



PRESS RELEASE

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World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame Remembers Kirby Puckett

Kirby Puckett 1960 – 2006



*Photo courtesy:
Minnesota Twins*

*Generosity and a
humanitarian spirit earned
Minnesota Twins slugger
Kirby Puckett a year 2000
induction into the World
Sports Humanitarian Hall*

BOISE, Idaho, March 10, 2006 -- The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame joins the Major League Baseball family in mourning the passing of former Minnesota Twins slugger and Humanitarian Hall of Fame and National Baseball Hall of Fame inductee Kirby Puckett. Puckett passed away March 6 in Scottsdale, Ariz. one day after suffering from a stroke. He was 45.

Puckett was born March 14, 1960, in Chicago, Illinois. In 1984, just two years after being drafted by the Twins, Puckett entered the Major Leagues with a four-hit debut.

Perhaps best known for his engaging smile and magnetic personality, Puckett's inspiring play and dynamic leadership helped guide his 12-year Major League Baseball career, bringing World Series titles to the Twin Cities in 1987 and 1991 and helped him to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds.

As a Sports Humanitarian, Puckett's tireless work in the Minneapolis-St. Paul community and among the baseball family brought him to Boise in 2000 for enshrinement into the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame - one year before earning a first-ballot trip to Cooperstown.

"We are deeply saddened at the loss of Kirby Puckett – a true sports humanitarian," said Larry Maneely, President of the Board of the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame. "Kirby's selfless efforts in the community helped to enrich the lives of others around him. When we remember Kirby, we will not just recall his engaging personality, quick bat and deft glove, but his understanding for the need to bring opportunity to those who needed it most."



Puckett's humanitarian efforts included work with Children's HeartLink, an organization that provides youth with life-saving heart surgery. His annual Kirby Puckett Celebrity 8-ball Invitational helped raise more than \$1.3 million in support of the organization.

He helped create a lasting impression on Minnesota youth through the Puckett Scholars Program at the University of Minnesota providing scholarships for students of color. Through his generosity, Puckett annually provided some 30,000 tickets to Twins baseball games for deserving Twin Cities youngsters. His efforts also included work with the Food and Drug Administration promoting new food nutrition labels and a program with the Minnesota Department of Health teaching kids the dangers of tobacco use. Along with Dave Winfield, Puckett was a founding sponsor of the Twins Rookie League Program – a youth baseball program to introduce the game to inner-city kids. Puckett had authored three books including one for children entitled, *Be the Best You Can Be* and is a regular participant with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Puckett's awards were numerous and included the USA Today Weekend Most Caring Athlete Award (1995) and the Branch Rickey Community Services Award (1994). In 1996, Puckett won the Roberto Clemente Man of the Year Award, presented annually to the Major League Baseball player deemed most active in the community. Puckett also held the role of chairman of the Minnesota Twins Community Fund.

A career.318 man-at-the-plate, Puckett hit for both power and average with 2,304 hits including 414 doubles and 207 home runs. Puckett's prowess with his bat drove in 1,085 runs in 1,783 games throughout his 12-year career. In the field, Puckett won six Gold Gloves for his deft defensive play where he routinely ascended the outfield fence snatching balls destined for the bleachers. Irreversible damage to the retina in his right eye abruptly cut-short the 10-time All-Star's career in 1996.

Puckett, who was divorced in December 2002, is survived by his children Catherine and Kirby Jr.



About The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame

The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame (www.sportshumanitarian.com), located on the Boise State University campus in Boise, Idaho, recognizes individuals and organizations from the world of amateur and professional athletics who, through their humanitarian efforts, distinguish themselves as role models in the community. Since 1994 over thirty role models with world-class athletic ability and exceptional humanitarian achievements have been inducted to the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame. Each spring the induction ceremony includes recipients of an annual humanitarian awards program that recognizes community achievement in all corners of the sporting world through its President's Award, Pro Team Community Award, Don Simplot Idaho Humanitarian Award, the Tradition of Excellence Award presented to a Heisman Trophy winner, and the Nell and John Wooden Humanitarian Lifetime Coaching Achievement Award. Each year the Hall of Fame, in partnership with Boise's MPC Computers Bowl, honors a player from each team with its Student Humanitarian Award. The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is open weekdays to visitors and humanitarians of all ages.

- www.SportsHumanitarian.com -

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