

The Inter-Mountain

Gould chosen as MSFF Honorary Grand Marshal

A Valley Head native will have the opportunity to follow in the path of his childhood hero, Mickey Mantle, by serving as the Honorary Parade Marshal for the 77th Mountain State Forest Festival Grand Feature Parade.

Stanley Gould, said he would be honored when told the news Thursday at the Elkins Rehabilitation & Care Center, where he is a resident. Gould said Mantle, the baseball legend who was his idol as a boy, was the MSFF Grand Feature Parade Marshal in 1976.

MSFF Director General Cricket Leary visited with Gould, along with MSFF Assistant Directors Robin Miller and Rich Nida, to offer him the honor. Del. Denise Campbell, D-Randolph, who is the administrator of the ERCC took the entourage to see Gould.

“We have some special people who wanted to see you today,” Campbell told Gould. “Folks from the Mountain State Forest Festival are here to ask you a question.”

Miller asked Gould if he would like to be the Honorary Parade Marshal. Gould’s face lit up with excitement.

“I would be honored,” Gould said. “But I have to check with Denise.”

Campbell smiled and told Gould she thought he should go for it.

“I would be honored to do that for you guys,” Gould said.

Miller said he has a driver lined up for Gould and they would decorate the trailer in the lifelong sports fan’s favorite colors: West Virginia University blue and gold.

“We are just as honored,” Leary said.

Gould, who has cerebral palsy, has been a resident in ERCC for 13 years, but he does not let his ailment slow him down.

“Stanley lives in a facility, but he is very active,” Campbell said. “He makes sure he continues to connect to the community.”

Gould serves on the Randolph County Democratic Executive Committee and the board of directors of the Family Resource Network. He also travels out to the local football and basketball games and assists during the Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs Expo in Elkins.

He is also a member of the Valley Head Fire Department, the AF & AM Masonic Lodge, Riverside 124 of Cass, and is an honorary member of the Mountaineer Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. He also started a project at Tygarts Valley High School helping create and find funding for a handicap platform at the school and the handicap -accessible fishing dock on Scott’s Ford Road in Elkins. He also assists with the West Virginia Challenged Athletes program, and aids several committees helping with disability rights.

“I am a 1971 graduate of Tygarts Valley High School. I also helped coach Tygart Valley Little League,” Gould said, adding that he helped coach youth basketball teams.

“I coached a girl by the name of Lori Arbogast, also known as Sparky,” Gould said. “She is the best basketball player I ever coached – boy or girl.”

Campbell said Gould is an inspiration to the residents and staff at ERCC.

“Stanley is one of the most positive residents we have,” Campbell said. “He is so good for our staff – he always wants to help others. He went to West Virginia University for a week for Fantasy Football Camp with Coach (Rich) Rodriguez. He also was named winner in the Biggest Mountaineer Fan contest.”

Gould said it is humbling to be asked to serve as Honorary Parade Marshal.

“I want to thank my family and friends for their help and support,” Gould said. “My friends and family support mean more to me than you can imagine. My motto is ‘never give up.’”

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