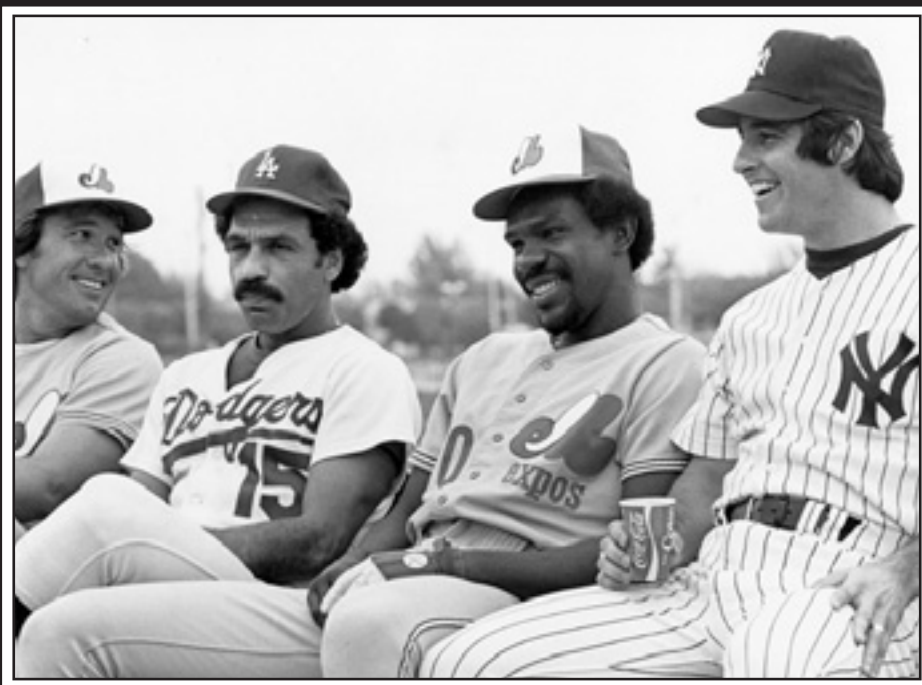


Sharks return to school for MDC baseball reunion

BY RICHARD YAGER



Sharks are everywhere — even the Major Leagues — and many will be returning to Kendall on Saturday, Jan. 26, for a reunion of Miami Dade College baseball players.

The “Sharks” name is symbolic of a 45-year history of Miami Dade College diamond teams, which over the years have won dozens of conference, state and national championships.

Hundreds of former MDC baseball coaches and players are expected to join community leaders in honoring a rich tradition of baseball greats who attended MDC campuses. For many years several campuses had their own baseball teams until the sports program was consolidated with one team representing all MDC campuses in each sport.

“We’re planning an incredible event to further solidify our alumni base,” said MDC athletics director Jim Cox.

Skip Bertman, currently director of athletics at Louisiana State University, will be the featured speaker at a “Miami Dade College Baseball Alumni Reunion” dinner party, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Kendall Campus’ Gibson Center, 11011 SW 104 Street.

Bertman, a member of the College Baseball Hall of Fame, blazed his own trail as a baseball coach at Miami Beach Senior High School and later as assistant baseball coach under Ron Fraser at the University of Miami before becoming head coach at LSU.

A half dozen current Major League players, who once wore MDC jerseys, include former Marlins catcher Mike Piazza, Placido Polanco, Raul Ibanez, Orlando Palmeiro, Kiko Calero and Alex Sanchez.

Other starring names over nearly five decades include Mickey Rivers, Warren Cromartie, Steve Carlton, Bucky Dent, Alex Fernandez, Kurt Bevacqua, Jaime Navarro, Oddibe McDowell and Gil Paine.

Others MDC grads have starred internationally in Latin American and Caribbean leagues as well as in Asia.

“The tradition and success of MDC baseball is unmatched by any other college in the nation,” Cox said. “Our alumni have gone on to continue their academic pursuits and play baseball in the finest university programs in the nation, as well as professional leagues.”

Miami Dade College, although it now has some bachelor’s degree programs, has a community (junior) college level athletic program.

The “Reunion Day” party begins when the current MDC Sharks baseball squad takes on Wallace Community College of Alabama at 11 a.m. on the Kendall Campus diamond.

All baseball alumni are urged to contact Sharks Coach Steve Hertz at 305-237-0681 or Cox by email at <jcox@mdc.edu> for reunion dinner reservations (\$100 per adult ticket; \$45 for children). Sponsorship opportunities also are available, Cox said.

Seen together in this picture during a baseball clinic at Miami Dade College North Campus on Jan. 22, 1980, are Major Leaguers (l-r) Gary Carter, Davey Lopes, Warren Cromartie and Bucky Dent. Cromartie and Dent played for Miami Dade College.



Warren Cromartie signs with the Expos baseball team on Aug. 28, 1973, while Mel Dider (left) and Dr. Demie Mainieri, MDC baseball coach, watch.

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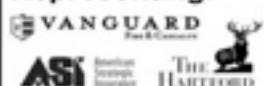
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