

Society for American Baseball Research Collegiate Baseball Committee Newsletter February 2008 (08-1)

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Chairmen	E-mail	Address	City	State	Zip	Cell
Rick Benner	r.benner@mchsi.com	203 Wesley St	Baldwin City	KS	66006	(785) 615-1616
Jay Langhammer	Jlangha132@aol.com	7209 Laurelhill Court South	Fort Worth	TX	76133	(817) 366-3201

NEW THINGS

With Phase I of the Master Project of the Committee reaching the point where new information is barely trickling in, I'd like to announce the commencement of the next few phases of the Master Project.

Those of you familiar with the Committee will know that more than five years ago, we began the process of identifying major league baseball players and the colleges and universities that they played for. Over 3000 players were verified and connected with almost 1100 colleges, including junior colleges. In addition, we prepared a "page" for each college which included year-by-year records, the names of coaches, listed conference affiliations and championships, identified first-team All-Americans and players of the year. We also added two categories of a different type of interest; 1) major league players who attended college without playing on the baseball team; and 2) collegiate baseball players who were noted in other endeavors, including coaches and managers with no major league playing time, umpires, general managers, actors and Hall-of-Famers in other sports (i.e. Larry Bird, NBA Hall-of-Fame, played a season on the Indiana State baseball team).

We posted some of the results on a website, but failed to keep it updated. I also published a book on the Division I colleges and universities that, though critically acclaimed, went largely unnoticed by the buying public. There is still work to be done in these areas, especially in the smaller colleges and junior colleges.

During last year's convention in Saint Louis, we agreed to affiliate with www.baseball-reference.com to host a new and improved web presence, one that

will be updated regularly and will expandable to new phases. Moving on a pace normally associated with the Department of Motor Vehicles, this Phase II is underway and will be operational soon.

Phase III encompasses the addition of two important data groups; game scores and season rosters. We're in the earliest of early stages here. Some of the college media guides have all-time rosters and/or all-time results, but most cover recent eras only. Still others, well...this is where the Researcher comes in. If anyone has any information that will help us here, please let me know. Anything will do, a team photograph with names, a scorecard, games results from the newspaper.

Phase IV is the collaboration with the Negro League Committee. We're working on identifying Negro League players who attended and/or played college baseball. We already have a list with over 300 names and colleges to work from, and the verification process is under way. There is a call for researchers that will be placed in the next Negro League newsletter, and there is a call here.

The final new Phase V is really an expansion of the collegiate baseball players who achieved fame in other venues. We're seeking to add Congressmen, Governors, Supreme Court justices and Four-Star Generals. Ideas for other categories are welcome.

As is evident, there are so many opportunities for everyone to participate and contribute, whether you are a weekend researcher, a pedal-to-the-metal researcher or somewhere in-between. You can work with one college, one newspaper or even one player, if you so desire. You can choose to work in one area or in many. You can spend five minutes or five hours, everything is up to you. If you'd like to know more, please convey your interest to Rick Benner at collbsb@mchsi.com.

SABR CONVENTION

The 2008 SABR Convention will be held June 26-29 at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, OH. If you're interested in attending, I recommend that you make your hotel reservations early. The past few years, rooms have been at a premium with the designated hotel usually sold out. This year's game on Friday will be an interleague/intrastate battle between the Indians and Reds. In addition, there are several minor league contests available. Perhaps John Zajc will also treat us to a tour of SABR Headquarters.

The Collegiate Committee meeting has again been placed in the leadoff spot on Friday morning. We'll be meeting at 8:30 AM, and will have to fill 30 minutes. I would like to meet each one of you, and would encourage you to attend.

FEEDBACK

Our Committee has never had a very large presence at the Convention, specifically during our committee meeting time. I do not know whether this is due to a lack of interest in the mission of the Committee, whether the time of the meeting is an issue or whether it involves something else entirely. This newsletter includes a feedback form. Please take the time to review it, fill it out, and return it to me. Thank you in advance for comments.

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I'd like to introduce our new Newsletter Editor, Don Leypoldt. Don is the Sports Information liaison and writer for the Manchester Silkworms of the New England Collegiate Baseball League. Don will be taking over the newsletter duties with the next issue, probably before the Convention. His email address is dleypoldt@hotmail.com. If you have any articles of interest to the college baseball nation, please send them to me or directly to Don.

TOM PRICE, LONG-TIME SOUTH CAROLINA SID, PASSES AWAY

Tom Price died on Feb. 1, 2008, just days after suffering a massive stroke. His 46-year legacy with University of South Carolina athletics as the sports information director, historian and SID emeritus from 1962-2008 left a lasting impression. His peers have recognized him for his many years of service. He was a member of the South Carolina Sports and College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Halls of Fame. He also received the coveted Arch Ward Award from CoSIDA for outstanding contributions to the sports information field in 1993. The CoSIDA Lifetime Achievement Award followed.

Many paid tribute to the man and the legend at funeral services on Feb. 4 in Columbia. "I don't know of anyone who loved South Carolina athletics more than Tom Price," Southeastern Conference Associate Commissioner Charles Bloom (a protégé of Price as a student at SC) opined. "We were so glad that he was feeling well enough to travel to last year's SEC baseball tournament in Birmingham, and we presented him an award for service to college athletics and baseball."

"He was a founding father of our profession," added University of Georgia's Claude Felton. "You always could call upon Tom when you needed an assist, and he was always there when you might need some advice."

