

# Alabama Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame



## HARRY WALKER Class of 2019

*“In Recognition of a Lifetime of Outstanding Achievement in the game of Baseball.  
The State of Alabama will forever be in your debt.”*

One of the most colorful characters to ever grace the UAB campus, Harry “The Hat” Walker passed away on Aug. 8, 1999. Walker served as the first head coach for the Blazer baseball program from its inception in 1979 to 1986. His No. 32 is the only UAB baseball jersey number to be retired.

Walker, who was inducted into the UAB Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013, led the Blazers to two Sun Belt North Division titles (1981 and 82) and had an eight year record of 211-171 (.552). What cannot be measured about Walker in numbers can be measured in terms of impact that he had in the early days of the UAB Baseball program. A veteran of five decades in professional baseball, “The Hat” brought a style and more importantly instant credibility to the fledgling program.

From a modest 21-29 record in his first season in 1979, Walker and the Blazers followed with a 30-20 mark in 1980 and a 40-17 record in 1981. He finished his UAB career with four straight 20-plus win seasons.

Nicknamed “The Hat” for his habit of adjusting his cap between pitches in the batter’s box, Walker spent 22 years as a player in the professional ranks. He played eight years with the St. Louis Cardinals appearing in three World Series (1942, 43 and 46) and two All-Star Games (1943, 47). A left-handed hitter, he won the 1947 National League batting title with a .363 average while playing for both St. Louis and Philadelphia. In all, he hit over .300 five times and had a .296 lifetime average. The versatile player, who was mostly an outfielder in his career, also played for the Phillies, Cubs and Reds.

Walker spent 20 seasons as a manager including Major League stints with the Cardinals (1955), the Pittsburgh Pirates (1965-67) and the Houston Astros (1968-72).

After the 1972 season, Walker worked as a hitting instructor for the Cardinals for three seasons. He was St. Louis’ minor league farm director in 1976 and the Cards’ advance scout and major-league scout for trades from 1977-78.

Walker came from a family steeped in tradition. His father, Ewart (Dixie) Walker, was the Alabamian to go to the majors. Dixie Pitched for Washington in 1909 and his uncle, Ernie, played for the St. Louis Browns. His brother, Fred (Dixie) was a star outfielder in both the AL and NL. Dixie also won the National League batting title in 1944.

Walker was revered as one of the game’s great hitting instructors, as he worked such stars as Cesar Cedeno, Matty Alou, Manny Mota and many others.

During the 1997 season, the Harry “The Hat” Walker Press Box was dedicated prior to the March 4 game against Vanderbilt. The “Hat Box” was a dream for Walker who wanted the local and visiting media to enjoy the hospitality of UAB Baseball at Young Memorial Field.

Walker was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in 1978.

**Inducted January 18, 2019**