA Dodgers*. The book includes a foreword by former Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda and received the 2009 Independent Book Publisher's award for Best Regional Nonfiction. "I knew I'd always do the book. As I began recalling the stories and events, I realized how much society had changed. All of California was in such an innocent time," she says. And California history is something to which Snyder continued to contribute. After leaving the Dodgers for state government, she spent another decade with the California Attorney General's office in Sacramento before being appointed the State Director of Tourism, a position that led her to fall in love with her current hometown of Carmel.

But mostly, Snyder still wants to talk baseball. When asked how can she possibly recall it all, the answer is simple and immediate: "How could you forget these things?" Lest we forget, we now have Snyder's book. Find out more at www.ladyinthelockerroom.com. ■ —JENNIFER MASSONI