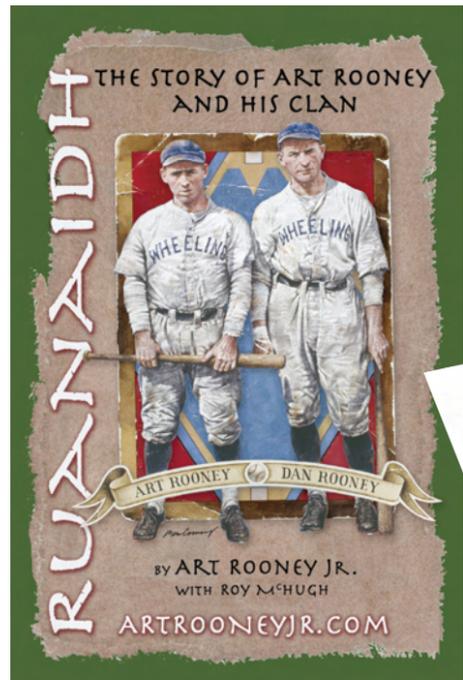




THE ROONEY'S ROOT DEEP IN WHEELING

By Casey Hayes & David Allinder
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RUANAIDH: *The Story of Art Rooney and His Clan.*

The book's title is derived from the Gaelic spelling of the Rooney name, because ARJ felt his father would disapprove of capitalizing on the family name.



As "the Chief", Art Rooney Sr., entered his twilight years his children and visitors noticed some thing unexpected.

When they were in the company of Mr. Rooney, they expected him to talk about Super Bowls, famous Steelers, the Immaculate Reception, Three Rivers Stadium, and all the things you would associate with Art Rooney Sr.'s glory days. Not so. Instead, he talked about Wheeling, West Virginia a lot according to his son, Art Rooney Jr. (ARJ), who just completed the book *Ruanaidh* about the Rooney family. As a result, ARJ selected a special photo of his father and his uncle, Dan Rooney, in their Wheeling



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“The book is not meant to earn a profit, but simply to document the history of the family that is so important to every member of the Rooney clan.”

-Art Rooney Jr.



Stogies baseball uniforms representing an era of The Chief's life that brought him great joy and satisfaction.

With the intention of eventually putting his father's story into a book, ARJ began keeping journals of his memories in 1996. Twelve years later, he had produced multiple journals filled with the appropriate style of "Irish stream of consciousness." Having had the unique experience of reading the book and then meeting Art Rooney Jr. confirmed for me that his style of writing creates the same experience as hearing him tell the stories in person. ARJ's training as an actor at Columbia University is apparent as he fills the family stories with imagery, creating an experience of actually seeing the story in your mind's eye as you read or listen to Art in person.

Although the Rooneys are undoubtedly a Pittsburgh family, their strong connections to Wheeling began during the time Art Rooney Sr. and brother, Dan Rooney, spent playing for the Wheeling Stogies baseball team as part of the Minor American League (1925). As the book's cover, which features the Rooney brothers, (game faces in place), may suggest, these were happy times for Art senior, filled with good memories of baseball, his brother, and of pushing the team bus up Wheeling's famous hills whenever it inevitably broke down. Wherever Art Rooney traveled with the team in West Virginia, he managed to make a friend and learn something about the state's people. This interpersonal skill of instantly becoming anyone's best friend is something that stayed with him throughout his life, shaping his identity as the "Chief". Throughout the book, AJR focuses

on this quality his father had, reflecting on such times as when he befriended a small boy at a Pittsburgh bus stop, giving him a quarter for the ride home and protecting him from neighborhood bullies, or when he sat beside football player Gabe Riveria in the hospital while he waited for his family to arrive.

The book's title is derived from the Gaelic spelling of the Rooney name, because ARJ felt his father would disapprove of capitalizing on the family name. The book is not meant to earn a profit, but simply to document the history of the family that is so important to every member of the Rooney clan. Next to family, faith and Steelers come in at a close second. AJR did admit that between family and the

ARJ's wife's family has ties to Wheeling as some members of her family attended WJU. Art Rooney Senior was a friend of Big Bill Lias of Wheeling.



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Steelers, there is only so much time before conflict between the two becomes unavoidable. This is another theme that is echoed in his book and the timing of this theme is particularly appropriate when questions of the Steelers future ownership are taken into consideration. AJR admits that his father would be "sad but understanding" in reaction to the sell.

"Next to family, faith and Steelers come in a close second. AJR did admit that between family and the Steelers, there is only so much time before conflict between the two becomes unavoidable."



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