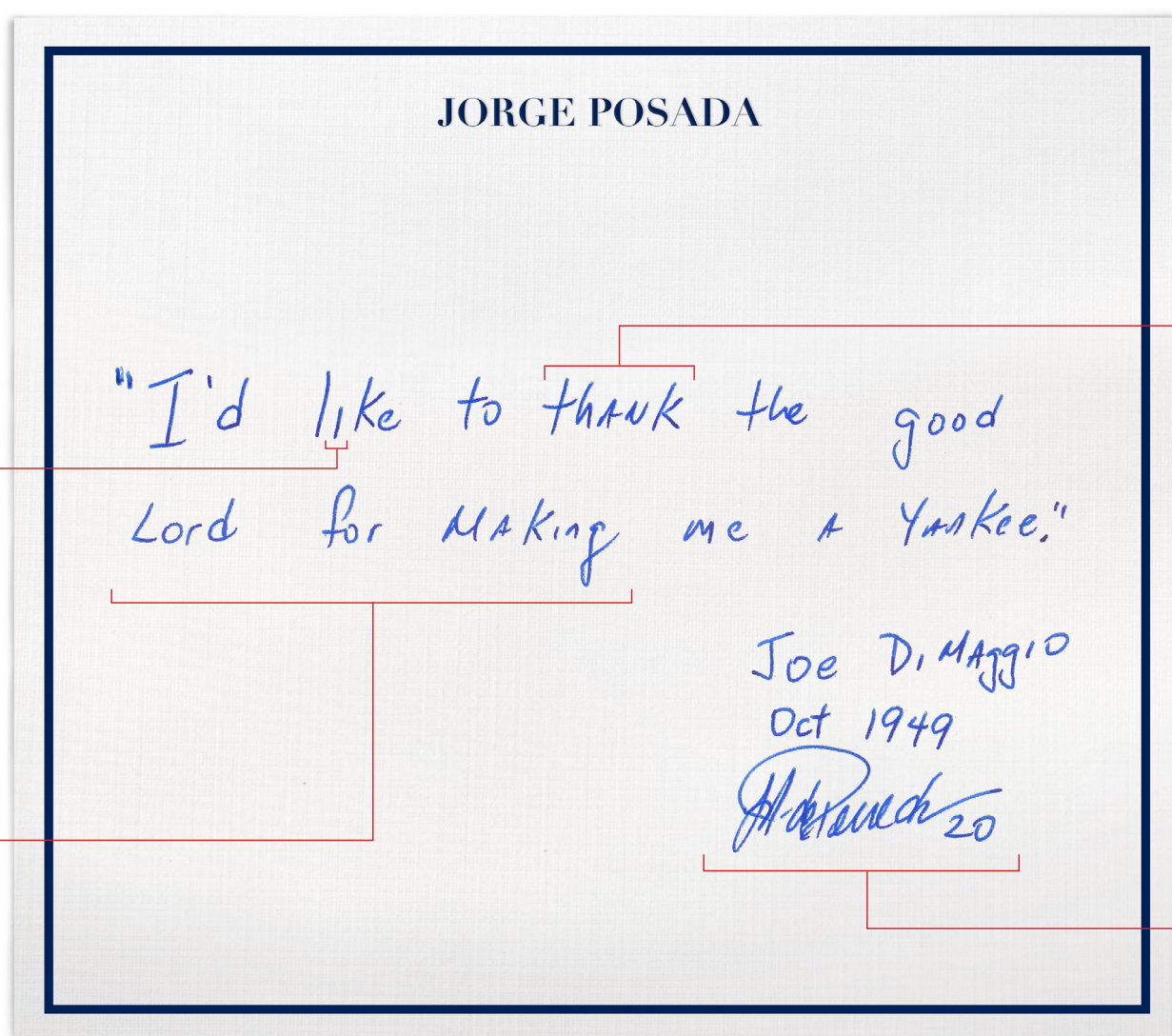


Famous Last Words

FOR YANKEES GREAT JORGE POSADA,
THIS MOTTO HAS PROVEN TO BE A HOME RUN

WRITTEN BY FRANCES DODDS



He doesn't dot his i's. This shows that he's at one moment extremely detailed but at another decides it's his prerogative not to be.

We see deliberate positioning of words and letters. He's careful about self-expression.

Capitals in the middle of words are a sign of defiance and rebellion.

There is a tightness in his signature. The letters are compressed. He's intense about what he does.

When Jorge Posada was a boy growing up in Puerto Rico, he could only imagine one future for himself: “It was always baseball,” says the legendary slugger. The son of a Cuban refugee, Posada never took the attainment of his dream for granted. “At the old Yankee stadium, we had a sign with this DiMaggio quote over the passage from the clubhouse to the dugout,” he remembers. “We all used to touch it before a game, and I would say it in my head every time I played there. It was true—we were lucky to be wearing pinstripes.”

The Yankees were glad to have him, too. This summer the team is commemorating Posada's 17-season career by retiring his number, 20, making him the last Yankee to ever wear it, a fact he calls “unbelievable.”

Of course, a career like his owes just as much to hard work as it does to luck. According to graphologist Annette Poizner, Posada's handwriting suggests he still holds the belief that he's been extraordinarily fortunate, and is thus avidly aware of his self-presentation. “Look at the clear and careful spacing,” she says. “Every letter is carefully articulated. Someone else might write more naturalisti-

cally, understanding that the whole point is to get a handwriting sample. But for him, he's aware that this is a showcase. There will always be a self-consciousness.”

What Posada's handwriting doesn't reveal, the man himself does in his forthcoming memoir, *The Journey Home: My Life in Pinstripes*. And what an odyssey it's been.

“I keep going back to that first day I got to put on the uniform and sit in the dugout,” Posada recalls. “Nobody was in the stands; nobody was on the field. I was there by myself, sitting in the dugout crying because I had accomplished my childhood dream.” ●