



# La Prensa del Béisbol Latino

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## Re-inventing SABR's Latino Baseball Committee

by Anthony Salazar

Re-inventing SABR's Latino baseball committee This is the first issue of La Prensa del Béisbol Latino, which roughly translates into the Latino Baseball Press.

The objective is to create a publication as a resource for news and information that caters to all our committee members. We hope that you feel encouraged and welcomed to submit contributions in subsequent editions, and perhaps share a bit of your research. There's a lot going in the field of Latino baseball research.

That being said, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce our committee's new co-vice chairs. Edwin Fernández is a Sportscaster and Baseball Researcher. He is a co-author of the book JONRÓN and articles on Latino baseball, and has been a SABR member since 1999.

Anthony Salazar has been a SABR member since 1997, and has contributed to several other SABR publications. In addition to his

duties as co-vice chair, Salazar is the editor of this publication.

In looking for ways that the Latino baseball

*see Committee, page 6*

## Rubén Gómez, "The Divine Madman" Passes Away

by Edwin Fernandez

Rubén Gómez was the first hurler to win a Major League game in the West Coast. He blanked the Dodgers 8-0 in 1958, playing for the new Giants in San Francisco.

*El Divino Loco*, as he was known in his native Puerto Rico, passed away on July 26. Nobody knows who named him "The Divine Madman", but many know why. He could make you upset if you was a San Juan Senators fan in the Puerto Rican Winter League. San Juan was Ruben's archrival. Playing for the Santurce Crabbers for 28 seasons, fans coined the phrase "Ese es tu papá" ( He is your daddy) referring to his dominance against San Juan. It was present in every game Ruben pitched against the Senators. But he will make you happy if you a Crabbers fan, and watch Ruben blanked San Juan in nine consecutive innings, as he did many times.

In addition, his winning and valiant attitude to come out of tough situations together with his many audacious performances is the reason for his nick name. I saw Gomez in Puerto Rico struck out Cincinnati's slugger Lee May four times in a row, all of them with a change ball.

### INSIDE

<i>Re-inventing the committee</i>	1
<i>Ruben Gomez Passes Away</i>	1
<i>At the Mike: Interview</i>	2
<i>JONRON</i>	2
<i>Hall of Fame Considerations</i>	4
<i>Announcements &amp; Research Needs</i>	5
<i>Marketing Baseball</i>	7
<i>Chair's Note</i>	8

## At the Mike with Amaury Pi-Gonzalez

by Anthony Salazar

### You are the play-by-play man for the Seattle Mariners and the San Francisco Giants. How do you manage that?

Yes, I think I am the only guy in the country presently broadcasting games for two major league teams. This is my 10th season doing San Francisco Giants home weekend selected games and on my second season as the Seattle Mariners Spanish Radio Network play-by-play man. Well, I have been very busy last two summers. Although I still live in the Bay Area I have been spending much of my summers in Seattle, where I call all Mariners home games (81), while in San Francisco I did about 35 [games] last season, and around 20 this season. It is very simple, Mariners and Giants schedules are made that if the Mariners are home the Giants are on the road and vice versa. I do not have much of a conflict since I do not travel with the teams, but when Seattle is home I do them, when Giants are home I do selected weekend games.

### How long have you been with each team? I understand that you called games for the Oakland A's some years ago as well?

With the Giants my first season was 1994 for 4 seasons I worked all their games home and away (162) plus playoffs and the 2002 World Series.

This season is my 10th with Giants, doing home weekend selected games. The Giants put out a schedule of around 40 games in Spanish, home and weekends. This is my second season with the Mariners for the Spanish Mariners Radio Network, which includes 5 stations in Seattle, Tri-Cities, Yakima, Moses Lake and Wenatchee. Prior to 1994 when I started with Giants I was the Spanish voice for the Oakland Athletics for 17 seasons and earned three World Series (rings) 1988-89-90 to go along the way.

### What led to your interest in broadcasting, and how did you get started in the business?

After I was honorably discharged from the US Army in 1968, I started writing for a small Spanish paper in Newark, New Jersey, "La Voz", always writing entertainment and sometimes sports. A good friend of mine was a journalism professor, who born in Cuba but presently retired and living in New Jersey, Efrain Osorio, suggested that I get involved in radio. When I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, I started doing traffic reports, and soon enough sports on KBRG in San Francisco. In 1977, I started doing broadcasts for the Oakland A's and I have stayed on the air since then doing Major League Baseball.

see: Pi-Gonzalez, p.3

## JONRÓN

by Edwin Fernandez

JONRÓN...A tribute to the Latin American and Caribbean major leaguers is scheduled to be released by its publisher by October 2004. This publication consolidates in one place, the statistics, growth and achievements of all of the native-born baseball players of this geographic area. First generation Latino descendants are included as well.