Price, who covered Gamecock athletics for newspapers and the wire services for 11 years after graduating from South Carolina in 1951, became USC sports information director in 1962. He remained in that capacity for 30 years before “semi-retiring” in ’92. He stayed very active as official scorer for Gamecock baseball games and radio analyst for four decades of USC baseball, including going to Omaha with the 1975, 1977 and 2002 NCAA World Series baseball runners-up. Though several other USC squads made it to Omaha, these teams held special regard in the Price sports memory bank. He handled each second-place finish with class and special aplomb. “Heck, I didn’t think we would ever get back to Omaha there for a few years,” he said in 2002, “and to make it to the finals was a true thrill.” Many who attended that championship knew it might be Price’s last trip to the NCAA World Series as well.

Though an all-sports person and football devotee at heart, Price received ample decoration for his work for five decades in college baseball. He captured the revered Wilbur Snyppe Award for contribution to college baseball in 1982 from the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association (NCBWA) and was both president and newsletter editor of the NCBWA throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of his crowning achievements was serving as official scorer for baseball in the 1984 Olympics at Dodger Stadium.

Longtime and successful South Carolina baseball coach Ray Tanner summed up the sentiments for everyone at the funeral. “I’m not sure any had the passion and love for the garnet and black that Tom had,” noted Tanner, who said he came to SC with many good reports and a true appreciation of Price’s work ethic and dedication to his alma mater.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

I’d like to address a sensitive matter. Early in 2007, my book *College Baseball, Essential Facts* about all Division I Teams was released by McFarland Publishing. The book was intended to be the initial encyclopedia for college baseball enthusiasts. I presented the information in a way that would be easy to read and find information. Over 1500 pages were typed and submitted for publishing. However, the editor decided on a different presentation of the material. Since the publication, I have been contacted about information that could have been included in the book. The problem...the information was already there, but the condensed style of the published version made that information difficult to locate and therefore virtually unusable.

My intention is, and has always been, to place as much information in the public’s hands as possible. If you’re a fan of college football and even college basketball, information is not very difficult at all to locate. But the information that I have accumulated for many of the colleges comes from digging into yearbooks, masters’

theses, contacting former players and coaches and from many sources, them compiled into a user-friendly format. Many colleges have told me that no such records exist, and some even flat-out refused to provide any information at all.

It is my hope that the new website will be the source of information on college baseball at each university, college or junior college. The success of the Master Project depends on each of us. Thank you.

**COLLEGIATE BASEBALL COMMITTEE
SELF-EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

TO: All Members Of The Collegiate Baseball Committee

FROM: Rick Benner, Committee Chairman

Dear Member:

This year the Collegiate Baseball Committee annual meeting at the SABR Convention in St. Louis, MO was held at 8:30 a.m. on Friday morning. Judging by the attendance, the time was just too early, or maybe a number of you were unable to make the Convention. For those of you who did not make it to St. Louis, you missed a very exciting and productive event.

In my five years as Chairman, the interest in the Committee has grown, but the feedback and participation by you, the members, has been very, very small.

According to SABR's rolls, this Committee has 255 members. I do not recognize almost half of the names on the list. I would like to get to know each of you—why you chose to be a member of the Committee, your interests and goals for the Committee.

For that purpose, I have designed a short survey that I would like each and every one of you to fill out and return to me. The survey is in MSWord format, so you can fill it out on your computer and send it back to me by email.

Please have these to me by March 1, 2008.

Thank you all in advance, and I look forward to hearing from each one of you.

COLLEGIATE BASEBALL COMMITTEE SURVEY

NAME: _____

The purpose of the Committee since my term as chairman began is to produce an overview of the baseball history college by college. We now have a huge chunk of this now accomplished and the results will soon be published on our own website with links to other baseball oriented websites and to the colleges themselves. I've even published a book with my findings for the Division I colleges and universities. We've identified college players in the major leagues, college coaches and records, All-America first-team selections, conference affiliations and championships and much more. Much like the Biographical Committee, we've been a single purpose Committee with lots of moving parts and missing pieces. Dedicated researchers are needed to start building on the foundation laid.

1. Do you think that this research should be the main project produced by the Committee?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Are there any other projects that you would like to see the Committee take on?

YES _____ NO _____

Please describe:

The Committee has been discussing the possibility of adding game scores to our product. This would require extensive work including review of college student newspapers and other time intensive source review. The end result would be the ability to look at each year for each college to see the

opponents, results, location of game and highlights, just by clicking on that year from the college page.

3. Do you think that the Committee should add this feature to our overall product?

YES _____ NO _____

4. Would you be willing to visit your local college and gather game score information, for one season, or more?

YES _____ NO _____

Now we would like to know a little more about you.

5. Why did you join the Collegiate Baseball Committee?

6. Are you working on any research regarding college baseball?

YES _____ NO _____

7. Do you have a specific interest within the college baseball banner, or just in college baseball in general?

8. Do you live near, work for, or having a relationship with any college on any level including community and junior colleges?

YES _____ NO _____

Which one(s)? _____

9. What are your favorite websites for college baseball news and information?

10. Do you operate a website?

YES _____ NO _____

Which one(s)? _____

11. Which best describes your current level of interest?

_____ I would like to keep receiving the newsletter.

_____ I would like to do some research, but don't know how I can help.

_____ I would like to do some research, but I am unable to commit at this time. I will contact the Committee when that changes.

_____ I would like to do some research. How can I get started!

Thank you for your responses. If you want to talk with me about this or anything regarding the Collegiate Baseball Committee, my cell phone number is (785) 615-1616.