



Dr. William A. A. Foster 1940-2021

William Alfred Amos Foster M.D. C.D., who died on September 11, 2021, attended Jamaica College from around 1950 to 1958. He was 81 and had been ill for some time.

At JC, William was a member of the winning Sunlight Cup cricket and Perkins Shield rifle shooting teams in 1958. His younger brother, Laurie, was also at JC. He was also an officer in the Cadet Corps and a member of the team which won the 1957 Daly Trophy for shooting.

William went on to study medicine at Howard University. He became a Cardiologist, and was known for his many philanthropic deeds among cardiac patients.

He also wrote poetry and was an avid cricket fan as shown in an eloquent article in the Gleaner about Sir Frank Worrell in 2015, during a WI vs Australia series –

“Frank Worrell ... the batsman

Much has been written of him; his humanity, his captaincy, his humility; of the fact that when the West Indies lost to Australia, 1-2 in 1961, half a million people gathered in Melbourne with ticker tape to bid him goodbye, an unheard of tribute to his sporting leadership during a superlative series that included the breathtaking tie in the first Test match of the tour played at the Gabba.

But did you ever see him bat? Against Australia, he once made nine at the Sabina, two fours and a single, and the announcer chatterboxed superlatives. He choked at his dismissal.

Here is to those who never saw him bat.

On March, 29, 1953, Frank Worrell walked to the crease at Sabina Park. A top-order batsman, he was replacing Jeff Stollmeyer. His was an innings to savour. A graceful pirouette, a flick of the wrists and, as the ball sped to the long leg boundary, he held the pose fractionally, elbows high. With the morning sun vanquished by a heavy bank of cloud, he moved easily down the pitch with terpsichorean grace and drove sweetly through the covers with a stroke that honeyed the drops of rain that were just beginning to fall.

Not much later, he eased onto the front foot, lithe and languid in preparation for the drive, then, as if realising nothing he could do this day would eclipse the memory of the earlier stroke, he shifted his weight onto the back foot and conjured a late cut of such delicacy and grace. A candle held next to his bat would scarce have flickered.

WORRELIAN GRACE

In Australia, this stroke is called the back cut. A cut of Worrellian grace would have been diminished by this description. During the 1950 tour of England, he romanced the crowds with an innings of 261; an innings of what one scribe called "a quarter of what appeared to be an innings of a 1000 runs."

But Frank ... Sir Frank came much later ... was not about quantity. Wisden, the Bible, intoned in 1950; "for beauty of stroke, no one in the history of the game can have excelled Worrell!" Neville Cardus, the doyen of cricketing scribes, allowed, "A Worrell innings knows no dawn. It begins at high noon!" Cardus again: "He never played an ungrammatical stroke."

Wilfred Rhodes, the late Test cricketer, a blind spectator (an oxymoron, if ever there was one), was there that day. At close of play, Worrell was in the 230s. Rhodes predicted his demise the next morning when the sound of bat on ball was off that little bit. Worrell, at the crease, was not just about what you saw.

Oh to have seen him bat! His was the dulciana of batsmanship. In the quicksilver stream of his batting fluency, his strokes, like sprightly fish leaping from the water in piscatorial splendour, riveted attention.

The normal wrist has eight bones. Worrell's probably had 16 tumbling over each other for all the dexterity this right-hander displayed at the crease. He rarely hooked, for all we know, viewing that as a vulgar display of unnecessary power. He would kneel for the sweep and occasionally kneel for the drive, but when he leaned for the drive in delicate balance, elbows high, rapture enthralled the audience...

BAKING SUN

I stood beneath a baking sun that day at the Sabina, when the Indians were making their first visit. I did not feel the heat. I did not heed the smell. The Frankie Worrell innings diluted all. In 1955, he made 61 in the fifth Test against Australia at the Sabina ... their first visit. Eight years into his career as a Test cricketer, the scribes had run out of superlatives. He made a mere 61. The best they could find was 'discriminating' to describe his innings, one cut short when wicketkeeper Gil Langley, in whose hands a bat was a foreign object, covered prodigious ground to snaffle a leg glance.

It seemed Frank could always bat. Felicitous in his strokeplay and feline in his movements, Worrell, at the crease, banished depression. To have seen him bat was to impact vivid imagery on the retina, leaving the brain in a futile writhe searching for expression."

<https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/sports/20150614/dr-william-foster-frank-worrell-batsman>

May his soul rest in peace

