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An Evening with Ozzie Smith at SEMO

APRIL 09TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Cape Girardeau, Missouri - Baseball Hall of Famer and former St. Louis Cardinal Ozzie Smith will close out the 2014-2015 Speakers Series at Southeast Missouri State University when he speaks at 7:30 p.m. April 20 in the Show Me Center.

His presentation is titled “An Evening with Ozzie Smith.”

Tickets are required and are \$10. They can be purchased at www.showmecenter.biz and the Show Me Center Box Office. Current Southeast faculty, staff and students can use a valid Redhawks ID to pick up a free ticket for this event in the University Center Room 204 or the Show Me Center Box Office.

Smith is affectionately known in baseball as “The Wizard” and the best defensive shortstop of all time. He was a first ballot inductee into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2002.

Smith retired from baseball in 1996 after playing 19 years in the major leagues, the first four years with the San Diego Padres and the final 15 with the St. Louis Cardinals. His nickname describes the way he played shortstop—he performed magic with his glove and performed in the infield with amazing acrobatic agility.

He has contributed to many charitable endeavors benefiting children and has spent countless hours assisting various charities in the St. Louis area, including the American Heart Association and St. Louis Effort for Aids Dining Out for Life program. He is currently president of the Gateway PGA Foundation, an organization that reaches out to inner city youth via mentoring and golf programs. He also serves as the education ambassador for the Baseball Hall of Fame and headlines a fundraiser, "Play Ball with Ozzie Smith," every year in Cooperstown, New York, during Induction Weekend.

Since retirement from baseball, Smith has hosted "This Week in Baseball," was the color analyst for Cardinal broadcasts in 1997-1999 and served as the baseball analyst for CNNSI, a joint venture between CNN and Sports Illustrated from 1999 to 2002. He operated Ozzie's Restaurant and Sports Bar at Westport Plaza in St. Louis.

In 1998, 1999 and 2001, Smith was cast in three theatrical productions at The St. Louis Municipal Theatre. He had a cameo role in "Damn Yankees" in 1998. In 1999, he sang and tap danced in "The Muny Goes British," a musical revue based on songs from various Broadway musicals, and in 2001, he starred as The Wizard in The Muny's production of "The Wizard of Oz."

In 2005, the CD, "Oh Say Can You Sing," was released featuring Smith singing the Sam Cooke song, "Cupid." The CD includes 10 other major league baseball players singing their own versions of popular songs. Proceeds from this project go to the players' designated charities.

Smith has three children and makes St. Louis his home because he feels a deep responsibility to give back to the community that has so enriched his life.

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