

Top umpire pledges to help lift up US cricket standards 2017 Inductees

Former international cricket umpire Stephen Bucknor promised to help lift up the standard of cricket umpiring and the sport in the USA following his induction into the Cricket Hall of Fame at ceremony which was held at the Sheraton Hotel, Windsor Locks, Connecticut on Saturday, October 7.

Bucknor, who holds the record for umpiring in the most Test matches throughout the world, topped this year's class of inductees which included Clement "Busta" Lawrence (posthumously), Earl Daley, Cliff Roye, Clement Thompson, Charles Simpson, Syed Balkhi and Stanford Walker.

Bucknor, who is widely known for his long deliberations before making a decision, for which he was nicknamed "Slow Death", said that he hopes that he will be able to live up to his promise to not only help to improve the standard of umpiring of cricket in the U.S. but also the sport itself. "I am going to work very hard towards getting the game and its umpiring standards better in the country," he said.

One of the biggest surprises of the evening was the induction of Walker, who is also the Public Relations Director of the institution. In thanking the committee for recognizing him, Walker spoke of how surprised and shocked he was when he was called up as one of the inductees. This was something he never expected, he said, but that he was happy that they had decided to do this before waiting until the day of his funeral.

The late Busta Lawrence from Jamaica, who got involved with the game from an early age, was honored for the outstanding contributions that he gave to the game in New York. He migrated to the U.S. at the age of 17 and not only impressed with his ability as a player but also his role as an administrator.

Daley, also from Jamaica, established himself as a top class cricketer before migrating to the U.S. However, it was here in the U.S. that he made outstanding contributions to the growth and development of the sport serving in many capacities which included as an administrator, player and coach. He is a former player of the U.S. national team who has a lot of playing and coaching experience.

After coming to the U.S. also from Jamaica, Roye hooked up with Westbury Cricket Club in New York, where he served as player, president and vice-president for many years. He served in similar positions with Villagers Cricket Club. He is now the President of the Metropolitan Cricket League, a post which he has held for several years. He played an integral part in the development of Women's Cricket in its initial stages in the U.S.

Thompson, who developed his cricket skills in his homeland Jamaica, was not only involved in a variety of the sport's activities there, but went on to play professionally in England for Durham, Newcastle and in the Central Lancashire League for Norden Cricket Club, while still representing Jamaica in the Shell Shield. He migrated to the U.S. in 1986 where he immediately began a new chapter in his cricket career. He became a founding member of Mid-Island Cricket Club where along with his playing held numerous leadership positions in the organization including captain, manager coach and president.

Simpson, a lifelong sports aficionada chalked up notice as an outstanding all-round athlete and sportsman before leaving Jamaica for the U.S. A former member of the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF), he represented the Force in cricket, soccer, field hockey and dance. For over 40 years he has been associated with the Metropolitan Cricket League in New York as a player, umpire and administrator. After 30 years in the U.S. he returned to Jamaica and got involved

with two cricket leagues which have produced players who have made the West Indies cricket team.

Balkhi, a promoter and Adviser for the Cricket Council USA in Florida is an award winning entrepreneur. Born in Pakistan, he was exposed to cricket from the very early days. He migrated to the U.S. at the age of 12 and joined the Florida Cricket League. At the end of high school, he gave up playing and went on to pursue a career in marketing. His marketing vision is to make cricket mainstream in the U.S. and is working with CCUSA to create a premier league in the U.S. with the goal of having regional teams with a similar format as the NFL, NBA or MLS.

At the ceremony two stalwarts of the game writer Tony Becker and Lloyd George Dixon, who has served the sport well in his community were presented with Lifetime Awards. Receiving Presidential Awards were well-known Master of Ceremony Edwin Carty, Leeroy Campbell, who usually makes videos of the ceremony and the Rev. Michette Burke. Well-known businessman and community leader, who is also the founder of the International Foundation for the Exoneration of Marcus Garvey, Dermoth Brown, was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation.



2017 Inductees: From left are Earl Daley, Clement Thompson, Cliff Roye, Stephen Bucknor and Syed Balkhi. Missing is Charles Simpson and Stanford Walker.