**OPENING KICKOFF FOR THE NEW BROWNS, SEPT. 12, 1999**

**Seeking an identity for the next century**

Drew Carey says it's time to 'shut up about the Cleveland jokes, but do n't struggle with pride in the city's psyche.'

By Fred McGannage

The Marine Drum and Bugle Corps marched on the bright green grass. Air Force jets roared across the black sky. Fireworks thundered on all sides of the new Browns Stadium.

Down on the field, the smoke drifted away. Drew Carey could not contain himself. "Everyone who ever told a Cleveland joke or laughed at a Cleveland joke," he shouted, "YOU CLEVELANDERS, NOW WE OWN STADIUMS!!!"

A roar came from 72,000 throats as a team emerged through an inflatable tunnel. It was the Browns. It had been a busy winter. As they made their entrance, the fans lined up for the ticket. It zoomedished as Phil Dawson sent the ball toward the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The Browns were back!!

**•**

The fans were ready. They had been starved for football since Art Modell showed the country by moving the 50-year-old franchise to Baltimore three years earlier.

They had mocked the Pro Football Hall of Fame for the expansion draft. Guard Jim Pyne, the first player taken, got the biggest ovation of all the new faces. "I stunk," he said of the fan reaction. "I'm just a blank slate now."

When the Browns' first choice in the regular draft was University of Kentucky quarterback Tim Couch — who, like Bernie Kosar, wanted to play for the Browns — he became an instant hero.

Yet despite the heights the new Browns had reached in the regular season, they had come too far to be regarded as a Super Bowl contender.

**•**

Unfortunately for the Browns, the bulb that Dawson kicked on Sept. 12 came down. So did the fans' hopes. The Browns managed only two first downs in a 34-0 shellacking at the hands of the Steelers.

The losses continued for seven weeks, including a humiliating defeat at Medora's field, now known as the Browns. They finished 0-7 and a last-minute loss to Cincinnati.

Then in New Orleans, with time expiring, Coach Jim Mora passes from his 44. As players from both teams fought for it, it bounced into the hands of Cleveland's Kevin Johnson near midfield.

The Browns had a 21-16 win. As the players jumped up and down in celebration, fans in living rooms across Northeast Ohio jumped up and down with them. By 9 a.m.

There was another joyous celebration in downtown Cleveland that morning — Brown's Stadium roof sailed through the open sky. Mayor Rudy Giuliani made the Browns' opening night — by a score of 16-14.

The losses resumed. Gloomy fans faced the fact Cleveland fans have to wait to exit. "We're No. 1, Cleveland fans!"

The Depression was even more devastating to Cleveland than it was to the nation. By 1937, the American League Central Division had shaken Clevelanders'.

Then in 1959, the Indians went to the World Series for the first time in 41 years. Again the city cheered the team and itself — until, days later, the inevitable occurred. The Browns were leaving.

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

It was then, in 1993, that the Cleveland Brown fans had to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

So did the fans' hopes. The Browns managed only two first downs in a 34-0 shellacking at the hands of the Steelers.

The losses continued for seven weeks, including a humiliating defeat at Medora's field, now known as the Browns. They finished 0-7 and a last-minute loss to Cincinnati.

Then in New Orleans, with time expiring, Coach Jim Mora passes from his 44. As players from both teams fought for it, it bounced into the hands of Cleveland's Kevin Johnson near midfield.

The Browns had a 21-16 win. As the players jumped up and down in celebration, fans in living rooms across Northeast Ohio jumped up and down with them. By 9 a.m.

There was another joyous celebration in downtown Cleveland that morning — Brown's Stadium roof sailed through the open sky. Mayor Rudy Giuliani made the Browns' opening night — by a score of 16-14.

The losses resumed. Gloomy fans faced the fact Cleveland fans have to wait to exit. "We're No. 1, Cleveland fans!"

The Depression was even more devastating to Cleveland than it was to the nation. By 1937, the American League Central Division had shaken Clevelanders'.

Then in 1959, the Indians went to the World Series for the first time in 41 years. Again the city cheered the team and itself — until, days later, the inevitable occurred. The Browns were leaving.

