

# Baseball Heaven: A Field of Dreams and Faith

*Integrity of the Game vs Economic Impact (Politics); The Oklahoma Business Plan*

## Overview

Baseball Heaven is more than a vision—it is a testament to perseverance, integrity, and an abiding faith. It symbolizes the belief that dreams, like seeds, must be planted, nurtured, and watered with patience and hard work, all underpinned by God’s unfailing love. Drawing upon years of research, personal experience, and the collective wisdom gleaned from our journey and literature on youth sports, this vision mirrors the natural and spiritual process of growth—a legacy built on family, faith, and the timeless game of baseball.

Tonight, I invite you to join me on a journey—a journey that began with a simple love for the game, evolved through personal sacrifice and community involvement, and now blossoms into a vision that inspires future generations. Interwoven with biblical truths, heartfelt memories, and insights from years of research, this narrative forms the very heartbeat of Baseball Heaven.

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## 1. The Planting of the Seed – The Birth of a Vision

The idea of Baseball Heaven was not born out of a business plan or a mere project proposal; it sprang from a profound love for baseball and a commitment to honor both family and faith. My journey began on the baseball field, coaching my son Brad, and was inspired by my first-born, Brian. What started as a humble act of love evolved into a movement—coaching youth baseball, uniting a community around the game, and planting the seed for a future where passion meets perseverance.

**Key Takeaway:** Just as a seed must be planted in fertile soil, every enduring vision begins with passion, purpose, and faith.

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## 2. Watering the Vision – Perseverance Through Adversity

Nurturing a seed is a continuous effort, and so is realizing a dream. The path to building Baseball Heaven has been strewn with challenges—from navigating complex city politics and financial hurdles to confronting systems that sometimes favor profit over the purity of the game. Early setbacks at the Bouse Sports Complex forced us to reimagine our approach, setting the stage for a transformative journey that would redefine our vision.

**Key Takeaway:** Just as rain may come slowly and fields may grow muddy, true progress requires relentless perseverance. Every drop of effort, even when its impact seems delayed, contributes to the eventual harvest of our dreams.

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## 3. The Growth – The Miracle of the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex

In the wake of our challenges at Bouse Sports Complex, we embarked on a five-year journey to create the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex on the campus of Seminole State College—a project born out of deep love and unyielding determination. There came a moment when the Seminole State College Education Foundation opted to pursue a different direction without my involvement—as they once referred to me as “The Godfather of Youth Sports.” Nevertheless, the accomplishments of the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex remain nothing short of a blessing. It stands as a tangible testament that the seed of Baseball Heaven continues to burn brightly, inspiring and nurturing future generations.

**Key Takeaway:** Even in the face of unexpected changes, the enduring spirit of our vision has taken root and flourished, affirming that perseverance and faith can transform setbacks into miracles.

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## 4. The Harvest – The Legacy We Leave Behind

This vision is dedicated to my grandsons, Jackson and Cole, my granddaughter, Emma, and my youngest son, Bryce. Having been only four at the time of Brian’s accident, Bryce has grown up fully immersed in this journey. Today, he serves as a head baseball coach at a local school, guiding and mentoring the next generation. His leadership embodies our commitment to fostering a community where values such as fair play, unity, and steadfast faith are celebrated and nurtured.

**Key Takeaway:** Every well-tended seed ultimately bears fruit. Our legacy, like a bountiful harvest, is designed to benefit not only our generation but all those who come after us.

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## 5. Strength Through Christ – The Legacy of Philippians 4:13

My son Brian always carried a powerful message close to his heart, emblazoning his baseball cap with the verse: *“I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me.”* This version, as printed in our memorial booklet, has become a cornerstone of the Brian Crawford Memorial. Over the years, we created baseball and softball necklaces and bracelets featuring this inspiring verse. Originally conceived as a fundraiser, these tokens of faith now number in the thousands and are lovingly given away as constant reminders that no challenge is too great when our strength comes from Christ.

**Key Takeaway:** True strength is not solely our own—it comes from relying on Christ. In honoring Brian’s

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memory through this verse and these tangible symbols of faith, we are reminded daily that with Christ, every obstacle can be overcome and every dream is within reach.

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## 6. The Unfathomable Love of God – A Reflection on John 3:16

John 3:16 proclaims, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* This verse encapsulates the mystery and magnitude of divine love—a love so vast that God did not spare His only Son. In my heart, I have often reflected that I would have done anything to change the course of time to save Brian. Yet, in understanding this profound sacrifice, I recognize that God's love for the world, including each one of us, is both overwhelming and unfathomable.

**Key Takeaway:** Comprehending God's love is beyond human grasp. It is a love marked by sacrifice and grace—a love that comforts us in our darkest moments and assures us that every loss and trial carries a divine purpose.

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## Closing Message: Trust the Process, Trust the Plan

In baseball, as in life, victory is not always immediate. There are delays, setbacks, and moments when hope seems dim. Yet, just as a well-tended seed grows into a mighty tree, our dreams and efforts will bear fruit in time. Baseball Heaven is a field of dreams—a sacred space where faith meets perseverance, and every challenge is met with the assurance that God provides the increase.

As we move forward, let us embrace the lessons of scripture, the insights from years of dedicated research, and the enduring spirit of the game. May we remember that every act of love, every moment of struggle, and every prayer contributes to a future harvest of blessings. Thank you, and may God continue to water the seeds of your own dreams.

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This speech is a celebration of our collective journey—a journey marked by faith, resilience, and an unwavering love for baseball and one another. It stands as a tribute to those who have inspired us, a memorial to cherished memories, and a beacon of hope for future generations.

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