

Sir Vivian Richards Hailed as Fitting Role Model

November 23, 2001

World renowned cricket star Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards was inducted into the Cricket Hall of Fame in a gala ceremony held at the Radisson Hotel, Cromwell, Connecticut, Saturday, September 29. The former West Indies' captain was hailed as one of the greatest West Indies' players ever, and a fitting role model for youths to emulate. The large turnout stood and applauded Sir Vivian following his induction.



Sir Vivian joins past inductees Sir Garfield Sobers, George Headley, Sir Leonard Hutton, Sir Frank Worrell, Sir Everton Weekes, Sir Clyde Walcott, Sir Conrad Hunte Alfred Valentine, Lance Gibbs, Wesley Hall, Clive Lloyd, Hanif Mohammed and umpire Tom Ewart to the prestigious halls.

Master of Ceremonies Attorney Rudolph Cohen also a former member of the West Indies cricket team, relived some of the feats of the West Indian hero, who tore the hearts out of Australian speed demons Dennis Lillee and Jeffery Thompson, during a tour of that country.

One of the most important aspects of Sir Vivian's career, Cohen said, is that after he became captain of the West Indies' team, he continued his performance as a leader, never losing a series.

Stating that it was a great honor to have Sir Vivian in our presence, Cohen explained how great a character Sir Vivian is by recalling a response he gave to a question during an interview. Asked about an alleged catch taken at the wicket during one of his innings, Cohen said that Sir Vivian replied that he is playing the game long enough to know when he hit the ball.

Sir Vivian paid tribute to all the people who helped him along the way, in particular his older brother Donald and fellow Antiguan Charles Henry, whom he said took him to see his first Test match. Henry, the father of one of the coordinators of the program, Harland Henry, was present at the induction with his wife. The couple who was celebrating their 52nd anniversary was presented with a bouquet of flowers in their honor.

Thanking the Cricket Hall of Fame's committee for the honor bestowed on him, "The Master Blaster," as he is affectionately called, said that despite his now known feats he was just as nervous going to the wicket as any other player. He lamented, however, that he had to come all the way to North America to receive this honor, something which he believes should be done in the Caribbean.

In responding to a question from the audience, Sir Vivian paid tribute to former player Lawrence Rowe, whom he described as one of the coolest individuals that he has ever come across and said that as far as the game is concerned Rowe will always be his hero. Rowe, he said, always whistles while batting, but during a tour of Australia while they were at the wicket facing the speedsters' Thompson and Lillee, he noticed that the whistling was missing. He said that he calmly went down the wicket to Rowe to enquire what was wrong in which Rowe replied that the men were dishing out fire today.

To a question about his thoughts on the present state of West Indies cricket, Sir Vivian put the blame at the leadership of the West Indies Cricket Board, which he said needs to be united. "Like the economy we are in a down cycle at the moment. It will take hard work and calculated decisions to get us out of it, and when that is done, then we will have something to shout about again," he said.

"We have the talent," he said, "but in order for us to go forward, the youngsters coming into the fold must realize that we must know where we are coming from in order to know where we are going," he said. Luckily for me, we had people to look up to, emulate and follow after, he added, stating that it is quite easy for us to forget that we

have to crawl before we can walk.

During the ceremony two proclamations were received, one from Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland and the other from the city of Hartford's Council declaring the day Sir Vivian's Day in the state and city respectively.

Earlier that day Sir Vivian attended a reception held in his honor at the Hartford Public Library, visited the Cricket Hall of Fame and a cricket match at the city's Keney Park between a visiting English team and current local champions, the West Indian Social Club.

Receiving presidential awards for their services to the game and support for the Cricket Hall of Fame was The Weekly Gleaner, The West Indian/American Newspaper, U.S. Cricketer International and Toronto-based comedian Norman "Sabu" Grant, who kept the audience in stitches at the start of the program.