The 260 page-book contains statistical and relevant information on every player ever played in the majors up to the 2003 season, and includes post-season facts and statistics, and of course, dream teams selected in a survey made among experts from Latin America. The

information is cleverly organized by country, position, debut date, etc. Readers will also find an alphabetized player index with biographical information on each player.

Jonrón will be available for SABR members at a discounted price. For more information, contact Edwin Fernandez by phone at (787) 723-5029, or by email at [mapa0329@prct.net](mailto:mapa0329@prct.net).



## BÉISBOL TRIVIA CHALLENGE

1. After the Havana Sugar Kings won the 1959 Junior World Series, they were transferred to what city for the 1960 season?

- Toronto
- Rochester
- Newark
- Jersey City

2. Which Dominican star won the 1987 AL MVP?

- George Bell
- Rafael Ramirez
- Tony Fernandez
- Julio Franco

3. What pitch was known as "Fernando's Fadeaway?"

- Sinker
- Slider
- Screwball
- Knuckleball

4. Tony (Tany) Perez played for these teams except:

- Montreal Expos
- New York Mets
- Philadelphia Phillies
- Cincinnati Reds

5. Pitcher Juan Marichal held the record for most wins by a Latino before he was passed by:

- Fernando Valenzuela
- Dennis Martinez
- Luis Tiant, Jr

Pi-Gonzalez, cont' from p. 2

**You were a nominee for the Ford C. Frick Award, which would lead you to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. If you were selected by the committee, what would that mean to you?**

I do not think of that presently. It has not been easy for me to survive in this tough and challenging business. I am one of the few Spanish play-by-play announcers nationwide who have "survived" many changes during the past 30 years. Used to be local radio stations loved to carry baseball, now more and more stations that are networks and they prefer to go with music most of the time; and the sports-news formats have become less and less each year. But if I live long enough and stay in this business to be elected to the Hall of Fame and win the Ford C. Frick Award – that would be one of the highlights of my life. But, I can tell you in February 2004 I was elected to the Cuban Sports Hall of Fame in Miami, and that by itself being nominated and elected by my peers including people like Felo Ramírez, Spanish voice of the Miami Marlins (whom I used to listen to on the radio as a boy in Cuba). I recently had the thrill to work a playoff game with Felo for the US-Latinamerica Radio Network. Felo is in Cooperstown (as the 2002 Frick Award recipient), though I feel very proud to be elected to the CSHOF in Miami.

**Tell me about the Hispanic Heritage Baseball Museum, and your work with that organization.**

The HHBM is a very noble organization dedicated to the recognition of the contributions made to baseball by Latino players. We are getting ready to have our displays exhibit at the Cal-Expo (California State Fair) this August to September. This popular fair is visited by over one million people each summer. I love to work with the Museum and the induction and recognition as well as exhibition of Latino baseball stars. I think the museum, through "béisbol" provides a great service to the Latino community as an organization that provides role models to our Latino youth in this country.

Trivia answers: 1) d; 2) a; 3) d; 4) b; 5) b

### RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

[www.HispanicBaseballMuseum.com](http://www.HispanicBaseballMuseum.com)  
[www.BaseballLatino.com](http://www.BaseballLatino.com)

**Guevera, Arturo and Fidler, David.** "Stealing Lives: The Globalization of Baseball and the Tragic Story of Alexis Quiroz."

**Regalado, Samuel.** "Viva Baseball: Latin Major Leaguers and Their Special Hunger."

**Wendel, Tim.** "The New Face of Baseball: The One Hundred Year Rise and Triumph of Latinos in America's Favorite Sports."

# Making a case for Dave Concepcion, Hall of Fame Candidate

by Anthony Salazar

This past July, Dennis Eckersley and Paul Molitor were inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. It made me wonder about the last Latinos enshrined into baseball's hallowed halls.

