

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

April 18, 2006

Mascot Hall of Fame Executive Committee
c/o Raymond Entertainment Group
62 North Chapel
Newark, DE 19711

Dear Mascot Hall of Fame Executive Committee,

I'm writing this letter to strongly recommend Clutch the Bear - the Houston Rockets' mascot -- for induction into the prestigious Mascot Hall of Fame.

As a sports reporter and sports columnist for the Houston Chronicle for the last 31 years, I've been a fan of the Houston Rockets, as well as our other local sports teams. Not only have I watched Clutch become a terrific mascot who is respected by fans, media and his colleagues within the organization, but I've also witnessed his outstanding contributions to the Houston community.

I feel comfortable saying that Clutch is a tremendous asset to the Rockets on and off the court. He's a tireless worker who's particularly adored by the Rockets' younger fans who always seem to be mesmerized by his boundless energy, enthusiasm and creativity.

In my role as an NFL writer, columnist and radio talk show host, I've been to every NFL stadium and many basketball arenas and baseball parks. I've seen mascots in all shapes and sizes entertain and inspire fans of all ages, and I can't emphasize strongly enough that Clutch is the equal to any and superior to many. He's a first-class act who plays a significant role in the Rockets' standing as a first-class organization.

During games, when Clutch interacts with his legion of fans, he often gets a larger ovation than the players. His immense popularity is the residue of years of hard work and dedication in and out of costume.

As one of the most valuable members of the organization, Clutch has made himself into an integral part of the Rockets' corporate culture. His value to owner Leslie Alexander doesn't end with the final buzzer. Clutch spends considerable time at Houston's elementary schools, and he's a familiar figure at area charity benefits. He should be commended for his role as an invaluable fundraiser within the community.

The Mascot Hall of Fame is the ultimate honor reserved for the best of the best, and I know it would be a privilege for Clutch to be enshrined with the greatest of his profession.

I humbly nominate Clutch the Bear for induction because his impeccable credentials make him an ideal choice and worthy of your consideration.

Thank you very much for your time, and please feel free to contact me with any questions at john.mcclain@chron.com or (713) 412-2318.

Sincerely,

John McClain
Sports Columnist