

Tampa Bay Times

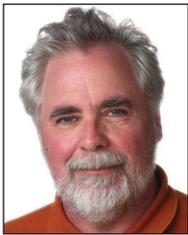
FLORIDA'S BEST NEWSPAPER



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Feting Papi simply good manners



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ST. PETERSBURG — The Rays are now planning to honor David Ortiz with more than a video tribute Sunday.

You're on the float committee.

Relax. They're not going to be naming a catwalk for him or anything.

But it will be more than originally planned. Or was kind of planned, preliminary like. Now a gift or gifts will be involved.

Rays players led the way, guys like Evan Longoria and Chris Archer, who wanted to mark the retiring Ortiz's last Trop visit. Good for them. The Rays organization caught up. It has joined the crowd. Slight media glare helped.

And so the old Papi plan has been properly pooh-poohed. Crisis averted. On with Sunday's presentation.

Patricia Rossi says the Rays just hit it out of the park.

"Etiquette dictates that you do the honorable thing," Rossi said.

Rossi, who lives in Trinity with her husband and two teenage sons, is an etiquette coach, professional speaker and the best-selling author of *Everyday Etiquette*. She is also a very good sport.

Full disclosure: Rossi's husband, Bobby, has promoted some concerts at Tropicana Field. Rossi said she also works with several Major League Baseball and NFL teams, teaching rookies about social influence and branding and: etiquette.

Now, about Papi-palooza ...

"Here's why it's a wonderful thing to do," Rossi said. "When you host someone, they're in your house, so you have to treat them well. It always reflects well on you. You have to cowboy up and you honor the person."

Hey, wasn't "Cowboy Up" the 2004 world champion Red Sox's slogan?

Back to Etiquette Central.



Etiquette expert Patricia Rossi says it reflects well on the Rays to honor David Ortiz.

What, exactly, do you give to a man who has 539 home runs?

"One thing I wouldn't give is something that's political or sexual, something too personal," Rossi said with a laugh. "Like, you wouldn't buy him pajamas or something like that."

She added, "When you shine a light on other people, you shine as well. You don't lose anything by doing the right thing, showing kindness and being celebratory. The Rays have always done things right."

Understand, Patricia had to talk me through this over the phone.

You see, I'm not naturally inclined toward farewell tours. I'd like to know who started these things. Did somebody give Ty Cobb a crate of Georgia peaches on his way out the door? Or does this go back to the Revolutionary War, when George Washington was presented with a cannonball autographed by all

the British officers at Yorktown?

Whoever started this farewell stuff, I'd like to give them a piece of my mind. You know, right after I eat another piece of the farewell cake, if there is one.

Does Ortiz really rise to the level of a Cal Ripken, Derek Jeter or Mariano Rivera, who have been honored with Trop ceremonies and gifts?

Also, the dude beat the Rays' brains in during his career and sometimes stopped to watch. Ortiz has 34 homers and 88 RBIs at the Trop, more than any visiting player.

Everywhere you look, Ortiz has been in the middle of things. Like when he said he saw "fear" in the Rays' eyes after the Red Sox won Game 1 of the 2008 ALCS. Or his home run that helped the Red Sox come from 7-0 down to beat the Rays in Game 5 of that series.

And there were his many confrontations with Rays pitchers, including the time he was hit in his large rump by (now teammate) David Price. There was that Ortiz homer off Price in Game 2 of the 2013 ALDS, Ortiz watching and watching. Or his 500th homer. It came at the Trop.

I thought a little more on David Ortiz, just like the Rays did. I thought of his clutch moments, and bear hugs for opponents, and his charitable nature. I thought of Boston Strong.

So stick a fork in the old Papi plan.

And make sure you use the right fork. Yes, it's the honorable thing.

It's about the proper etiquette.

I'm taking the pajamas back.