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*Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County*

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## **Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame**

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15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

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May 2020

Dear inductees and their families, members, supporters and friends,

I hope this letter finds you well. My purpose is to inform you about the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame during the coronavirus crisis that has consumed our nation.

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel issued an emergency declaration. In response, I made the decision to immediately close the CSHOF until further notice. I was concerned about the threat of exposure to our loyal volunteers, visitors to our facility, and CSHOF directors.

Since that time, we have been continuing to operate the business side of the organization. Treasurer Lee Johnson, secretary Russ Ecklund, and vice-president Bob Schmitt have all been in our office fulfilling their duties. I might note that they are working alone and taking appropriate precautions.



I, too, have been working my normal daily hours, in solitary, at the CSHOF handling written correspondence, answering e-mails, maintaining a presence on the CSHOF Facebook page, submitting a weekly article to *The Post-Journal* on the history of baseball, maintaining and updating our inventory data base, adding material about our inductees to our website, performing janitorial duties, etcetera, all with the goal of continuing to meet

**our mission: To Honor and Preserve the Sports History of Chautauqua County.**

We were very fortunate to hold our 39<sup>th</sup> annual Induction Banquet on February 17<sup>th</sup> before the virus shutdowns occurred. Chairman Chip Johnson again orchestrated a very successful sold-out event at which we inducted 9 deserving individuals to our Hall of Honor, recognized 47 high school, collegiate and community athletes and presented 17 Legacy Awards to outstanding athletes and contributors.

**Please take note that the annual CSHOF golf tournament has been moved from its usual June date to September 12<sup>th</sup>.**

**We will again be participating in the Give Big CHQ on-line fundraiser organized annually for county not-for-profits by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation. This year's Give Big CHQ date is Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. SAVE THE DATE. Last year's event brought in over \$4400 to the CSHOF!**

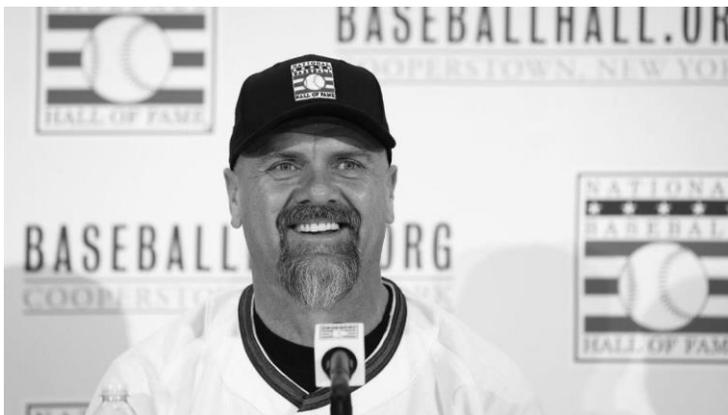
**Until next month, please stay safe and know that we very much appreciate your support of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame.**

**Randy Anderson  
President**

***EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by former Jamestown resident Jeff Brucculeri for the Tulsa Beacon on January 30, 2020. Mr. Brucculeri is a freelance writer and broadcaster. You can contact him at [jeffb@tulsabeacon.com](mailto:jeffb@tulsabeacon.com), or follow him on Twitter @JeffBSports. Thanks to Jeff for allowing it to be used here.***

It was with great anticipation and excitement that I watched the announcement of the 2020 Baseball Hall of Fame inductees, last week. It wasn't because I was hoping Derek Jeter would be a unanimous choice, but because I was hoping Larry Walker would finally be selected.

Jeter fell one ballot shy of being voted unanimously by the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA), a feat only accomplished by Mariano Rivera, just last year. Not even some of the greatest players of all-time were elected unanimously; not Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Hank Aaron, or Nolan Ryan, for whatever reason. It was Jeter's first year of eligibility.



