

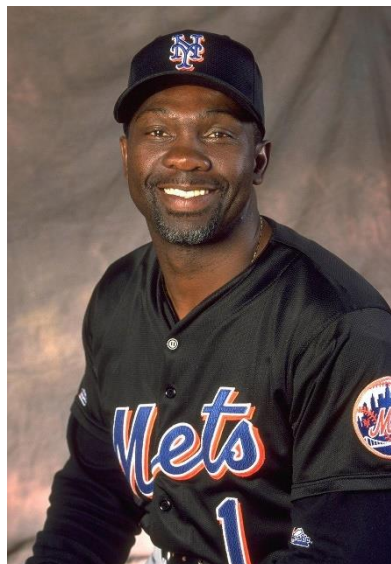
UCBA Journal

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FEBRUARY 2020

84th Annual Hot Stove Dinner



Mookie Wilson,
former New York Mets Outfielder

The Union County Baseball Association will induct new members into the Union County Baseball Hall of Fame at the organization's 84th Annual Hot Stove awards dinner on Sunday, February 9, 2020, beginning at 1:00 p.m., at The Gran Centurions in Clark, New Jersey.

The dinner will be headlined by this year's featured guest speaker, former New York Mets outfielder, Mookie Wilson.

This year's **Union County Baseball Hall of Fame** inductees include:

Jim Dietz of Summit, an All-American catcher at Moravian College (and starting quarterback) and minor leaguer with the Philadelphia Phillies, who returned to Summit to teach math and coach baseball and football for more than 30 years.

Alexander Mirabella of Fanwood, a Union County Freeholder since 1998 and five-time Chairman of the Board, who has been a longtime advocate for youth baseball leagues and other recreational opportunities throughout Union County.

Gene Mirabella of Roselle Park, an outstanding high school wrestler, All-State pitcher, and captain of the football team, whose pitching success at Brookdale College earned him Region 19 Tournament MVP and Pitcher of the Year, and a stint in the minors with the Cleveland Indians.

Karen Pedersen, formerly of Berkeley Heights and Scotch Plains, the longtime Secretary of the Union County Baseball Association, who has helped administer the numerous activities of the UCBA for decades.

Other awards being given out at this year's dinner include:

Joseph R. Lombardi Memorial Award for Outstanding Athlete of Union County:

Lauren Buchanan: Lauren Buchanan is a graduate of Union County College where she excelled in the classroom and on the soccer field. Lauren was the goalie for UCC leading them to the team qualifying for the National Junior College Athletic Association Women's Soccer National Tournament where they finished third in the nation. Not only did Lauren excel on the field, but she also excelled in the classroom maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. She finished the season as the NCAA Division III top goalie in two categories and was selected for the Scholar All-America Second team by the United Soccer Coaches Association. Lauren also received the "Woman of the Year" Award at the annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day, held at Seton Hall University on February 4. After graduating from Union High School, Lauren enrolled at Union County College. She is currently continuing her education at Dominican College, in Orangeburg, New York and majoring in political science.

Chris Zusi Memorial Award for Outstanding Athletes of Union County:

Elmora Trooper Baseball Team: The Union County Baseball Association would like to honor the Elmora Trooper baseball team that finished in the top four of the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The Elizabeth based team's run to the Mid-Atlantic Tournament title in Williamsport was always about more than a trophy.

This team of young men from Elizabeth, Linden and Rahway proudly represented themselves, New Jersey, Union County, Elizabeth and one of their own – former Elmora player and New Jersey state Trooper Thomas J. Hanratty, whose memory the team honors with its nickname and his badge number on their uniforms.

Elmora lost a heart breaker in the elimination game and was limited to two hits in a 4-1 loss to Southwest Regional champion River Edge, Louisiana. The Troopers second loss in the tournament eliminated it from championship contention.

84th Annual Hot Stove Dinner (cont.)

Congratulations to the Elmora Trooper coaching staff for not only teaching the game of baseball, but instilling the importance of good sportsmanship and championship character in their team. Manager Jairo Labrador, coaches Sal Garcia Jr. and Louis Aponte are to be commended for an outstanding job. As manager Labrador stated, "We finished as a top-four team in the country, and people are talking about Elizabeth, New Jersey, and our kids and families and to me, that's the biggest part."

Banyasz Brothers Memorial Award for Service to Union County Baseball:

Michael Cowen: Michael Cowen was born and raised in Elizabeth, NJ and has been involved in the Union County Baseball Association for well over 27 years as a player, score-keeper, coach, umpire and now as the Assistant Director of the Youth League Program.

Mike is a product of our Youth League baseball program participating in our leagues since he was 8 years old. Mike played 4 years of Varsity baseball at Elizabeth High School under coach's Ray Korn and Tom Urban. He was a left-handed pitcher and first baseman for the Minutemen and pitched a no-hitter against Cranford High School during his sophomore season.

Mike was the head coach of the Benedictine Academy Green Bees Softball Team from 2013-15 compiling 57 wins over three years. During his time as head coach, the Green Bees won the North Jersey Catholic League Championship and 2 Conference Championships, all firsts in Benedictine Academy school history.

Mike is presently a member of the Elizabeth Police Department serving the department for the past 5 years. He is also the owner of MC Electronics Repair, repairing mobile devices, computers and various forms of technology. He is also the webmaster for the UCBA website and has been instrumental in developing and updating our website, Facebook and Instagram accounts.



**UNION COUNTY BASEBALL
HOT STOVE DINNER**
GUEST SPEAKER: MOOKIE WILSON, NY METS

FEBRUARY 9, 2020
GRAN CENTURIONS, CLARK, NJ
PURCHASE TICKETS @ UCBA-NJ.ORG

UNION COUNTY BASEBALL ASSOCIATION
UCBA

The banner features a large photo of Mookie Wilson in a Mets uniform, smiling, with a smaller photo of him in action swinging a bat. The UCBA logo is prominently displayed in the center.

Sponsored by the Union County Baseball Association, in cooperation with the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Hot Stove League awards dinner is the primary annual fund-raising effort for the Union County Youth Baseball Leagues. The summer and fall leagues have given more than 40,000 boys and girls an opportunity to participate in an organized baseball program for the past 70 years.

Tickets are still available, and can be purchased online at www.ucba-nj.org or by downloading and mailing the table reservation form to the Union County Baseball Association, Box 176, Fanwood, New Jersey 07023.

Journal ads can also be purchased online or by downloading and mailing the journal ad form.

For more information call Jim Iozzi, UCBA President, at 908-917-2523.



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