On a day when Browns legend Gene Hickerson should be celebrated for his efforts on the field, the Plain Dealer just couldn't resist tossing a turd in the punch bowl. And The Rhino is fired up about it, noting the difference between today's columns from the ABJ and the PD on Hickerson's long overdue inclusion to the Hall. While Pat McManamon's column celebrates Hickerson's achievement with stories about his playing days and his dry wit, Mary Kay Cabot decides that the best way to honor Hickerson is to make him an object of pity.

THE PLAIN DEALER

There's an interesting contrast between today's Akron Beacon-Journal article on Gene Hickerson's selection to the Hall of Fame and the one that appears in
The
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Apparently, Gene Hickerson's memory is not what it once was. Pat McManamon notes Hickerson's condition, and says that "Hickerson is suffering from memory loss and showing symptoms of early Alzheimer's disease, but he has not been diagnosed." That's all he says about Hickerson's physical condition. Instead of pitying Hickerson, McManamon writes about his days as a Cleveland Brown, and about his decency and humility as a person.

Cabot, on the other hand, wallows in Hickerson's misfortune to such an extent that she makes me think she's trying to emulate Pulitzer Prize winning weeper Connie Schultz. (By the way, don't miss today's column from Mrs. Sherrod Brown. It's vintage Connie--she's encouraging all of us to cry a river over a dead horsie). Anyway, Cabot goes so far as to contend that Hickerson's ailments result from an all-consuming bitterness over the injustice of having to wait 30 years for his induction. She's aided and abetted in her role as amateur diagnostician by the dunderheaded Dick Schafrath, who should have known better than to open his mouth in front of a PD reporter.

I am truly sorry to learn of Gene Hickerson's ailments, but it seems to me that if ever there was

a time not to have a pity party for Hickerson, this is it. Unfortunately, I guess the bottom line is that The Plain Dealer has been throwing turds in people's punch bowls for so long that they just can't figure out how to do anything else. What a shame.