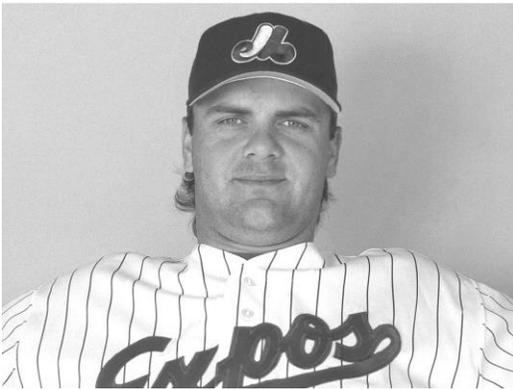
For Walker (left), it was his tenth and final year to appear on the BBWAA ballot. Players must appear on 75 percent of submitted ballots to be inducted into Cooperstown. Walker received 76.6 percent. If he had not been elected this year, Walker would have had to wait to see if the Hall of

Fame Today's Game committee would elect him in 2022. Walker was inducted in Canadian Sports Hall of Fame in 2007 and Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in 2009.

By the way, that brings up an interesting point. Baseball Hall of Fame elections have become more complicated in recent years. No longer is it just one ballot by the BBWAA and one ballot by the Veteran's Committee. Now, there are four rotating committees asked to do the job of electing MLB players, Negro League players, umpires, front office personnel, and broadcasters, worthy to be in the Hall of Fame, that the BBWAA may have overlooked.

Separate 16-member subcommittees vote on individuals from different eras of baseball, with candidates classified by the time-periods that cover their greatest contributions: Early Baseball (1871 – 1949), Golden Days (1950 – 1969), Modern Baseball (1970 – 1987), Today's Game (1988 – present). All committee ballots include ten candidates. The Today's Game and Modern Baseball committees convene twice every five years, the Golden Days committee once every five years, and the Early Baseball committee once every ten years.

So, why my excitement regarding Walker being elected to the Hall of Fame?



Well, I can truly say, I've known Larry Walker since his first season in pro baseball. Walker was signed by the Montreal Expos as a free agent in Nov. 1984 and in March of 1985 he was sent to the Expos minor league camp in West Palm Beach, FL. After camp, he was assigned to the Expos short-season-A team in my hometown, Jamestown, New York, in the New York-Penn League. I was working for the Expos at the time and that year we hosted a

two-week training camp in Jamestown before the season began. My job the first day of the camp was to meet players at the Buffalo airport, put them in vans, and send them to Jamestown. The last two players flying in that night, I was to bring back in my car; Walker was one of those players. I don't remember who the other player was, he was quickly cut from camp a few days later. In fact, I knew when he made the much larger Walker sit in the back of my Chevy Monza that his attitude wouldn't keep him around very long, and I was right.

During the two-week training camp, I was there every day working with the team and before long, Walker and I became good friends. He would often ask me to give him a ride to the grocery store, or to go get some wings, and often we would go to a video arcade place at the mall and play air hockey or foosball. However, at the end of the two-week camp, Walker was afraid he might get cut from the team and sent home. He was

struggling at the plate. Walker could hit the ball a mile when he connected, but he swung at everything. He certainly showed a lot of promise in the field and as a base stealing threat, but his patience at the plate needed some work.

When it was time for the season to begin, Jim Fanning, the Expos minor league director, sat down with each player and told them their fate; they were either going home, going to Utica, N.Y., or staying in Jamestown.



That season, the Expos decided to split a squad in Utica with the Toronto Blue Jays. After Walker had his conversation with Fanning, he came over and sat with me in the grandstand at the ballpark. He looked very upset, so I began to assume the worst. Then he said, in a disappointed voice, “I’m going to Utica.”

“Well, that stinks, but at least you didn’t get released,” I said.

“Yeah, but I wanted to stay here,” he said.

Deep down, that’s what I wanted too. I enjoyed being around this young Canadian baseball player who seemed to have such a happy-go-lucky outlook on everything, and was just fun to hang out with. He was only two years younger than me and we both loved hockey, so we hit it off great.’

“Hey, go to Utica and tear up the league, and prove to the Expos they made a mistake and should have kept you here,” I reassured him.

Walker didn’t lead the NY-Penn League in any category that year, but he played well enough for his manager, Ken Brett, and Expos minor league hitting instructor, Ralph Rowe, to recommend the Expos not release him, but instead send him to instructional league in Florida that fall.

Walker continued to work on his hitting, and eventually became a five-tool threat in the Major Leagues, and now will be enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame in July.

And, I knew him when....

[www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org](http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org)