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# BATTING 1.000

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**YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE LEGACY OF  
WILLIAM B. "BILL" ARCE, FOUNDING DIRECTOR  
OF THE CLAREMONT-MUDD-SCRIPPS ATHLETICS  
PROGRAM, DEMONSTRATES HOW PARTICIPATING  
IN SPORTS CAN POWER SUCCESS IN LIFE.**

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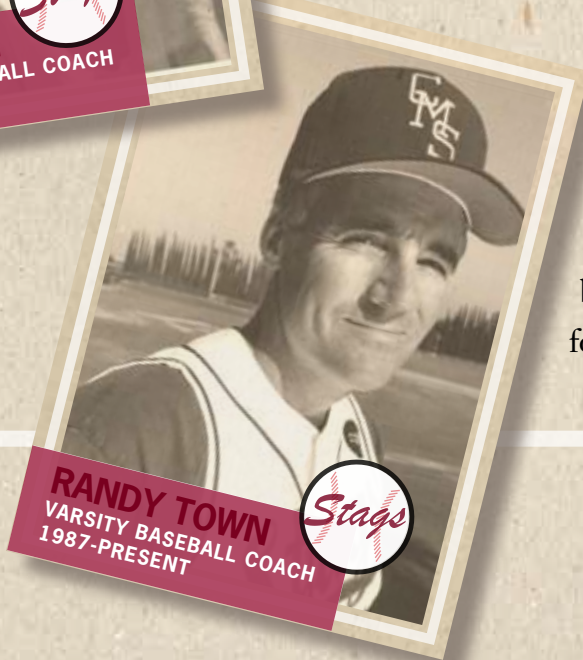
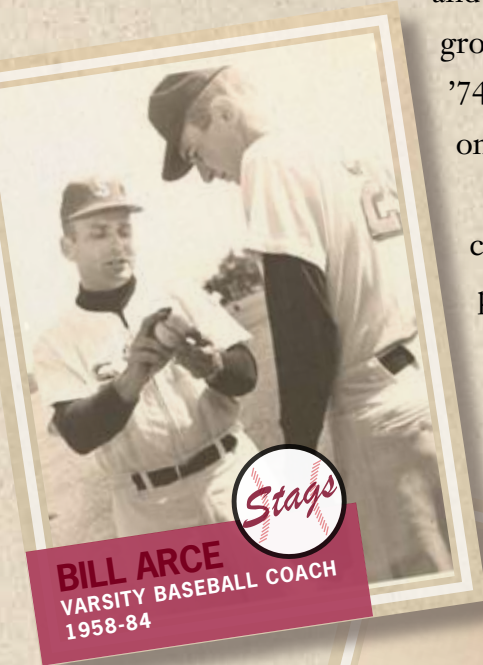
**S**omewhere between the Invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge, Bill Arce felt a calling. If he survived the combat of World War II, he decided, he would trade his Army fatigues for a baseball jersey and follow those coaches who had encouraged him as a boy on the field. In 1946 that calling grew cleats when, after being discharged with a Purple Heart, Arce settled into civilian life in Northern California to play ball and study education at Stanford University.

At Stanford, Arce captained the baseball team while earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees. When he returned to pursue his doctorate, he was appointed the university's assistant varsity baseball coach. As he transitioned from diamond to dugout, Arce was poised to lead by example, using commitment, communication, and a culture of healthy mind/healthy body to drive his strategy home.

The path to a new definition of success led to Claremont soon enough, and the impact of that decision would ripple for decades, both here in the tree-lined college town where he hung his hat and abroad, where he nurtured baseball in such faraway places as Yugoslavia, the People's Republic of China, Holland, and Czechoslovakia. His players have reflected, over time, how Arce's encouragement and leadership strategies both motivated them on the field and added discipline and growth to their personal lives. "What makes him so special," recalled Gary Rattet '74 in 1981, when Arce Field was dedicated, "is his interest in and care of students on a personal level."

"Everything that we do here now has its roots in what Bill established," says current Director of Athletics Mike Sutton '76. "Bill believes that athletics and physical education are not just about wins and losses; they are about defining success. This mind-body dynamic applies to the classroom as much as the athletic field and life. He demonstrated this philosophy through his actions and he instilled this philosophy in his coaches and players."

Arce's ideals and the theories behind the College's successful athletics program—the strong bond between educational values and intercollegiate competition, a committed cadre of carefully selected coach-teachers and student-athletes, and a holistic perspective on fitness and wellness that extends well beyond varsity play—are illustrated by the stories of four model players.



## A LIFELONG BOND: THE STORY OF ROBERT NAKASONE '69

**T**hough Robert Nakasone '69 hoped to play baseball for Arce immediately upon graduating from high school in January 1966, he was told he'd have to wait until September for admittance to the College. "Nine months seemed an eternity," Nakasone recalls.

He accepted an offer from UC-Santa Barbara, convinced the disappointment would be permanent. No less than a week into freshman team scrimmages, Arce called to pass along a message: A spot had unexpectedly opened and—if Bob wanted it—it was his.

"That was on a Friday," Nakasone says. "By Monday I was enrolled. That was my first experience with how Bill Arce takes that extra step to help out not only his players, but students in general."

**"There's no question that you can get close to another student in a classroom atmosphere, especially when you are working on homework and outside projects together, and, to a certain degree, you can develop friends that way, too. But you don't get the closeness you get with another student-athlete, the closeness that comes when you are on a team, seeking one goal to reach together."**

**—Bill Arce**

Nakasone, a second baseman and shortstop, recalls that Arce always showed up at practice with "an upbeat voice and an encouraging word"—and an unrivaled knowledge of baseball. The techniques he espoused for playing the middle infield, says Nakasone, were always related to fundamental mechanics and accompanied by a concise explanation as to "why."

Arce's first sports exchange program trip to Holland, in 1964, was followed two years later by a 26-player squad made up of students, including Nakasone, from CMC and Harvey Mudd, along with Occidental, Redlands, and Whittier. "The selections were based partially on playing skills," Nakasone says, "but the key determinant was players who would represent the country and the College well."

Players were sent to cities throughout Holland, where they lived with local families, taught baseball, and gathered every few weeks to play all-star games under the moniker the "California Stags," a.k.a. the "Arce Stags." They played the Belgian national all-star team in Brussels, and handily won more than a dozen games, including

a championship game victory over the Dutch national team at the 1966 Haarlem "Honkbal" Tournament, outside Amsterdam, where the competition included elite baseball teams from throughout Europe, such as the Dutch Antilles team and the Wiesbaden Flyers (from the U.S. military base in Germany).

"Bill's passion for the game went beyond the coaching and teaching," Nakasone says, "but a lifetime commitment to take baseball throughout the world."

Nakasone, now a Trustee and retired chief executive officer of Toys "R" Us, stays in touch with his former coach. "While I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, Arce rang me up to help get a group of visiting Dutch ballplayers into a game at Wrigley Field," says Nakasone, who insists the culture of outreach and mutual helpfulness that Arce instilled at CMC goes beyond baseball, and even beyond varsity athletics.

"There's something special at Claremont," Nakasone says. "A very high proportion of CMC students play NCAA varsity sports. When you add in other club and intramural sports and fitness in general, it really is part of the culture of the College. The culture of healthy mind/healthy body was set early here by Bill Arce."



1966  
BOB NAKASONE



One outstanding example of Arce's lifelong impact on his players occurred in 2006, when Nakasone helped to organize a 40-year reunion of the '64 and '66 Holland baseball teams. "I was truly blown away when 21 of the 26 players from the '66 team cared enough to fly in from all over—including Washington, Colorado, Arizona, Massachusetts, Georgia, and Alabama—

to commemorate this wonderful experience and to honor Bill," says Nakasone. "It spoke volumes about the impact both the experience and Bill Arce had on all of us." The reunion took place at Dodger Stadium prior to a Dodger-Pirate game, allowing Pittsburgh Pirate pitching coach (and '66 pitcher) Jim Colborn to attend. The highlight, Nakasone says, was when the Dodger organization, well aware of Bill's lifelong role as an ambassador for baseball world-wide, honored Bill, along with the reunion players, at home plate before the game.

## BUILDING BLOCKS: THE STORY OF DEAN TAYLOR '73

**D**ean Taylor '73, now vice president of baseball operations/assistant general manager for the Kansas City Royals, was a freshman pre-med major and baseball player when, early in his second semester, he read an article describing a new program being

offered at Ohio University: sports administration.

"When I read the story," Taylor recalls, "I knew it was what I wanted to do but I didn't know how to do it. Before even talking with my parents, I sought counsel from Bill Arce. He said, 'Dean, if this is what you want, we'll be behind you 100 percent.'"

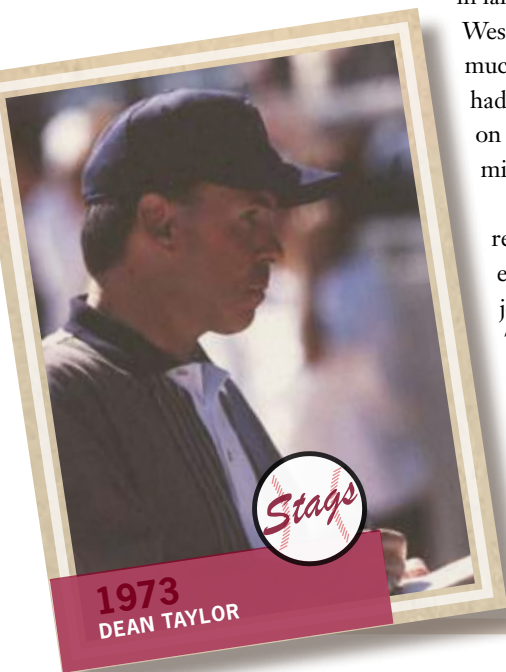
Taylor dropped his pre-med major and switched to economics, with an emphasis in business, and "from that point forward I began to prepare myself for gaining admission to the program."

At Ohio University, rather than accepting a standard, major-league, ticket-office internship, Taylor and CMC classmate Mike Manning '73 pitched a new franchise: the Northwest League (a short-season Class A baseball league). That they succeeded

**"A broad program of athletics enhances the opportunity for students to learn how to cope with the successes and failures they're bound to have in their undergraduate years and beyond."—Bill Arce**

in landing a team in New Westminster, B.C., wasn't much of a surprise—Taylor had done his senior thesis on exactly that: launching a minor-league baseball club.

By 1980, Taylor's reputation was sufficiently established to warrant a job offer from the Royals. Taylor advanced through the ranks and, after a stint as manager of baseball operations for Major League Baseball, joined the Atlanta Braves



before spending three years as general manager of the Milwaukee Brewers. He then worked for the Cincinnati Reds before returning to Kansas City.

"Bill Arce helped me find the way that was best for me," Taylor says. "Of all the coaches I played for he was easily the most influential, not only from an instruction perspective but also in terms of life guidance."

Taylor notes that athletics success is due in large part to Claremont McKenna's academic reputation.

"Part of the formula at CMC," Taylor says, "is the quality of the students who are attracted to the College in the first place. Obviously the raw material was there; Bill Arce was the one who crafted us all into finished products."

## DEFINING SUCCESS FOR THE STUDENT-ATHLETE: THE STORY OF ADAM MILLER '03

**A**dam Miller '03, a veteran of two summers of professional baseball in Saint-Lô, France, concedes he didn't choose Claremont McKenna for baseball. He'd been "a marginal player on a very good high school team," and by the time CMC's economics and government program hit his radar screen, Miller was thinking as a prospective pre-law student, not a future college pitcher.

"In my mind, playing baseball wasn't an option," Miller recalls. But when he contacted Randy Town, Arce's successor, who just completed his 22nd season as head baseball coach for the Stags, "Coach Town was encouraging, at least of my making the team and hanging out with the guys. I ended up being pleasantly surprised."

After four years of varsity competition, Miller was contacted by former CMS pitching coach Andy Sallee, then a coach with the French national baseball program, who told him about an opportunity to play in France. (Not long after he joined the French national team Sallee said, "They have no games in France where you throw things. I have a friend with a baby and the first thing he does when you put a ball in his hands is drop it on the ground and kick it.") Miller eagerly accepted, and discovered a league that played double-headers on Sundays from the middle of March through late July, took August off, and returned for playoffs in September.

"Baseball is developing in France," Miller says. "I would equate it to low-level Division III or even high-school baseball. It gives

“Intercollegiate athletics complement the academic program when quality coaches work with quality athletes: athletes who can improve and get better through each and every workout each and every day. We had student-athletes who wanted to play for us who were terrific players but had a focus that was far more on athletics than academics. I knew they could not be successful here.” —**Bill Arce**

the kids who aren't very good at soccer another opportunity to get involved athletically.”

Now assistant dean of admission for the College, Miller, who holds a master's degree in education from the University of Redlands, seeks out high-achieving students whose extracurricular interests and drive to succeed are tempered by organization, focus, and balance: skills and characteristics that match both his own and those espoused by Coach Arce. “It comes down to that ability to manage time, prioritize, and, at the end of the day, make hard choices about what you're going to do when you have multiple options,” Miller says. “Then, when you make that smart choice, you move forward with it rather than wallowing in indecision.”

**A BRIDGE TO INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING: THE STORY OF BEN KATZ-MOSES '06**

**W**hen Ben Katz-Moses '06 was drafted in spring 2007—ahead of Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax (yes, the 71-year-old Jewish baseball icon actually was drafted)—by the Ra'anana Express of the Israel Baseball League

(IBL), he jumped at the opportunity to play professional baseball as a part of the league's inaugural—and only—season.