The answer was Tony (Tany) Perez, who was elected with over 77% percent of ballots cast in 2000. Rafael "Felo" Ramirez, the Spanish voice of the Florida Marlins, was awarded a place in 2001 as a Ford C. Frick recipient for broadcasting.

The next question is, who should become the next Latino into the Hall? Here are a few names for future hall of fame elections. These are guys who retired several years ago, and if they stay retired, are eligible for consideration:

**2005:** No Latinos eligible; **2006:** Rick Aguilera, Alex Fernandez, Ozzie Guillen, Juan Guzman, Roberto Kelly, Jaime Navarro, Luis Polonia; **2007:** Bobby Bonilla, Jose Canseco, Tony Fernandez, Stan Javier, Ramon Martinez.

I would like to make a case for Dave Concepcion, as a strong hall of fame candidate. As you know, he was a mainstay for the Cincinnati Reds as shortstop for 19 seasons (1970-1988), and was a pivotal part of the 'Big Red Machine' in the mid-1970s. Over those years, he compiled the following:

- ✓ 9 All Star Appearances
- ✓ 5 Golden gloves
- ✓ 1 All Star MVP
- ✓ 2,326 hits
- ✓ .267 lifetime batting average
- ✓ .971 lifetime fielding percentage

Since 1998, he has been given consideration by the baseball writers, but over the years, the balloting has been somewhat erratic and hard to pinpoint a pattern. For these seven years, I have tracked the votes and their percentage,

and indicated the players that were elected that year:

## Dave Concepcion Hall of Fame Votes Received, 1998 - 2004

Year	Votes	Pct.	Players Elected that Year
2004	57	11.26	Paul Molitor, Dennis Eckersley
2003	55	11.09	Eddie Murray, Gary Carter
2002	56	11.86	Ozzie Smith
2001	74	14.4	Dave Winfield, Kirby Puckett
2000	67	13.4	Carlton Fisk, Tony Perez
1999	59	11.9	Nolan Ryan, George Brett, Robin Yount

He wasn't a splashy player like Ozzie Smith, who, admittedly compiled better numbers over his career, but Concepcion was an integral gear in the 'Big Red Machine' and had much to do with its success as any other the other Reds players, who currently reside in Cooperstown (Pete Rose, notwithstanding).

Since 1998, the number of votes Concepcion has received by the voters has dropped dramatically. Surely he deserves much more credit than a paltry 50-something votes. I should hope that votes make a rebound before too long. It would be a shame to see Concepcion pushed off the list due to voter apathy.

The following are deserving Latino players in their final year of eligibility for consideration by the HOF Veterans' Committee. We could only hope that they will soon hear the call from the Hall. The candidates are:

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Felipe Alou</i>  | <i>Bert Campaneris</i> |
| <i>Mike Cuellar</i> | <i>Mike Garcia</i>     |
| <i>Dolf Luque</i>   | <i>Minnie Miñoso</i>   |
| <i>Tony Oliva</i>   | <i>Camilo Pascual</i>  |



## Announcement & Research Needs

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Pete Bjarkman** ([bjarkman@mindspring.com](mailto:bjarkman@mindspring.com)) had his article, "Waiting for Che — Chasing Illusions in the Modern-Era Cuban Ballpark," published in *Elysian Field Quarterly*, Vol. 21 / No. 2 (2004). He also announces that Greenwood Press will publish his new book, *Diamonds Around The Globe: The Encyclopedia of International Baseball* in December.

**Bruce Markusen** ([bmark@telenet.net](mailto:bmark@telenet.net)) has a new (young adult) book coming out in October called *Ted Williams: A Biography*. (Ed. Note: In recent years, it was discovered that Williams, a San Diego native, is part Mexican.) Additionally, Bruce has just signed a contract to write a book called *Tales From The Mets Dugout*. Bruce also announces his recent departure from his work at the Hall of Fame to pursue a full-time career in writing and broadcasting. He is currently the co-host of the weekly talk show, "Heart of the Order: Old School Baseball Talk" on MLB Radio, airing Thursdays beginning at 12pm (Eastern time).

**Tim Wendel** ([tim@timwendel.com](mailto:tim@timwendel.com)) was honored for his recent book, *The New Face of Baseball: the 100-year Rise and Triumph of Latinos in America's Favorite Sport*, which was named the 'Top History Book' for 2004 by the Latino Literary Awards. The book was also selected as a "must read" by the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

### RESEARCH NEEDS

**Bruce Markusen** ([bmark@telenet.net](mailto:bmark@telenet.net)) is writing a book called *Tales From The Mets Dugout*. If anyone has any amusing or interesting stories involving Latino Mets (like Felix Millan, Frank Taveras, Bobby Bonilla, Jesse Orosco, etc.), he would be interested in hearing them.