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

It was then, in 1993, that the Cleveland Brown fans had to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

So did the fans' hopes. The Browns managed only two first downs in a 34-0 shellacking at the hands of the Steelers.

The losses continued for seven weeks, including a humiliating defeat at Medora's field, now known as the Browns. They finished 0-7 and a last-minute loss to Cincinnati.

Then in New Orleans, with time expiring, Coach Jim Mora passes from his 44. As players from both teams fought for it, it bounced into the hands of Cleveland's Kevin Johnson near midfield.

The Browns had a 21-16 win. As the players jumped up and down in celebration, fans in living rooms across Northeast Ohio jumped up and down with them. By 9 a.m.

There was another joyous celebration in downtown Cleveland that morning — Brown's Stadium roof sailed through the open sky. Mayor Rudy Giuliani made the Browns' opening night — by a score of 16-14.

The losses resumed. Gloomy fans faced the fact Cleveland fans have to wait to exit. "We're No. 1, Cleveland fans!"

The Depression was even more devastating to Cleveland than it was to the nation. By 1937, the American League Central Division had shaken Clevelanders'.

Then in 1959, the Indians went to the World Series for the first time in 41 years. Again the city cheered the team and itself — until, days later, the inevitable occurred. The Browns were leaving.

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

It was then, in 1993, that the Cleveland Brown fans had to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

So did the fans' hopes. The Browns managed only two first downs in a 34-0 shellacking at the hands of the Steelers.

The losses continued for seven weeks, including a humiliating defeat at Medora's field, now known as the Browns. They finished 0-7 and a last-minute loss to Cincinnati.

Then in New Orleans, with time expiring, Coach Jim Mora passes from his 44. As players from both teams fought for it, it bounced into the hands of Cleveland's Kevin Johnson near midfield.

The Browns had a 21-16 win. As the players jumped up and down in celebration, fans in living rooms across Northeast Ohio jumped up and down with them. By 9 a.m.

There was another joyous celebration in downtown Cleveland that morning — Brown's Stadium roof sailed through the open sky. Mayor Rudy Giuliani made the Browns' opening night — by a score of 16-14.

The losses resumed. Gloomy fans faced the fact Cleveland fans have to wait to exit. "We're No. 1, Cleveland fans!"

The Depression was even more devastating to Cleveland than it was to the nation. By 1937, the American League Central Division had shaken Clevelanders'.

Then in 1959, the Indians went to the World Series for the first time in 41 years. Again the city cheered the team and itself — until, days later, the inevitable occurred. The Browns were leaving.

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

It was then, in 1993, that the Cleveland Brown fans had to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

So did the fans' hopes. The Browns managed only two first downs in a 34-0 shellacking at the hands of the Steelers.

The losses continued for seven weeks, including a humiliating defeat at Medora's field, now known as the Browns. They finished 0-7 and a last-minute loss to Cincinnati.

Then in New Orleans, with time expiring, Coach Jim Mora passes from his 44. As players from both teams fought for it, it bounced into the hands of Cleveland's Kevin Johnson near midfield.

The Browns had a 21-16 win. As the players jumped up and down in celebration, fans in living rooms across Northeast Ohio jumped up and down with them. By 9 a.m.

There was another joyous celebration in downtown Cleveland that morning — Brown's Stadium roof sailed through the open sky. Mayor Rudy Giuliani made the Browns' opening night — by a score of 16-14.

The losses resumed. Gloomy fans faced the fact Cleveland fans have to wait to exit. "We're No. 1, Cleveland fans!"

The Depression was even more devastating to Cleveland than it was to the nation. By 1937, the American League Central Division had shaken Clevelanders'.

Then in 1959, the Indians went to the World Series for the first time in 41 years. Again the city cheered the team and itself — until, days later, the inevitable occurred. The Browns were leaving.

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.

It was then, in 1993, that the Cleveland Brown fans had to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Browns had been asked to think of themselves as "the city's team."

The Indians fired manager Mike Hargrove and promoting hitting coach Charlie Manuel. Dick Jacobs announced he was selling the team to the Indians. A book on Cleveland's sports history was written.