

Malta House of Care



Claire Smith: Pioneering Sportswriter

Sports reporter Claire Smith can lay claim to a lot of “firsts.”

The award-winning journalist has built her 43-year career the old-fashioned way – from the ground up. After graduating from Temple University, she began reporting for her hometown paper, *The Bucks County (PA) Courier Times*, making her way to the *Philadelphia Bulletin* and then, in 1982, to *The Hartford Courant* -- where she became the first woman in the country assigned to cover Major League Baseball as a daily beat.

In 1984, after the San Diego Padres lost to the Chicago Cubs in the opening game of the National League Championship, she was barred from the Padres’ locker room – but got her interview anyway when Padres’ first baseman Steve Garvey left the clubhouse to speak with her, stating that she had a job to do. The next day, Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth ruled that all teams must provide equal access to locker rooms.



Claire’s career continued at *The New York Times* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, where she still covered baseball, winning numerous awards in the process. Nominated twice for a Pulitzer, she is a three-time recipient of *New York Times* Publisher’s awards; was named the Sports Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists in 1997; and has earned many other distinctions, including her induction into Temple’s Alumni in Media Hall of Fame in 2014.

But perhaps the most prestigious award is the one Claire will receive in Cooperstown in July 2017, when she will be presented with the [J.G. Taylor Spink Award](#) – the highest honor given by the [Baseball Writers’ Association of America](#). She is the 68th person to win this award – and only the first woman.

Says *Hartford Courant* columnist Jeff Jacobs: “Ring Lardner won the Spink Award. So did Damon Runyon, Grantland Rice, and Red Smith. They are fortunate to be in Claire’s company.”