

Tommy Kramer January 2024

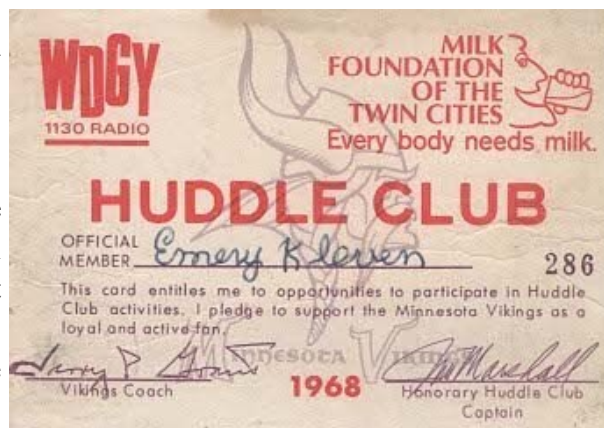
Tommy Kramer, one of the great quarterbacks for the Minnesota Vikings, was in West Concord in November, 2022. He spoke at the Legion Club and then stopped in the Muni to sign autographs and visit with people. I was not around to see him when he was there. But when my two sons and I went to Las Vegas for the weekend of the Vikings game against the Raiders last month, TK was visiting with people at the Treasure Island Casino in Vegas so we had a nice conversation with him. In fact we were the only ones there for about 15 minutes so we had a long conversation.



I got talking with him about one game in particular that I attended at the 'old Met.' December 4th, 1977, the rookie Kramer, came in the game in the 4th quarter against the 49ers after starter Bob Lee could not get the Vikes offense going. That sounds eerily familiar to this past season. The Vikes were down 24-7 when TK entered the game. In only one quarter, the former first round draft pick from Rice University, completed 9 of 13 passes for 188 yards and 3 touchdowns to pull out a 28-27 win. Rob 'the Beav' Henry was with me for the game sitting in the north end zone bleachers. Beav said that game could not be topped and he decided he would not go to another Vikings game again. And to this day, it's the only Vikes game he has seen live. You can see the ticket stub. That's how they used to cancel tickets; by ripping them in half. I'm not sure what the price was for that ticket back in 1977. If I had to guess I would say \$20 to \$25.

'Two-Minute Tommy', a nickname he got for all the comeback victories over his 11 year Viking career, had numerous injuries including many concussions and a spine injury that he has said ultimately led to his retirement. The soon to be 69 year old still has strong hands and forearms as his handshake is very firm, to say the least. It was a lot of fun to visit with him.

The very first Viking game I went to at what Howard Cosell referred to as 'Venerable Metropolitan Stadium' was to the day, exactly 11 years prior to the Tommy Kramer game. It was December 4th, 1966. I got two free tickets as I was a member of the WDGY Huddle Club. My classmate Dan Miller went with me as my dad drove us to the stadium. Dad needed a ticket so we found a guy who wanted to sell the second of two season tickets he had. His wife evidently did not want to sit in a cold rain. I remember getting the ticket for face value, a whopping \$5.00. Nowadays, the decimal point is moved over to the right a couple places.



It was memorable as it was a cold rainy December day and we were hoping to see Fran Tarkenton in person. Well we saw him but not in the game. Fran was sitting on his helmet along the bench as Coach Norm Van Brocklin benched him. After the 4-9-1 season, Tarkenton was traded to the NY Giants and Van Brocklin was fired. Bud Grant came in the next year.

Leon (Charly) Charleton had season tickets to the Vikings game for many years. He had access to extra tickets so many West Concord people went to games and sat near the north endzone. I was in those very bleachers when on Dec 28th, 1975, at a playoff game against Dallas; the very first 'Hail Mary' pass was completed. Unfortunately, it was the Cowboys QB Roger Staubach who completed the pass in the south end zone as they stole the victory from the Vikings. From our vantage point on the opposite end, we first saw an orange thrown out on the field and we all thought it was a penalty flag. No such luck. Pretty soon a glass pint bottle was thrown and hit referee Arman Terzi-an right in the face. Rob Henry reminded me it was a Snoshoe Grog bottle if you ever need that piece of trivia.

At the time, most of the fans in the north end zone were getting ready to jump on the field to celebrate but as we saw what happened, we all stood in stunned silence. And that my friends, is why the Dallas Cowboys are not a much liked team in these parts. On any given day during the season I cheer for the Vikings and whoever is playing against the Cowboys.

The next year though, I was back in those same bleachers for two playoff games. The Vikes beat Washington 35-20 and then the next week they beat the Rams 24-13 to win what would be the last playoff game played at Met Stadium. We did get to jump on the field after that game and in a frame on my wall in the mancave; I have a piece of purple sod that was used to cover up the infield dirt around 3rd base. And as we remember all too well, the Vikings went on to lose their 4th Super Bowl to Oakland. But like a good Viking fan, we black out when we talk about Super Bowls but we remember all the victories that led us to get to four Super Bowls.

Below is the sod from that Rams game that I have framed and hanging in my 'Mancave'. It was actually a much bigger piece that I carried out of the stadium but another fan 'high fived' the sod and broke it in half. He took that piece.



Keep scrolling for more pictures....



Tommy Kramer is front right. Emery front left. In the back are my two sons, Caleb on left and Isaac on right. This picture was taken at the Treasure Island Casino in Las Vegas on December 8, 2023. Below is Tommy autographing my shirt.





Here we are after the game in the stadium in Vegas. The Vikings beat the Raiders 3-0. Picture below is from the top of the Strat, some 900 feet up in the air.

