

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Matt Paolelli
Spirit Juice Studios
matt@spiritjuice.com
(224) 585-9569



SPIRIT JUICE STUDIOS

PRESS RELEASE

ACCLAIMED FILM ON CATHOLIC BASEBALL PLAYER GIL HODGES RECEIVES NEW YORK EMMY AWARD FOR BEST SPORTS DOCUMENTARY

Chicago, IL, October 24, 2022: A documentary highlighting Catholic Major League Baseball legend Gil Hodges entitled "*Soul of a Champion: The Gil Hodges Story*", received a New York Emmy Award in the category of sports documentary at a ceremony held in New York on October 7, 2022.

Produced by **Spirit Juice Studios** in association with **Catholic Athletes for Christ**, the film was released to wide acclaim in November 2021 and contributed to Hodges' long overdue election to the Baseball Hall of Fame. One month after the film was released, Hodges was voted into the Hall of Fame via the "Golden Days Era" ballot. He was inducted into Cooperstown on July 24, 2022.

"The true victory of producing this film was helping Gil Hodges to finally take his rightful place in the Baseball Hall of Fame, but this Emmy is a tremendous honor and feels like the icing on the cake," said Rob Kaczmark, the film's co-director and CEO of Spirit Juice Studios. "I hope this will bring even more attention to the remarkable impact Gil had both on and off the playing field."

With a deep dive into Hodges' career highlights including World Series victories with three teams as a player and manager, his impressive offensive and defensive statistics and awards, and his personal life as a husband, father, military veteran, and devout Catholic, the film makes the case that Gil Hodges is more than deserving of joining his peers in the Baseball Hall of Fame for both his on-field prowess and his off-field example of leadership, character, and integrity.

Despite numerous articles, sportswriters, and baseball experts calling for his enshrinement, Hodges was repeatedly overlooked until being included on the "Golden Days Era" ballot in December 2021.

"Gil was a tremendous baseball player who clearly deserves to be in the Hall of Fame," said Ray McKenna, president of Catholic Athletes for Christ. "But he was also a phenomenal human being who served God, his

family, and his country with a quiet humility that made an impression on everyone who knew him. Hodges is the kind of athlete who should be held up as a hero and example to our children for the way he played the game and lived his life."

Currently streaming online at www.gilhodgesfilm.com, the 30-minute film features interviews with baseball luminaries including the late longtime Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers announcer **Vin Scully**, Dodgers legendary manager **Tommy Lasorda**, and several members of the 1969 New York "Miracle Mets" including **Art Shamsky**, **Ed Kranepool**, **Cleon Jones**, and **Ron Swoboda**.

The film is directed by Emmy Award winners David Naglieri and Rob Kaczmark.

"It has been an honor to work with these legends of the baseball world to produce this compelling story," said Rob Kaczmark, Spirit Juice Studios CEO. "Gil Hodges was loved and respected by so many people, and I hope viewers of this documentary will come away with a better understanding of his positive impact on both the history of baseball and the people he encountered throughout his life."

About Spirit Juice Studios

Spirit Juice Studios is an award-winning, Chicago-based creative production firm specializing in the transformative power of high-quality visual media merged with the ever ancient, ever new beauty of Catholicism. Through the collaborative efforts of those involved with Spirit Juice Studios, the Gospel is delivered by means of a strong visual design aesthetic, coupled with the paramount components of modern technology. Learn more at www.spiritjuicestudios.com

About Catholic Athletes for Christ

Launched in 2006, Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC) serves Catholic athletes in the practice of their faith and shares the Gospel in and through sports. The 501(c)(3) organization works with athletes at all levels of sport to promote a Catholic sports culture. CAC was formed in response to St. John Paul II's call to evangelize the world of sports and his establishment of an office dedicated to Church and sports in 2004. Learn more at www.catholicathletesforchrist.org

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