Gifford, Frank (1929-) Encyclopedia Article

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On the football field, Frank Gifford starred for the New York Giants in the 1950s and early 1960s during the final days of the twoway player. Away from the game, his movie-idol visage made him a larger-than-life sports hero, a figure synonymous with another famous New Yorker of the 1950s, ball player Mickey Mantle. But it was a book about failure that cemented Gifford's cultural standing. The football star was cast as a central figure in Frederick Exley's autobiographical novel, *A Fan's Notes.* After retiring from the Giants in 1964, Gifford married television personality Kathie Lee Johnson, and joined the Monday Night Football broadcasting team helmed by Howard Cosell. He made headlines again in the late 1990s when a tabloid newspaper paid a former flight attendant to seduce him in a bugged hotel room. When the scandal hit, Gifford's fairytale marriage seemed to be over, but Kathie Lee stood by her man and Frank Gifford's late-life sin did little to change his standing as an All-American icon.

Further Reading:

Exley, Frederick. *A Fan's Notes.* New York, Harper & Row, 1968.

Gifford, Frank, with Harry Waters. *The Whole Ten Yards.* New York, Random House, 1993.

Gifford, Kathie Lee, with Jim Jerome. *I Can't Believe I Said That!* New York, Simon & Schuster, 1992.