

Two former WI cricket stars nominated for induction

By STAN WALKER

Former West Indian Test cricket stars Courtney Walsh and Desmond Lewis lead off this year's list of nominees for induction into the Cricket Hall of Fame. They will be joined by veteran West Indian umpire Clyde Cumberbatch of Trinidad and six other local individuals, Venelda Wallace, Dr. Sham Ali and Roy Reid of New York, Mavis Johnson-Walsall and Grantley Headley of Georgia and Massachusetts, respectively, and Alcious Watson, Hartford, Connecticut, who will be honored for their contributions to the sport in the U.S.

The annual ceremony is set for Saturday, October 5, at the Hilton Hotel downtown Hartford.

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 for several years and holding 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.

Lewis, another Kingston, Jamaica native, who played for the West Indies, has shined in every department of the game – player, batsman/wicketkeeper, captain and coach. He joined the West Indies team in 1971 and performed impressively against the touring Indian team. Although he played in only three of five Test matches, he ended his performance with a healthy average of 86.33. To many it still remains a mystery why he was never selected again to represent the West Indies. Despite this, he never gave up his love for the game, becoming a successful coach in the Georgia Supreme Cricket League, in Atlanta.

Wallace, who has been the manager for the Villagers cricket team for more than 14 years, has promoted, arranged and hosted many cricket tours in and out of the U.S. Although born in the U.S., she was schooled in Jamaica where she learned and developed a strong love for the game. A successful administrator, fundraiser, advocate, developer and innovator of ideas, she is currently the Recording Secretary of the Metropolitan Cricket League and the coordinator of the women's cricket team in New York

Ali has been giving excellent, dedicated service to cricket in the region for over 30 years.

Reid, another Jamaican, is one of the true pioneers of the game, not only as a player but also as a promoter. He has displayed a passion for the game that only can be described as a life-long dedication and love for the sport. He has demonstrated humanitarian efforts in extending employment to some of the players in the New York area.

Johnson-Walfall created history by becoming the first woman to serve on any executive committee in the game of cricket in the U.S., when she was elected as Recording secretary for the New York Metropolitan and District Cricket Association. She is a cricket administrator who has served the game for over 35 years continuously in three clubs, either as Correspondence Secretary or Recording Secretary to five league presidents.

Along with the late Roy Sweeney, Watson was one of the founders of the Connecticut Cricket League. He served as secretary for many years and was also responsible for helping his team the New Britain Social Club to obtain a field. No funds were available in the town's parks and recreation budget, so members of the club under his leadership financed the development of the field with the required specifications.