

# *SABR COLLEGIATE COMMITTEE*

Cappy Gagnon, Chair

P.O. Box 509, Notre Dame, IN

219-233-0929

The results are in! The University of Southern California has matriculated more Major Leaguers than any other college. Although some of the usual suspects also rank very high, there are also a few surprises among the all-time list:

**What is a Collegian?** This may seem like a simple task, but it gets complicated. For the purposes of this research, any person who played in the Majors who also attended post secondary education or played for a college baseball team is included (in the early days of college baseball, many ringers, like the academically-challenged Rube Waddell, appeared in college games). In addition, prior to World War I, many colleges ran a multitude of academic programs, including elementary and high schools, on their campuses. Many future Major Leaguers played for college teams while enrolled in prep programs. Another problem is what to do with Major Leaguers who either did not play for their college team, attended colleges which did not have varsity teams, or attended college after they became professionals, even in later life. I have listed everyone--readers can make their own judgement.

There are two focuses of this research: baseball programs which produced Major Leaguers and Major Leaguers who furthered their education.

**Where did all this material come from?** One man, more than any other, is the Father of The College and Major League Register (research in progress). Tom Shea was an active baseball researcher in eight decades (take that, Minnie Minoso!). As he travelled the Eastern half of the country, visiting colleges for the MacMillan Company, Tom researched newspapers, studied college records, spoke to "old timers", and, as he told me on several occasions, "learned a lot in the speaks". (For those of you not old enough to know what a speakeasy was, ask Bob Davids.)

Shea compiled his material on scraps of paper which he stored in 127 shoeboxes. During his final years, Tom collaborated with Dick Thompson, one of SABR's most outstanding researchers. Dick became the caretaker of the *Shea Collection*, helping to organize this material.

Lee Allen played a big role in the compilation of The College and Major League Register (there's that title again). While working as the Historian for the Baseball Hall of Fame, Lee began the Player Questionnaire Project, collecting data on former players by tracking down former players or their next of kin. This project was picked up by Cliff Kachline when he succeeded Allen. The job has since been carried on by the SABR Biographical Committee Chairmen.

**SABR's Collegiate Committee got involved with this project when Dave Anderson became Committee Chair.** When Dave turned the task over to me a decade ago, I began adding information from other sources including *The Sporting News Register* and college media guides.

Thirty one years ago *Baseball Digest* paid me \$50 to write an article about Notre Dame men who had played in the Major Leagues. It was clear from my research that Notre Dame had an outstanding baseball roster among its alumni. Whenever someone would challenge me that another college had produced better players, I would undertake research on that school. Pretty soon I had collected research on dozens of colleges. I also threw that research into the mix.

**Alas, one of the first things I learned was that there was much work to be done.** There was no single place to go to for the answers. College Athletic Departments had little or no interest in this project. Sports Information Directors concentrated on Football and the present scene. College Baseball Coaches, with a few notable exceptions, were not interested. Most information prior to World War II was either non-existent or unreliable. I started writing college Registrars and Archivists. I sent them the total combined lists of all the above mentioned sources. I asked them to confirm if my "suspect" attended their college: when he was enrolled; what he majored in; and what degrees he earned. Through the SID's I inquired if the player earned any varsity letters.

Tom Shea's material has turned out to be the most useful of all these sources. I wrote more than 3,000 letters to colleges attempting to confirm the leads we had developed. I received replies from about 40% of my letters. I wrote several hundred research librarians for obituary notices and college box scores. I received replies to approximately 70% of these letters. Although I have had to use my own money for letters, phone calls, and research expenses, I had a terrific subsidy for three years of my research.

Some of the most famous movie stars and entertainers were kind enough to employ me as their personal and residential security supervisor from 1988 through 1990. While I was managing a security command center, I use my free time to compile lists and send letters to colleges. I have required a primary source as confirmation for college attendance. I have made the notation (N/R) if a college can find no record.

**I have just completed entering 7,500 lines of data into my *paradox* software.** Each entry represents one player and one college with Major League debut year, primary position, years in college, degree(s) earned, academic major, and years lettered. **SAMPLE ENTRIES:**

Joe Girardi	1989 C Northwestern	1982-86 B.S. Industrial Engineering	1983-85
George Sisler	1915 1B Michigan	1911-15 BSE Mechanical Engineering	1913-15
Don Kessinger	1964 SS Mississippi	1960-65 BBA General Business	1962-64

There are plenty of surprises on the above list, but perhaps there are more surprises among those colleges missing from the list. Miami (23), Long Beach State (21), and Wichita State (21) are three long-time powerhouses who fall short. Fordham is not on the list because of the difficulty in confirming their supposed Major Leaguers from the pre-World War I period (like virtually every other Catholic College, Fordham had major fires around the turn of the century, destroying many of their records). They may be a top-10 team. Washington University of St. Louis may crack the top-40 if we were able to confirm all of their "suspects".

