

NOT faster than a speeding bullet: â??Giants Superfanâ?? dedicates 35 years collecting autographs of â??79 team

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Already a huge San Francisco Giants fan at the age of 15, Charles Fracchia Jr. went one better than perhaps any other fan in the teamâ??s history.

He attended almost every game at Candlestick Park, had a worthy collection of memorabilia and chattered about his team incessantly. Then in 1979, he decided to collect the signatures of every player, coach and executive in the 95-cent, 1979 â??San Francisco Giants Official Media Guideâ?• â?? all 48 of them.



Charles Fracchia Jr.â??s friends thought it crazy the lengths he went to to get autographs from â??79 teamâ??s players, coaches and executives.(Photo by Myra Krieger)

It took him 35 years. He finished his quest at age 50 with the signature of Hector Cruz, a backup outfielder who lived in Chicago. â??There was a plane flight, two street cars, and a 50-minute bus ride,â?• Fracchia Jr. said, â??but I got it.â?•

â??The players were, for the most part, good with giving me an autograph. I was not always successful, but I was always persistent,â?• he said. â??Some players were touched that someone did remember their sports career. I donâ??t think that anyone was particularly dismissive of me, but Giants

pitcher Randy Moffitt did tell me though his neighbor to â??take a hike.â?• I was able to get his autograph later on.â?•

The project started with his favorite player, Willie McCovey, and then moved along in â??dribs and drabs over the years,â?• he said. â??My friends thought I was crazy: I rented a car and drove to Oregon to get the autograph of a rookie player who was a schoolteacher. I managed to pull him out of his class and have him sign the book.â?•

Along the way, this super fan caught the attention of Jon Leonoudakis, a filmmaker and sports documentarian. The trailer for â??The Adventures of Superfanâ?• is free online; the full production is part of a Leonoudakisâ?? series that can be seen with a Vimeo subscription.

Pure devotion wasnâ??t the only thing that propelled him to keep going. In 2015, he learned that his restlessness, impulsivity and disorganization were all symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. â??Things make sense now; maybe talking about this will help others,â?• said Fracchia Jr., who is getting help along with medication.

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â??One of the behaviors of ADHD is the ability to hyper focus,â?• he said. â??I really think that this is how I spent 35 years working on the autograph project. It probably also explains why there were also years where I did nothing about it.â?•

He was a â??little sadâ?• when it ended. â??This venture was something that had followed me through all my ups and downs.â?•

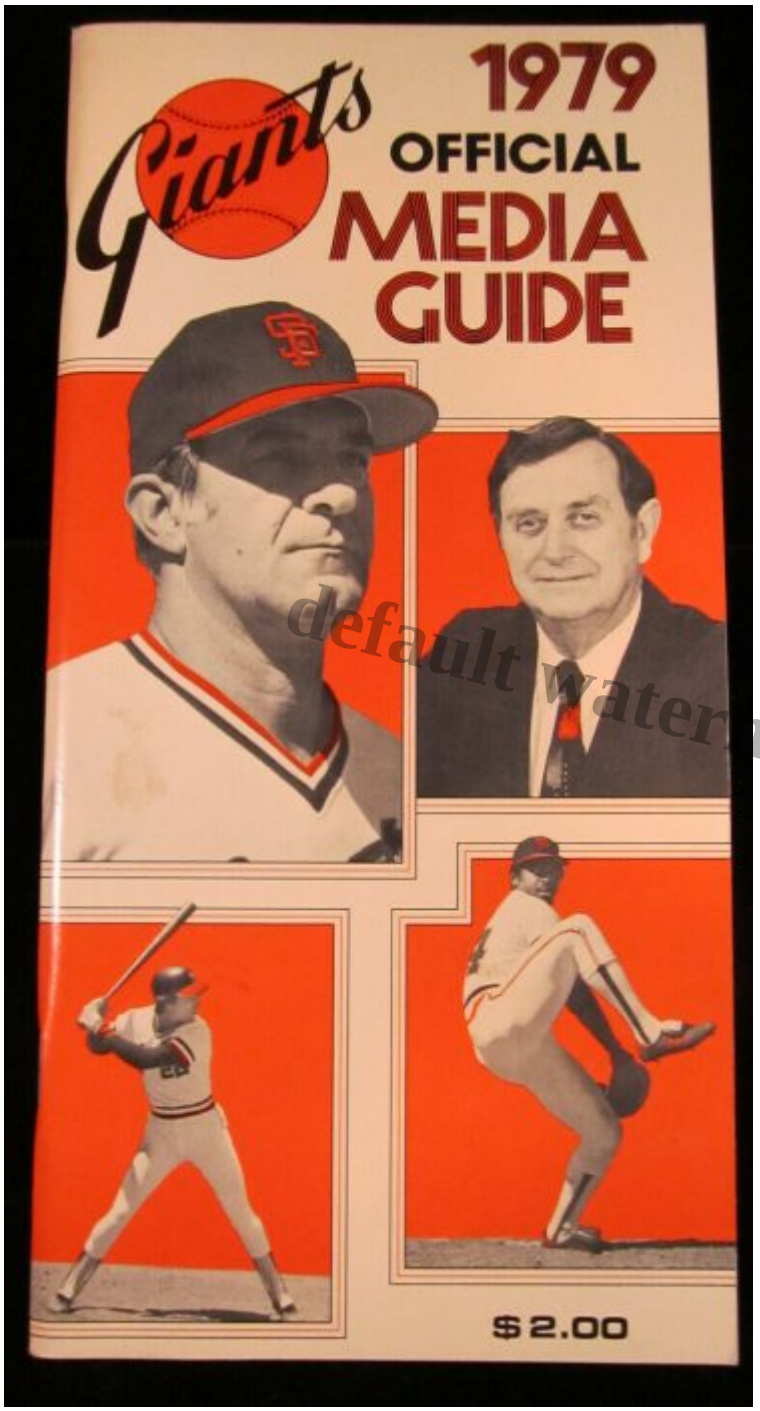
Now 57, heâ??s working on getting autographs of the winners of the Willie Mac Award, given to the best teammate each year. Iâ??ve already completed the â??80s,â?• he said. â??The other decades are a work in progress.â?•

