

Member of the Class of 2011 *Wilfred Hillard "Sudgy" Culmer (1957-2003)*

"The future belongs to those who believe of their dreams." Eleanor Roosevelt



The dreams of Wilfred Hillard Culmer II began on Tuesday, November 11, 1957 when he entered this world at the home of his parents Wilfred Hillard Culmer Sr. and Phyllis Wheatley Culmer (nee) Ingraham. He was a joy to his parent and sisters Yvonne and Donna. At an early age he showed a love for sports and he found joy in playing with his cousins and neighbours through Rupert Dean Lane. He was baptized into the Anglican Communion and attending Sunday School regularly with his big sister Yvonne.

His early education began at William Sayles Primary School and continued at CC. Sweeting Senior High School where his dreams were nurtured and his life long passion for the sport of baseball identified. While at CC Sweeting High School, he was a versatile all-around athlete playing volleyball, softball, basketball and was a member of the track team. This passion for sports resulted in his travel throughout the Caribbean, Bermuda, the United States and Canada as a member of the National Volleyball team and a member of the 1976 Bahamas Carifta Team.

After two years, Bahamas Baseball Association president Jim Wood, convinced Sudgy (as he was affectionately called) to make the switch from softball to baseball. This move resulted in a scholarship to Chipola Junior College in Marianna, Florida. It was here that the Major League Baseball Association discovered this Bahamian power hitter. Sudgy joined the Pioneer league as a member of the Helena Phillies in the Spring of 1978. He moved through the Baseball League, joining the A, AA and AAA teams.

He later shared his dream of excelling in the major league baseball arena with the Nassau Guardian.

"It all started for me in 1977 when I received a scholarship to attend Chipola Junior College. I was there for a while and after turning in an incredible performance, I was faced with a decision of either going into the Phillies farm system or staying in college for about two years. I decided that it was best for me to turn pro. At that time, it was only a gamble, and right now, things seem to be working in my favour. After getting off to a bad start, in my first year, I got into the hitting groove again. At that time, I knew I had power, and I found out that it is not the home runs that give the good batting average, but the consistency in getting hits regular. I found that out, and so I concentrated on just trying to get some hits. My hopes are high in terms of reaching the big leagues, and I have decided that by the time I reach 22, if I'm still healthy, and if I'm not protected by the Phillies organization, I will try somewhere else."

Sudgy went on to realize his dreams of playing for a major league baseball team when he was traded by the Philadelphia Phillies, along with Jerry Red and Roy Smith, to the Cleveland Indians on September 12, 1982; after five years with the Phillies. His dream was to be cut short due to a finger injury, which resulted in his return to the minor league because he was unable to practice or play for the rest of the season.

Once home, he decided not to return for another season and sought full time employment as one of the finest class of Croupiers in the new Crystal Palace Casino. Advancing from a Croupier then to a Supervisor and a lastly a Pit Manager, Sudgy's impeccable 20 year stint was abruptly ended when he slipped away from this earthly morning hours of October 14, 2003.

A fun-loving, but private person, Sudgy shared 27 years of love, romance and friendship with his best friend, Sharon Bethel. Their love for sports brought them together but grew out of their many dreams. They shared a lifetime of fun, laughter and tears. They found their greatest joy in sharing in the lives of their sons Wilfred III and Montenez.

As a brother, uncle, lover and friend, he gave of his time, money and advice never asking or expecting anything in return. He was a loyal and dependable uncle to Ethan, Don, Kishlane, Waldon, Chelsie and Brandon. It is hard to imagine life without him. We will miss his many gifts at Christmas and birthdays, his smart remarks, his sweet treats late at night and that special smile.