

Honorary Doctorate

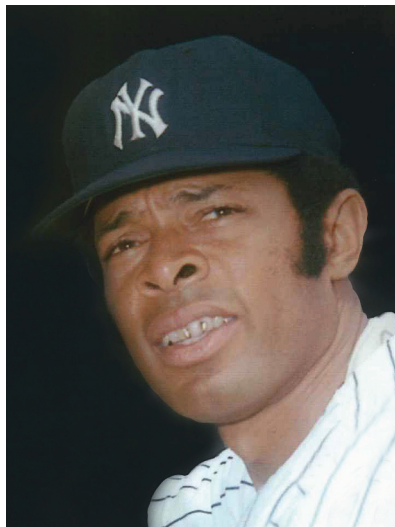
Mr. Horace Clarke - Professional Athlete, Youth Mentor

Born and raised in Frederiksted, St. Croix, Horace Clarke played baseball around the school yards and playgrounds at every possible opportunity. At the age of 14 he joined the Braves Baseball Club that entered the local amateur league.

In the following years, Clarke was often named to all star teams that represented St. Croix against St. Thomas and Puerto Rico. During one of these championship series he was scouted by Jose Seda of the New York Yankees organization. On completion of high school in 1958, Clarke began his professional career at Kearney, Nebraska, in the Nebraska State League. Over the next five years Clarke played in the minors, and in the Puerto Rico Winter Baseball League, improving his skills and gaining valuable experience.

In 1965, he was promoted to the major leagues and played a utility role over the next two seasons. Bobby Richardson retired as the Yankees second baseman after the 1966 season giving Clarke the opportunity he had long awaited. From 1967 through 1973, Clarke was the Yankees regular second baseman. In 1974 he split the season with the Yankees and the San Diego Padres of the National League before retiring.

Clarke compiled the best fielding percentage for second basemen in 1967, ranks eighth in fielding percentage among inactive second basemen and led second basemen in assists six consecutive years. Clarke's first two home runs in the big leagues were grand slams. He led the Yankees in stolen bases on several occasions, with his strongest offensive season occurring in 1969. He hit a career high .285 batting average, with an on-base percentage of .340 and 33 stolen bases.



Horace Clarke

On April 19, 1970, Clarke enjoyed a five-hit day in the nightcap of a doubleheader at Baltimore's Memorial Stadium. In the span of a month in 1970, he broke up three possible no-hitters in the ninth inning (Jim Roker on June 4, Sonny Seibert on June 19, and Joe Niekro on July 2). Clarke and Joe Mauer are the only hitters in Major League Baseball to ever break up three no-hitter bids in the ninth inning. That season, Clarke made 732 plate appearances (batting 686 times officially). As a fielder, though, the knock on Clarke was that he would not turn the double play with runners barreling in. Few ever took him out with a slide, but Clarke would hold the ball after leaping. In his ten-year career, Clarke hit a career .256 average, with 27 home runs, 304 RBI's and 151 stolen bases.

After his professional playing career was over, Clarke returned to his St. Croix home to serve as a Baseball Specialist developing young players – along with Elmo Plaskett, another former major leaguer from St. Croix – for the Virgin Islands Government. Clarke was also an assistant scout for the Kansas City Royals. He served in the capacity of Baseball Specialist for 20 years. Two of his star pupils who went on to play in the major leagues were Jerry Brown, from 1986 through 1995, and Midre Cummings from 1993-2001 and 2004-2005.

In the television show "The Job," Horace Clarke is referred to occasionally. In the book "The Wednesday Wars," the protagonist Holling practices with Clarke through an arrangement by Mrs. Baker. Holling also calls him "one of the best baseball players to wear pinstripes since Babe Ruth."

He was one of the most well-known faces of the Yankees' teams from 1967 to 1973, a period in Yankees history that is commonly referred to as "The Horace Clarke Era." Clarke is a member of an elite group of baseball players from the Virgin Islands who played professional Major League Baseball. He is known as a selfless baseball star who, even in retirement, continued to contribute to the sport by giving back to young Virgin Islands players – coaching them into becoming stars themselves.

Fiftieth

Commencement



ST. THOMAS

Saturday, the Seventeenth of May
Two Thousand and Fourteen
Seven O'Clock in the Evening
Sports and Fitness Center
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

ST. CROIX

Sunday, the Eighteenth of May
Two Thousand and Fourteen
Half after Two O'Clock in the Afternoon
Campus Grounds
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands