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*"To compile all the success he did as a player and a coach, it's unbelievable. It wasn't all pure talent. It's his perseverance and passion and hard work. He re-wrote the book as far as a successful baseball guy coming out of Waterbury. There is nobody like him."*

- Ronald Diorio

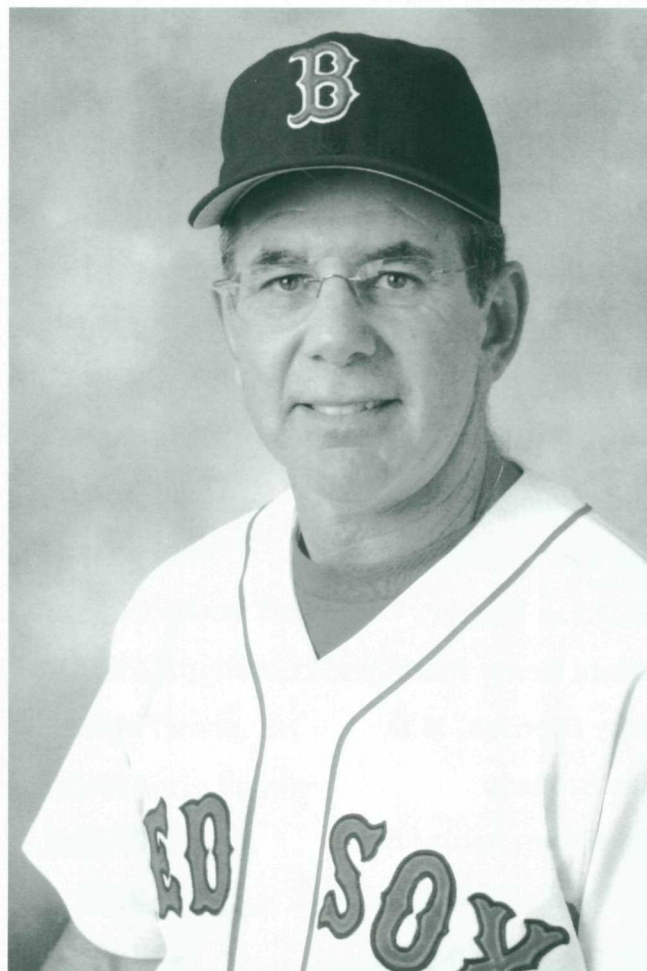
In the long history of baseball-loving Waterbury, from among the many thousands of boys who have played on its ball fields during the past 150 years, Dave Wallace is the only city native to earn one of the game's great honors: the right to wear a World Series ring. Indeed, Wallace's entire 44-year career in professional baseball, from 1970, when he was signed by the Philadelphia Phillies as an amateur free agent pitcher, to the year of his Waterbury Hall of Fame induction in 2014, when he watched over the Baltimore Orioles' pitching staff during its pennant run, is unlike anything Waterbury has produced before - in any sport.

David William Wallace was born in Waterbury, Connecticut on September 7, 1947; the son of Frank and Muriel Wallace. The city was a baseball town in those days, and it was never hard to find a game, a team or a league. He graduated from St. Margaret Grammar School, which fielded its team at Fulton Park. And summers were a time for Exchange Club Little League contests at legendary Mert Connor Stadium on Watertown Avenue. Next up was a distinguished four years at Sacred Heart High School, where Wallace was the football quarterback and a basketball guard as well as a standout pitcher. He went from there to the University of New Haven, where, sharing the mound duties with another Waterburian, Ron Diorio, his 24-6 career record helped lead the Chargers to the NAIA Eastern Regional title and a place in the 1966 National Tournament. Along the way, Wallace drew the attention of major league scouts.

After graduation in 1969, Wallace spent the next decade as a professional pitcher, mostly in the minor leagues but with some major-league appearances as well. As a right-handed reliever, he posted a 47-31 record with 60 saves in 355 career minor-league outings. In the majors, he made 13 mound appearances for the Phillies (1973-74) and Toronto Blue Jays (1978) and went 0-1 with 12 strikeouts and a 7.84 ERA in 20 2/3 innings. He concluded his pitching career with AAA Pawtucket in 1979.

But rather than his baseball career ending, it was really just beginning. Along the way, observing all those games, soaking up strategies and methods, Wallace had become an excellent student of the game. Now it was time to share that wisdom. He found his first coaching home in the farm system of the Los Angeles Dodgers. He became a pitching coach for the minor-league Vero Beach Dodgers (1981-82), the San Antonio Dodgers (1983) and the Albuquerque Dukes (1984-86). After that, the big club named him as its minor-league pitching coordinator (1987-1994) before calling him up to replace Ron Perranoski as the Dodgers' pitching coach in 1995.

The ensuing 20 years have been a testament to Wallace's value as a coach and mentor, and also to the unpredictable nature of employment at the highest reaches of the game. He stayed with the Dodgers until 1997 and then moved to the Mets from 1999 to 2000, when the team won the National League pennant. Then it was back to the Dodgers, where he was senior vice president for baseball operations (2001-03) and even the interim



general manager for a spell in 2001. But his first love, coaching young pitchers, brought him back to the field - Fenway Park to be exact - with the Red Sox (2003-06), including the never-to-be-forgotten World Series Championship in 2004. Next it was on to the Houston Astros (2007), a stint as a special assistant to the general manager with the Seattle Mariners (2008-09) and as the minor league pitching coordinator for the Atlanta Braves (2010-13). In October 2013, Wallace was back coaching again, this time with the Baltimore Orioles.

While living out this dizzying résumé, Wallace has been credited by many pitchers with being an instrumental part of their progression in the game. Among the stars of the game singing his praises have been Pedro Martinez, Orel Hershisier, Curt Schilling and Jon Lester. However, Wallace has said that perhaps his greatest pleasure has come from coaching the lesser talents and helping turn them into major-league pitchers, even if only for a brief period. It's nice to think that this sturdy professionalism echoes all the way back to the dusty playing fields of Waterbury.