**Takeshi Moritaku** ([nontanyo@h.do-up.com](mailto:nontanyo@h.do-up.com)), who has been playing baseball in Spain for three years, would like information about a book by the Dominican beisbolista Miguel Batiste. If you have any information, please let him know.

**Michel Nareau** ([michelnareau@hotmail.com](mailto:michelnareau@hotmail.com)) is conducting research on Latino baseball novels. He is interested in finding out if anyone knows writers who have incorporated baseball in their work of fiction. Authors he was noted included: Sergio Ramirez, Alejo Carpenter and Leonardo Padura. Are there others? Please contact him.

**Rod Nelson** ([SABRscouts@aol.com](mailto:SABRscouts@aol.com)), who heads the Scouts committee, is looking for assistance with a project they are working on dealing with Latino scouts. One is Espy Guerrero, and the other is the legendary Papa Joe Cambria and his Cuban national associates. Another database project the committee is compiling is a "Who-Signed-Whom" database and the All-time Scouts Register. They are looking for volunteers to help fill in the gaps in what is known in these areas. A biographical compilation of scouts along the lines of "deadball" era stars is also in the works. Contact Rod if you are interested in helping out the Scouts committee.

**DID YOU KNOW:** Current Latino Hall of Fame Ford C. Frick Award recipients include Buck Canel (1985), Jaime Jarrin (1998) and Felo Ramirez (2002).

Eligible active broadcast nominees fame are: Juan Alicea, Joe Angel, Billy Berroa, Eduardo Ortega, Amaury Pi-Gonzalez and Francisco Ernesto Ruiz.

Eligible retired broadcast nominees include: Rene Cardenas, Ulpiano Cos Villa, Tito Fuentes and Mario Zapian Thomas.

**COMMITTEE, continued from page 1**

committee can best serve the organization and its research mission, we should attempt to reach out to other committees, and find common bonds that affect each entity, and will further the knowledge and baseball historiography.

For example, how many players do we have in common with the Negro League committee? A look at legendary Latino scout, Papa Joe Cambria certainly benefits us as it does the Scouts committee. The Women in Baseball committee would enjoy working with us on research looking at the Cuban women of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL).

And lastly, we should ask ourselves. how can our committee contribute to national conventions? Perhaps we can facilitate a research discussion looking at the Latino contributions to the Toronto Blue Jays. From Rico Carty and Alfredo Griffin to George Bell, Tony Fernandez and Roberto Alomar, Latinos have had a significant role in the city of SABR's 2005 national convention site.

These are but a few examples of how we can look beyond our committee's parameters and give the SABR membership a more complete picture of the history of baseball. Latinos and

Latinas have made an incredibly significant impact on the National Pastime. This is where we show how.

Don't forget, you can stay in the loop with us by joining the Latino baseball group online at:

[latinobaseball-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:latinobaseball-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

We're a great group of people, with vast experience in looking at research in Latinos in baseball.

**CHAIR, continued from page 8**

of our Committee. I am positive they will make significant contributions to the group.

Besides its historical aspect, we look forward to disseminate other relevant information about baseball played in Latin America, organized baseball and its players. We welcome contributions to our Newsletter from SABR members and look forward to share La Prensa del Beisbol Latino among students and baseball writers.

Also, we encourage SABR members to get involved in investigative projects dealing with any aspect of Latinos in baseball, wherever it has taken place. Your contributions will always welcome.

## Member Spotlight

**Name:** Tony Menendez

**Chapter:** South Florida

**Areas of Expertise:** Florida Marlins, Latin America Baseball

**Interest or Research:** All history-related facts and figures of Latin American players in the Major Leagues. That's why I created [www.BaseballLatino.net](http://www.BaseballLatino.net), where you can find daily news and stats of Latino players during the regular baseball season. We also cover the four major winter leagues (Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Venezuela). Other sections include All-Star Games, World Series and other important research data.

**Favorite Baseball Moment:** Watching the Florida Marlins win their two championships (1997 Game 7 Edgar Renteria's game-winning single & the entire 2003 World Series).

