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UVI Joins Community in Mourning Loss of Baseball Legend Horace Clarke

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The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) said Wednesday that it was joining the Virgin Islands community in mourning the death of baseball legend Horace Clarke, who died last Wednesday at the age of 82.

Born in St. Croix, Clarke rose to national prominence as a professional baseball player with the New York Yankees and the San Diego Padres. After retiring from the professional sport, he dedicated more than 20 years of his life to coaching and mentoring Virgin Islands youth as a baseball specialist with the V.I. Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation. In 2014, UVI awarded Clarke an honorary doctorate for his significant contributions to the sport of baseball and to the youth of the Virgin Islands.

“On behalf of the UVI community, I extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Horace Clarke, a man who is dearly loved and revered in the Virgin Islands and recognized by baseball fans across the United States,” said UVI President, Dr. David Hall. “His athletic accomplishments are a shining example of how one can achieve great success through hard work, perseverance and following their dreams,” said Dr. Hall. “In choosing to dedicate the rest of his career instructing and mentoring young Virgin Islanders, Clarke expressed his deep connection and commitment to his community,” remarked Dr. Hall. “We should all be inspired and grateful for his contributions.”

Clarke grew up in Frederiksted where he played baseball around the playgrounds at every opportunity. At the age of 14, he joined the Braves Baseball Club that entered the local amateur league. In the following years, Clarke was often named to all-star teams that represented St. Croix against St. Thomas and Puerto Rico. During one of those championship series, he was scouted by Jose Seda of the New York Yankees organization. After graduating from Christiansted High School in 1958, Clarke began his professional career in the Nebraska State League. Over the next five years, Clarke played in the minors and in the Puerto Rico Winter Baseball League, improving his skills and gaining valuable experience. In 1965, he made his major league debut with the New York Yankees and played a utility role over the next two seasons. Bobby Richardson retired as the Yankees

second baseman after the 1966 season giving Clarke the opportunity he had long awaited. From 1967 through 1973, Clarke was the Yankees regular second baseman earning the reputation as a solid and dependable player. In 1974, he split the season with the Yankees and the San Diego Padres of the National League before retiring. In his ten-year major league career, Clarke played 1,272 games, hit a .256 average, with 27 home runs, 305 RBIs and 151 stolen bases. After retiring from the major leagues, he became an assistant scout for the Kansas City Royals for some time, before returning to the Virgin Islands.

Friends and family remember Clarke as a truly kind and humble person with a gregarious laugh. He passed away in Maryland, where he lived with his son, Jeffrey, daughter-in-law and two grandsons since 2018. A funeral service is being planned on St. Croix in the coming weeks.