

Eighth Wonder of the World

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Can you smell the aroma from the popcorn maker, the hamburger grills, and the sweet mesquite from the BBQ? Can you hear the sharp crack of the fireworks and the electrifying roar from the crowd? I sure can. I still remember the days when I was the center of entertainment. “It’s not every building that gets to be known as The Eighth Wonder of the World. Texas’ nominee, the Astrodome . . .” (Harvey, par.1). The Houston Astros used to call me home along with the Oilers when they were still in town. Sports fans would jump up and down with excitement whenever their home team would win. The AMA Supercross riders would fill my air with their exhaust, and the Monster trucks would scatter pieces of beat-up cars across my floor. The fans were always rowdy when the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) came into town. Then, once every year I would hear the delightful sound of music from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo performers. My days used to be spent with enjoyment but since the day they closed me down, I have been empty, useless, and lonely.

My father, Judge Roy Hofheinz, decided to create a dome stadium. They broke ground on January 3, 1962, and my journey to becoming the first dome stadium began. After nearly two years my doors opened on April 9, 1965. Then, I caught my first glimpse of life. I could see the excitement and fascination from these strange creatures they call humans who came to visit me. They were excited to see my newly-built facility



and were fascinated by my revolutionized shape resembling a spaceship. My freshly-furnished seats were beginning to fill with the excited and cheerful fans.

Throughout all of this excitement, I became home to the MLB team, the Houston Astros, and then the NFL team, Houston Oilers. During each game, new events would take place. It was always energizing when my home team would win, but when they lost I could feel the sadness and negativity which also made me feel dispirited. I looked forward to each game and hoped they would win because, when they did, there were these loud, bright, sparkling objects that filled my dome with pride. The days when the pastel blue and red colors entered into my dome I knew I would be in for a treat; all the hard-hitting action and down-to-the-wire plays usually resulted in a win for my Oilers.

The event I enjoyed watching the most was the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, especially the bull riding events and the performances. The revolting smell of manure was my least favorite part of the show. During the event, daring cowboys would ride a malicious mammal that would do anything to get them off, even if that meant getting thrown against the fence or getting pounded into the dirt. I would see these cowboys struggling to get to their feet, and some person with make-up and colorful pants would get in front of the bull; they called themselves “bull fighters” or “rodeo clowns.” At the end of the rodeo portion, the grounds crew would haul in an enormous platform to the center of the arena. I enjoyed listening to the different varieties and joyful sounds of music and watching the entertainers. The music blared throughout the stadium and vibrated my walls; it got extremely loud sometimes. I was delighted to be the host for

such an enjoyable and entertaining event. I always wished it would stay longer and was disappointed when the festivities and fun times ended.

It was really exciting each time the AMA Supercross and Monster Jam came to town. I always knew this event was going to take place when they began hauling in and building the dirt tracks throughout my floor. I looked forward to the opening ceremony and its colorful fireworks along with the blinding green lasers. My heart would skip a beat each time the loud and piercing firework sounds would go off. The roar of the motorcycle engines chilled the surface of my walls. I would cringe as they began their journey around the track hoping one of them would not fall. The smell of the exhaust was always an odd but pleasant aroma. Watching the rider's race around the track was like watching ants roam through an ant farm.

I knew my days were numbered because the Houston Oilers moved away, the Houston Astros found a new home called Minute Maid Park, and I saw a new stadium being built right next door to me. I began to wonder what my future would hold; it brought a sense of sadness upon me. In 2004, city officials officially closed my doors, and now I am nothing but a useless dust collector. People have stated that “the Astrodome is simply history now, a forgotten symbol of an era when domes were the deal” (Pells, par. 2). I am always alone now, and they are proposing to tear me down. Just the thought of this is terrifying; I was the first dome stadium ever built and a historical marker for other domed stadiums. I may be old, but I think I'm still useful. The word around Houston is that there are several proposals to keep me around. Some say they may

build a luxurious hotel with different stores and canals so the guests could shop and take gondola rides. There are other proposals that make me hopeful that one day I would be used for what I was meant for: entertainment and enjoyment. I should be remodeled and made into an enjoyable place that people could use on a daily basis. Wouldn't that be a better future for a building known as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" instead of being demolished and made into a parking lot?

Works Cited

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