Consumer & elder advocate

Heâ??s also searching for people with technical expertise to help him produce a video to educate seniors on how to detect and avoid the scams. Heâ??s got a lot of expertise in that area.

He spent 10 years as a bank and credit card fraud investigator and the last six as a consumer investigator and counselor for â??7 On Your Side,â?• a program on ABC News local Channel 7.

â??I learned the cleverness of the fraudsters as well as the vulnerabilities of the victims, whom so often were seniors,â?• he said. â??The important skill here is listening carefully to what each person is saying â?? listening for the details.â?•



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This little book, originally 95 cents and now selling for up to $8 on ebay.com, started a 35-year quest.

He remembers testifying in a Sioux Falls, S.D. court case in 2009. â??Quite a highlight in my career: putting away a guy who had effectively stolen over a million dollars from banks, insurance companies and individuals.â?•

At Channel 7, he investigates scams and claims of business malpractice. Often, he is a liaison between all parties, reviewing sales contracts, communications and advertising claims. When he prevails and gets money back to the customer, he gives the details to reporters, helping drive the story to broadcast.

Heâ??s a volunteer in the Marin County group FAST (Financial Abuse Specialist Team,) working under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide advocacy and education to seniors on elder abuse, elder fraud and the latest scams. Before Covid hit, this team would visit senior centers and address audiences of 10 to 30 attendees. Now itâ??s all being done on Zoom.

A native San Franciscan, Fracchia Jr. grew up in a Richmond district household where this cityâ??s history was an integral part of his upbringing. His father, Charles Fracchia Sr., was the founder of the San Francisco Historical Society and the last-word authority on San Franciscoâ??s past through his teaching, books and presentations. He passed away last year.

Dadâ??s walking tours

Fracchia Jr. remembers tagging along to help on his fatherâ??s many walking tours, which were always open to the general public.

â??Sometimes there were 50 to 100 people trotting through the neighborhoods. My father had a big heavy megaphone, and I would carry it for him. The history of the Haight caught my interest a lot.â?•

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He fesses up to being a hippie in the â??80s who graduated with a degree in political science. He is a poll worker in every San Francisco election and a longtime regular blood donor. Fracchia was married once and divorced: â??I do well with women as friends but not in romantic relationships.â?•

He still lives in the outer Richmond neighborhood and stays close with his three sisters, whoâ??ve given him six nieces and nephews. He calls himself an introvert and has a small circle of friends who continue to root for him in all his endeavors, including his feverish allegiance to the Giants.

He goes to season openers and many of their games. He once saw a game with the VIPs, but said he prefers to be with â??the common folk.â?•

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