

Eight new members inducted into Cricket Hall of Fame

Cricket Hall of Fame celebrated its 25th Anniversary on Saturday, October 7, with a gala ceremony at the fabulous Marriott Hotel, downtown Hartford, which featured the induction of eight individuals, four internationals (one posthumously) and four locals.

The internationals were former England captain Tony Greig, former Indian Test player Syed Abid Ali and Australian mogul, the late Kerry Packer. Local inductees included Denzil Powell of New York, Lloyd G. Scott of New York, Conny Campbell of Ottawa, Canada, Vincent Hosang of New York and Leonard Wilson of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Greig, who is in India doing duties at the International Cricket Council (ICC) tournament was inducted via telephone. In his response, he praised the merits of the game saying that cricket is responsible for making a lot of great friendships.

Ali who has established himself as one of the top cricket coaches in the world, was responsible for helping the U.S. team make it to the 2001 ICC tournament.

Pat White, President of the West Indies Cricket Umpires Association (WICUA), who introduced Scott, explained how he (Scott) persevered to pass the tests to qualify as a first class umpire. Scott, he said, went on to establish the United States of America Cricket Umpires Association (USACUA), which now boasts more than 100 members. Scott was also instrumental in getting the WISCUA to hold its convention in New York, he said.

Campbell, who is originally from Jamaica, was recognized for his role in developing cricket in Canada and for the building of a wicket that was recognized by authorities of the game in England.

The biggest applause for the night, however, went to Powell of Poughkeepsie, New York. A very humble individual, also originally from Jamaica, not getting the cooperation of his city officials, Powell took it upon himself to purchase land and build his own cricket field. The facility has today become the recreational meeting place in his community.

A successful businessman in the River Valley area, Powell said that he did it as a means of giving back to a community that has supported him throughout the years. "My greatest delight," he said, "is to see the youngsters in the area making use of the facility."

Wilson was rewarded for the role he played in the game in the state of Connecticut and his community including the founding of the Bridgeport Cricket Club.

Hosang, a successful businessman in New York, who is well-known in the Caribbean community for devoting his services and time to help improve the lives of others, was recognized for his financial contributions to the sport in New York. He was represented by his son Brian at the function.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first Cricket Hall of Fame's ring to former West Indies fast bowler, Dr. Michael Holding. He was selected to receive the ring in recognition of the services that he has rendered the institution since his induction two years ago. Beginning next year all future inductees will receive a Cricket Hall of Fame ring. Members of the Cricket Hall of Fame's Committee were also presented with commemorative rings.

In a brief address Dr. Holding advised youngsters who are interested in playing the sport, to play and enjoy the game. "It will go a long way in making you a better person," he said. "Cricket "is a great game. It is about team work, making friends, building character, learning and growing."

Dr. Holding made an appeal to the mayor to help the Hall of Fame obtain a bigger building so that it can become a big attraction in the city. "This Hall of Fame is unique," he said, "because it does not only honor people who bat and bowl but individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the sport and their community."

Tribute was paid to two former stalwarts of the game, former England fast bowler Freddie Trueman and Clyde Walcott, formerly of the West Indies' Three Ws, who passed away earlier in the year. Another former West Indian player, Attorney Rudolph Cohen, said that although they approached the game differently, they (Trueman and Walcott) made tremendous contributions to the sport that they loved. The two outstanding players lived for the game, he said.

A number of past inductees, stalwarts of the game and some of the visionaries who are responsible for the establishment of the Cricket Hall of Fame in Hartford, were recognized for their insight.