

## **STATEMENT FROM ROD CAREW ON CALVIN GRIFFITH**

**MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, MN** – “I understand and respect the Minnesota Twins decision to remove the Calvin Griffith statue outside Target Field. While I’ve always supported the Twins decision to honor Calvin with a statue, I also remember how inappropriate and hurtful his comments were on that fateful day in Waseca. The Twins did what they felt they needed to do for the organization and for our community.

“While we cannot change history, perhaps we can learn from it.

“I first met Calvin Griffith in 1964 when he travelled to New York City to watch me workout at Yankee Stadium. Calvin and longtime Minnesota Twins scout Herb Stein must have liked what they saw as they signed me to a professional contract shortly thereafter. I can tell you when I got to the major leagues with the Twins in 1967, Calvin was my most ardent supporter. He told manager Sam Mele that I was the Twins everyday second baseman. I saw no signs of racism whatsoever.

“In 1977, my MVP year, I made \$170,000. When the season was over, Calvin called me into his office, thanked me for a great season, told me that I had made the team a lot of money and handed me a check for \$100,000. You could have knocked me over. A racist wouldn’t have done that.

“There is no way I can apologize for what Calvin said in Waseca in 1978. His comments were irresponsible, wrong and hurtful. I recall my response at the time reflected my anger and disappointment.

“Now that more than four decades have passed, I look back on Calvin’s comments and our personal relationship with additional context and perspective. In my view, Calvin made a horrible mistake while giving that speech in 1978. I have no idea what happened that day, but who among us has not made a mistake? I know Calvin paid a heavy price for those comments and I believe his thoughts on race evolved over time.

“When he traded me prior to the 1979 season, Calvin told me he wanted me to be paid what I was worth. Later that year the Angels made me the highest paid player in baseball. A racist wouldn’t have done that.

“In 1991, the first person I called after I was told I had been elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame was Calvin.

“I have long forgiven Cal for his insensitive comments and do not believe he was a racist. That was NOT my personal experience with Calvin Griffith – prior to or following that day in 1978.”