

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 67 (Quirk-Silva) – As Amended April 21, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Tommy Lasorda Memorial Highway

**SUMMARY:** Designates the portion of State Route 5 from Ball Road OC 55-670 at postmile 37.638 to Eastbound exit State Route 91 at postmile 42.671, within the County of Orange, as the Tommy Lasorda Memorial Highway.

**EXISTING LAW:** Assigns Caltrans the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown, however the bill requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering that cost, erect those signs.

**COMMENTS:** Tommy Lasorda, for more than eight decades, was the face of the Los Angeles Dodgers and, many agree, will always remain the embodiment of Dodger blue. Tommy Lasorda was born Thomas Charles Lasorda on September 22, 1927, in Norristown, Pennsylvania, the second of five sons to mother, Carmella, and father, Sabatino.

He started his baseball career straight out of Norristown High School with the Philadelphia Phillies for the 1945 season, and soon after, spent two years in the military before a record-setting return to the baseball scene with the Schenectady Blue Jays, where he pitched a remarkable 25-strikeout game.

In 1949, the then Brooklyn Dodgers drafted him from the Phillies, sending him to a new home where he pitched for the Greenville Spinners and the Montreal Royals, where he led the Royals to four minor league championships.

Tommy Lasorda made his major league debut on August 5, 1954, with the Brooklyn Dodgers, where he played for two seasons before being traded to the Kansas City Athletics in 1956, where he pitched for one season. Before his major league career started, he married his wife, Joan ("Jo"), with whom he had two children, Tom Jr., and Laura, and settled in Fullerton, California, their home for more than 50 years.

After the 1960 season, Tommy Lasorda ended his playing career and became a scout for the Los Angeles Dodgers until 1965 and then a minor league manager from 1966 to 1972, and, in 1973, he made his way back to Major League Baseball (MLB) as a third base coach for the Los Angeles Dodgers, where in 1976, he took the reins to manage the Dodgers for two decades.

Tommy Lasorda's amazing accomplishments as the Los Angeles Dodgers manager include 1,599 career wins, which currently ranks 22nd all-time in MLB history, four National League pennants, eight division titles, and becoming the pride of the great City of Los Angeles with two World Series Championship titles in 1981 and 1988.

Tommy Lasorda's 16 wins in 30 National League Championship games managed were the most of any manager at the time of his retirement, his 61 postseason games managed rank fourth all-time, and he managed four All-Star games. He acted as father figure to many players and individuals in his life, and as manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers, Tommy Lasorda managed nine players who won the National League Rookie of the Year Award.

Tommy Lasorda was regarded by many as baseball's most popular ambassador. He was bestowed a number of baseball-related awards, including being named Manager of the Year of the National League twice and after his retirement, and the following year, in 1997, he was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame as a manager. That same year, the Dodgers retired his number two uniform number on August 15,

Tommy Lasorda came out of retirement to manage the United States National Team at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, where he brought pride to our country by leading the Americans to the gold medal, beating a favored Cuban team that had won the gold medal at the prior two Olympics, and in doing so, he became the first manager to win a World Series championship and lead a team to Olympic gold medal.

His humanitarianism and spirit of goodwill made him a legend throughout the world, as evidenced by many awards, including being a distinguished recipient of the Legion of Honor Award, and in June 2005, President George W. Bush asked Lasorda to serve as a delegate to attend the United States National Day at the World Exposition in Aichi, Japan, where in 2008, the government of Japan conferred upon him the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, which represents the fourth-highest of eight classes associated with the award, and was presented in acknowledgment of his contributions to Japanese baseball; and

Tommy Lasorda was a generous humanitarian with boundless enthusiasm and was a great man who always gave time to those who asked of him. He was famous for his colorful personality and outspoken opinions regarding players and other personnel associated with baseball.

Tommy Lasorda embodied the spirit and love of the game of baseball and dedicated his life to the game by not only managing one of the most successful baseball franchises, but also encouraging the success of his players, and with the deep gratitude of the fans. His passing has left us all with a heavy loss, but his legend lives on.

In honor of Tommy Lasorda's wonderful contributions to the State of California and the world of baseball, and in deepest condolences to his wife Jo, family, friends, the Dodger organization, and fans.

*According to the author*, "Tommy Lasorda was regarded by many as baseball's most popular ambassador and a legend throughout the world. He was a generous humanitarian. He embodied the spirit and love of the game of baseball and dedicated his life to the game by not only managing one of the most successful teams, but encouraging the success of his players, and always with deep gratitude towards the fans. In honor of Mr. Lasorda's wonderful contributions to the State of California and the world of baseball, we want to honor his great work. Tommy Lasorda will always remain the embodiment of Dodger Blue."

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Julia Kingsley / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093