**Favorite Latino Players:** Edgar Martínez, Roberto Alomar and Sammy Sosa

# Marketing Baseball to the Latino Fan

by Anthony Salazar

During the 1990s, the number of Latino players virtually exploded. To date, the almost a third of all major league rosters are comprised of Latinos. This includes Latinos born in the United States, and those born in Latin America.

With the rise of Latino players, come the Latino fans who flock to ballparks to catch their favorite stars. As a result, for the past several years, ballclubs have sought to create marketing programs to leverage the Latino player star power to bring the in the Latino fan and the Latino family.

The San Diego Padres were the vanguards of this movement since the mid-1990s. Being so close to the Mexican boorder, it behooved them to undertake such aggressive means to attract Spanish-speaking fans. their movement continues to this day.

Teams in predominantly Latino markets have taken pro-active steps in reaching out to Latino fans, by developing creative promotions that celebrate the rich heritage of the Latino contribution to baseball. This doesn't include the handful of teams broadcasting games in Spanish, nor presenting websites in Spanish.

The table here shows what teams have been up to this year in creating Latino-oriented promotions and special events, according to their websites.

TEAM	PROMOTION
ANAHEIM ANGELS	CINCO DE MAYO
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS	HISPANIC HERITAGE DAY, FIESTA DOMINGOS
FLORIDA MARLINS	DOMINICAN HERITAGE/MERENGUE NIGHT, HISPANIC HERITAGE
HOUSTON ASTROS	LATIN NIGHT
LOS ANGELES DODGERS	VIVA LOS DODGERS
MINNESOTA TWINS	HISPANIC-AMERICAN HERITAGE NIGHT
NEW YORK METS	HISPANIC HERITAGE NIGHT & CONCERT
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES	LATINO FAMILY NIGHT
SAN DIEGO PADRES	LATINO NIGHT
SEATTLE MARINERS	SALUTE TO LATIN AMERICAN BIESBOL NIGHT
TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS	HISPANIC HERITAGE NIGHT
TEXAS RANGERS	HISPANIC HERITAGE FIREWORKS SHOW

In looking at baseball's fan avidity, that is, how avid do fans consider themselves, the Sports Business Journal looked at a period of five years. The table below shows the breakdown by ethnicity from 1998 - 2002. The more interesting figure, the one that baseball marketers found enlightening, is during this period, Latino fans increased by 17.5%. The corollary, of course, is that the general Latino population in the United States has grown just as dramatically.

## Baseball's Fan Avidity, 1998- 2002

Source: Sports Business Journal

Ethnicity	1998 <i>n=14,540</i>	1999 <i>n=14,287</i>	2000 <i>n=14,345</i>	2001 <i>n=10,1068</i>	2002 <i>n=12,391</i>	CHANGE SINCE 1998
White	75.4	74.2	73.7	74	73	-8.1%
Afr-Am	10.8	10.9	11.2	10.4	10.8	-0.4%
Latino	10	10.9	10.9	11.3	11.8	17.5%
Asian	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.5%
Other	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	21.7%

Special baseball events geared to Latino fans will continue because it makes sense for everyone. Fortunately marketers know that, too.

## A Note from the Chair

by Eduardo Valero

Buenos Dias! Welcome to ¡La Prensa del Beisbol Latino!, the new edition of the Latin American Committee newsletter, which will provide SABR membership all about the Latino baseball. From its history to their protagonists, which for over a century, their contribution to the game's development are been enshrined for posterity.

The last SABR Convention in Cincinnati was a rewarding experience. This year, there were several interesting research presentations and one that called my attention was the selection of the best leadoff hitter since 1900. The same was selected by the attendees in an interactive mode.

Also, this year the luncheon keynote speaker was Marvin Miller, a former leader of the MLB Players Association. We had a good attendance in our Committee meeting. A draft of the *JONRON* book was presented by

Edwin Fernandez as well as LATIN REDS, a presentation on all the Latinos ever played with the Reds franchise. We encourage our Committee members to attend the next SABR convention in Toronto, Canada.

We would like to welcome Anthony Salazar and Edwin Fernandez as Co-Vice Chairmen

*see Chair, page 6*

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### Latin American Baseball Committee

Eduardo Valero	Chair
Edwin Fernandez	Co-Vice Chair
Anthony Salazar	Co-Vice Chair, Editor

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