

Members of the Class of 2003

Vincent Lloyd Ferguson

(1938-2009)



"To every man comes in his life time a special moment when he is tapped on the shoulder and offered a very special job, fitting and unique only to his own talent."

Vincent Lloyd Ferguson was born with the pedigree of leadership, permitting him to chart what might rightfully be regarded as the golden era of Bahamian basketball. In addition, the organization that he brought to baseball allowed The Bahamas to realize its greatest ever international achievement in that sport. Furthermore, his individual accomplishments in track and field, baseball and basketball place him firmly within the firmament of excellence. His sporting career was rooted in confidence, competence and challenge. He practiced Total Quality Management before many in The Bahamas could conceive of the concept.

In a very real sense then, Ferguson was a product of the collective effort of the Benedictine monks of St. Augustine's Monastery and its College where he won fame in basketball, softball, volleyball and track. In the latter, his specialty was the long and the high jump. He held jump record from 1955-1960. Also, his tremendous hand-eye coordination permitted him to overshadow friend and foe alike in basketball and softball. He was among the first Bahamians to win a scholarship, entering St. Anselm's College in New Hampshire in September, 1957. No baseball was played at his college at the time; and so he made a name for himself in highly competitive Northeast and Boston Park Leagues in the summer of 1959 and 1960, earning MVP status in both leagues.

After his successful collegiate matriculation he advanced to professional baseball with the Milwaukee, now Atlanta, Braves organization, where he persevered and progressed to the AAA level, one step away from the Major Leagues, having been contracted three times to the major league club. He ended his outstanding baseball career in 1967, having demonstrated the ability to defensively cover his outfield position as comprehensively as the morning dew, batting in the top ten

three occasions and earning All Star status twice.

Upon his return to The Bahamas, Ferguson entered the teaching profession full time at St. Augustine's College where he was to eventually achieve the Vice Principalship, at the same time producing a dynasty of champion athletes. It was he who attached to the school its "Big Red Machine" nickname.

In spite of all these individual sterling accomplishments, Ferguson's most telling achievements reside in the countless broken lives and organizations he has helped to resuscitate. Such a gift evidenced itself as early as his high school days when he would coordinate basketball competition at the Priory for players much older than himself. This continued during his annual break from pro baseball, and it formalized itself when he assumed the presidency of the defunct Bahamas Amateur Basketball Association in 1966, a post in which he served for seventeen years. In that period what was once an emaciated body bloomed into the most vibrant and most organized national federation with an elevated caliber of competition comparable to NCAA Division II college standards.

This same pattern of transformation occurred during Ferguson's twelve years tenure as the treasurer of the Bahamas Olympic Association. Also, he assumed managerial responsibility for this country's national baseball team in 1968 & 1969, when the Bahamas achieved its finest ever international results. His squad advanced to the third round of the National Baseball Congress of America tournament in Wichita, Kansas, finishing 7th out of a field of 32 teams. The 1969 team was voted the most disciplined in tournament. Ferguson further confirmed his place in history in 1975 when he became the first International Basketball Federation certified referee from any country of CARICOM.

Indeed, even in the eyes of the uninitiated, Vincent Lloyd Ferguson has maximally used his qualities of leadership to perform well the special tasks that he was asked to perform.