Like Miller, Katz-Moses, now a doctoral candidate in mathematics at the University of Colorado, says his choice to attend CMC and play baseball for the Stags was all about the academics. “I didn't get much playing time until my senior year,” he says. “I liked the opportunity, but baseball was secondary.”

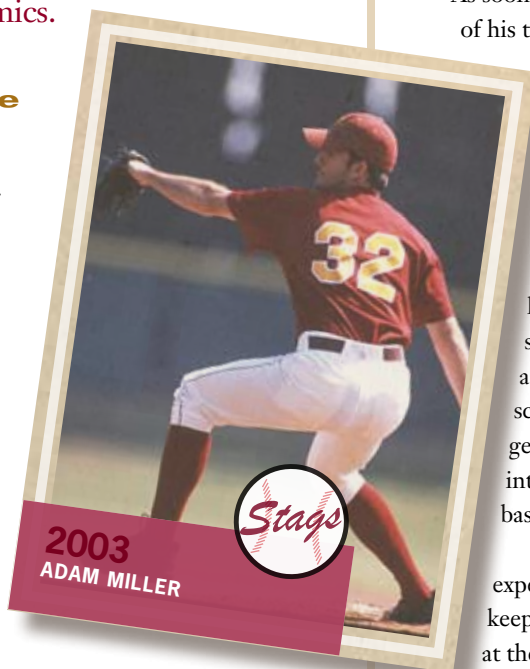
As soon as he started at the College, Katz-Moses became aware of his teammates graduating and going to France, Holland, and other locales. “Playing abroad was always something I wanted to do,” he says, “but I thought being a student made that impossible.”

The IBL's schedule fit Katz-Moses' perfectly, however, and he says he didn't miss a day of graduate school while getting a priceless international baseball experience.

“My only expectation was to keep playing baseball at the highest level I possibly could, and the level of play over there was good,” he says. “More than that, I got to experience Israel. I'm not going to claim that I understand the conflicts there, but I did get to talk to people and I did get to hear what it's like to live where you don't know if you're safe.

“It gave me some personal experience with a very, very complicated issue.”

“When you mix people from different cultures, different backgrounds, and different countries, you have an opportunity for education to take part within the athletics experience. They are going to learn about us, just as we can't help but learn about them, from being in their country, seeing how they grew up. It's always an educational process.” —**Bill Arce**



BY CHRIS LAZZARINO  
ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY  
SHEA MANNING AND ADAM SAPP

## TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

**I**n a tangible expression of Arce's lasting impact, CMS baseball alumni dusted off their gloves and cleats and gathered for a series of 50th reunion games on Feb. 7, pitting alumni against the current varsity team, celebrating 50 years of SCIAC excellence, and honoring the program's first SCIAC championship team—plus scoring a little face time with Coach Arce and Gold Glove-winner Wes Parker '62, former first baseman for both the Stags and the Los Angeles Dodgers, with whom he played from 1964-72.

The CMS Alumni Baseball Game is a defining event for a small college that takes athletics seriously. Young athletes with the intelligence and drive to cut it academically find in Stags baseball an extended family that can help them see the world, find a job, or, if nothing else, enjoy a tasty barbecue on a chilly February afternoon.

"Stags baseball has a unique spirit, instilled by Coach Arce and carried through by Coach Town," says Miller, who took the mound for the young alumni team. "It's about understanding how to balance an academic life and an athletic life, taking lessons learned on the baseball field and applying them to CMC's core values like leadership, teamwork, and bouncing back from adversity.

"And that's kind of special."



As the game gets underway, family, friends—including Arce's wife, Nancy—and alumni who aren't playing assemble in the stands to catch up on news and share memories. "In Holland, Coach Arce was the King of Baseball," recalls San Jose attorney Roger Brandon '71, a member of the 1970 SCIAC championship team. "He got a lot of us to play in Europe in those days."



Coach Town asks everyone to assemble for a photograph on the field. "I want to acknowledge everyone who has come out here today for this game celebrating our 50th anniversary," Town says. "This is a great day and we've assembled a great group of guys here." He later shares balls purloined from the archives, including the autographed ball from the Stags' first victory over Redlands, in 1959.

PHOTOS BY DAVID JOHNSTON



Arce gathers with 11 members of the team from 1979, his last season at CMC. Between poses, friends share tips on how they stay in shape and where they vacation, and Arce tells the guys he'll soon embark on a six-week tour of Australia.



Among those in the stands is Parker, selected in August 2007 as the greatest defensive first baseman since the inception of the Gold Glove Award in 1957, according to fan balloting sponsored by Rawlings. Parker and his pals replay their memories of long-ago games against LaVerne and Redlands.