

## Former WI batting star praises Cricket Hall of Fame



Although most of us may not want to admit it, this type of honor is something that we all look forward to, former West Indian batting star Basil Butcher said shortly after he was inducted into the Cricket Hall of Fame at ceremonies held at the Hilton Hotel in Hartford on Saturday, October 6.

Butcher, who along with former teammate Joseph Solomon topped this year's class of inductees, said that he has a keen interest in organizations like this and hopes that they will continue to recognize good performances. "This honor is something that we will cherish for the rest of our lives."

In his response, Solomon who played a pivotal role in the historical tied test between the West Indies and Australia backed up the sentiments expressed by Butcher and said that he was proud to have been selected to join all the other greats who have made it into the Hall of Fame.

The pair, who is from Guyana, was joined by seven other individuals John Aaron, Jamie Harrison, Samuel Belnavis, Joseph Buffong, Mahamood "Mo" Ally, Dale V. C. Holness and Andrew "Buster" Headley, who were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the sport in the U.S.

Aaron, former Executive Secretary of the United States of America Cricket Association (USACA), said that although he did not become a top player of the game, he is very content with the contributions that he has made in regards to the development of the sport in the U.S. "My only regret is that my father who encouraged me to get involved with the game is not around to see how I turned out," he said.

Harrison is president of the United States Youth Cricket Association (USYCA). An American educator, Harrison who was introduced and fell in love with the game in 2008, called for more support in his efforts to get the sport established in schools across the country. Since the launch of the association, the group has delivered cricket sets and training to over 700 American schools, and has brought the game to tens of thousands of children, he said. Because of how well the game is catching on in the schools, he expressed optimism that America will eventually become world champions of the sport.

An individual, who has participated in almost every aspect of the game (player, coach and administrator), since his arrival in the U.S. from Jamaica in 1971, Belnavis who is known for his discipline and loyalty, has demonstrated an innate ability to partner cricket with a number of other initiatives beyond the sport and for his philanthropic work to benefit his community.

Ally, a life-long cricket aficionado with domestic and international experience, who is also from Guyana, told the gathering about the number of efforts and the hard work that he has put in to promote the game throughout the U.S. The president and publisher of the American Cricketer magazine which he founded in 2003 to highlight the status of the sport in the U.S., Ally slammed the USACA for not giving him any support or doing anything to develop the game in the country.

Of the lot, the most joyous inductee was Buffong. Along with being a very successful player, over his vast career, he has held multiple cricket affiliated positions such as president, vice-president, public relations director and manager in Massachusetts. Originally from Montserrat, Buffong said that when the people in the island learn of his achievement, they may decide to declare a holiday in his honor.

Golden Age Award inductee Headley, another American-born cricket enthusiast, who got involved with the game when he migrated to Jamaica in his early years, thanked his club members (Wembley Athletic Club, Inc.) for nominating him. Although going on well in years, he still continues to support and contribute to the

game.expressed optimism that America will one day become world champions of the sport.