

Former WI cricket stars top this year's class of inductees

By STAN WALKER

Former West Indian Test cricket stars Courtney Walsh, Lawrence Rowe and Deryck Murray top this year's Cricket Hall of Fame's class of inductees. The annual ceremony is set for Saturday, October 1, at the fabulous Marriott Hotel, across from Hartford's Convention Center. We will be celebrating our 30th anniversary.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Walsh represented the West Indies from 1984-2001. Captaining the team in 22 Test matches, he is best known for a remarkable opening bowling partnership with fellow West Indian Curtly Ambrose. He held the record of most Test wickets from 2000, after he broke the record which was held by Kapil Dev of India. Walsh's record was later broken in 2004 by Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka.

Rowe is another West Indian cricketer who was born in Kingston, Jamaica. An elegant right-handed batsman, Rowe was felt by many of his peers that his ability was so extraordinary that he could have been the greatest West Indian batsman ever. He was a West Indies batting hero in the days before Sir Vivian Richards. He, however, became infamous in 1982-83, because he led a rebel tour to South Africa during the days of apartheid.

A wicketkeeper and right-handed batsman, Murray who was born in Trinidad, kept wicket for the potent West Indian fast bowling attacks in the 1970s, which included Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Joel Garner and Collin Croft. His efficient glove work effected 189 Test dismissals and greatly enhanced the potency of the bowling attack. Murray captained Trinidad and Tobago 1976-1981, and was vice-captain of the West Indies sides which won the 1975 and the 1979 World Cup. In his later career, he served as a diplomat in the Foreign Service of Trinidad and Tobago in 1978-1989.

Two other individuals Mahammad A. Quereshi of Florida and Clarence Modeste of New York will be the local honorees. Former West Indian umpire Johnny Gayle, O.D., will be the recipient of the "Golden Age Award" which was introduced for the first time last year.

An ardent lover of the game, Quereshi, the Chairman and CEO of MAQ Group, Inc., one of the largest real estate and financial investment groups in the U.S., and of his foundation, Cricket Council USA, said that "I dream of the day that I can open my morning newspaper to the Sports Section and read about last night's American cricket league games alongside articles about the Dolphins, the Marlins and the Panthers." The Council has been spreading the wonderful values of cricket throughout the homes, schools and community recreation parks in the United States and Canada for more than 10 years, he stated. "I know in my heart that cricket is on its way to becoming a mainstream sport in the U.S.A.," he added.

Born in Tobago, Modeste is currently president of the Staten Island Cricket Club, the oldest continuously active cricket club in the United States. He has held that office for more than 20 years. Under his guidance, the club has been able to maintain its historic longevity and its association with its ground at Walker Park in New York, which has been unbroken since 1886. The continued survival and success of the club could not have occurred without the contribution of Modeste.

A very good cricketer in his young days, Gayle took up umpiring after his playing days were over. He successfully passed the umpires examination which was held by the Jamaica Cricket Umpires Association, the second oldest umpiring organization in the world, and went on to become a very outstanding official of the game. During his first class career which lasted for 20 years, he stood in three Tests, 32 first-class matches, and a host of One Day Internationals. After retiring in 1990, Gayle served on many occasions as referee in regional matches and as a third umpire in Test matches at Sabina Park.