Columbia has 21 former Big Leaguers, but holds a record for quality. Four members of the *Baseball Hall of Fame* attended Columbia. Lou Gehrig and Eddie Collins prepped at Columbia, while Montgomery Ward and Sandy Koufax took classes after they were already professional baseball players. Other colleges with two HOFers include Michigan (Sisler and Gehringer) and Notre Dame (my book will be called Anson and Yastrzemski).

The Medical profession was well represented in the Major Leagues. At least 58 Major Leaguers became physicians, with another 33 becoming dentists. There are also a fair number of PhD's and attorneys sprinkled throughout The Baseball Encyclopedia.

The college rankings would be far different if schools were measured by their number of degree holders. The results would also be different if the rankings were taken during different eras of the Major Leaguers. For example, Arizona State did not have one player in the Majors until after Holy Cross had more than 60.

Defunct colleges have done well in producing Major Leaguers, including the "V" schools: St. Viatur, St. Vincents, Voiant. Sadly, varsity baseball is no longer played at Syracuse and Wisconsin, two schools with very long and rich baseball traditions.

The rise of Juco's in producing Major League baseball players has been significant during the past three decades. Many four-year programs recruit players from the ranks of the two-year colleges. I have also collected and included some data on Negro Leaguers who are suspected of having attended college.

The two most obvious trends of this research are that the percent of players in the Majors who have attended post-secondary education is growing steadily and that those players are increasingly attending schools in warm-weather climates.

Persons with additions, corrections, or comments should contact me at the address listed above.

**COLLEGES WHICH PRODUCED THE MOST MAJOR LEAGUERS:  
(as of the end of the 1995 Baseball Season)**

1.	SOUTHERN CAL	96	32.	WASHINGTON STATE	32
2.	TEXAS	89	33.	GEORGIA TECH	31
3.	ARIZONA STATE	87	33.	BOSTON COLLEGE	31
4.	MICHIGAN	76	33.	BAYLOR	31
5.	HOLY CROSS	74	36.	CLEMSON	30
6.	NOTRE DAME	70	36.	WESTERN MICHIGAN	30
7.	ILLINOIS	69	36.	MISSISSIPPI	30
8.	ST. MARY'S	55	39.	DARTMOUTH	29
8.	ARIZONA	55	39.	ARKANSAS	29
10.	PENNSYLVANIA	53	39.	PENN STATE	29
			39.	HARVARD	29
11.	STANFORD	52			
12.	UCLA	51	43.	CAL STATE FULLERTON	28
13.	OHIO STATE	48	43.	GEORGIA	28
14.	ALABAMA	46	43.	MARYLAND	28
15.	FLORIDA STATE	45	43.	TENNESSEE	28
16.	SANTA CLARA	44	47.	MISSISSIPPI	27
17.	OKLAHOMA	43	47.	SOUTH CAROLINA	27
17.	NO CAROLINA	43	49.	FRESNO STATE	26
17.	GEORGETOWN	43	49.	NORTH CAROLINA STATE	26
17.	MINNESOTA	43	49.	NORTHWESTERN	26
			49.	YALE	26
21.	CALIFORNIA	41	49.	IOWA	26
22.	MICHIGAN STATE	40			
22.	BROWN	40	54.	SAN DIEGO STATE	25
24.	FLORIDA	38	54.	SYRACUSE	25
25.	MISSOURI	37	54.	WISCONSIN	25
25.	LSU	37			
27.	TEXAS A & M	36			
27.	DUKE	36			
29.	VILLANOVA	35			
29.	OKLA STATE	35			
29.	AUBURN	35			

## MAJOR LEAGUERS WITH COLLEGE DEGREES

AWARDING COLLEGE	BA	MA	LLB	PHD	DDS	MD
MICHIGAN	34	1	2			2
PENNSYLVANIA	16	1	5		11	3
HOLY CROSS	32					
NOTRE DAME	26	1	4	1		
BROWN	25	4				
MICHIGAN STATE	20			2		
YALE	17		4			1
PRINCETON	18	1	(OF 22 MAJOR LEAGUERS)			
FLORIDA STATE	18		1			
ILLINOIS	15	2	2			
GEORGETOWN	8		5			5
MARYLAND	5	4				7
BOSTON COLLEGE	15					
NORTHWESTERN	9	1	2		1	2
TEXAS A& M	12	2				
ARIZONA	12	1		1		
SYRACUSE	11	3				
MISSISSIPPI STATE	13					
VIRGINIA	10	2		1		
AUBURN	12					
WESTERN MICHIGAN	12					
BAYLOR	9	2		1		
WISCONSIN	9	1	1			1
INDIANA	8	4				
AMHERST	11	(OF 13 MAJOR LEAGUERS)				
OHIO	11					
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	10	1				
MISSOURI	9	2				
TUFTS	2				6	3
CHICAGO	6	1	3			
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	2	1	6			