



NewsRelease

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Fairfield University Honors Legendary Athletics Director and Baseball Coach C. Donald Cook '63

Fairfield's Baseball Alumni Diamond has been renamed the Don '63 and Chris '88 Cook Field in honor of former Athletics Director C. Donald Cook '63 for his contribution to Stags baseball and his efforts to help propel the program as a national force.

FAIRFIELD, Conn. (January 12, 2024)—Fairfield University President Mark R. Nemec, PhD announced that Baseball's Alumni Diamond has been renamed the Don '63 and Chris '88 Cook Field in honor of C. Donald Cook '63, alumnus and former Fairfield University athletics director and head baseball coach.

Don Cook was a standout with the Fairfield baseball team where he served as co-captain in 1963. He became head coach in 1966, and directed the Stags for 19 seasons, transforming the program into a respected Division I entity. Eleven Stags who played under Cook's leadership went on to play professionally in the minor leagues, including Keefe Cato '82, the only Fairfield alum to appear in a Major League game.

In 1971, Cook was appointed director of athletics, a position he held until 1986, where he supervised the building of the Recreation Complex, the expansion of Alumni Hall, and a renovation of Alumni Field. He was a co-founder and the first president of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) and was inducted into the Fairfield Athletic Hall of Fame in 1984.

"Fairfield University is proud to recognize Don Cook's legacy and his role in helping to shape Fairfield athletics, especially its esteemed baseball program—building a tradition of superior coaching, developing talented and well-rounded players, and generating support from the highest levels—a formula that will continue to produce continued success on the Don '63 and Chris '88 Cook Field," said President Nemec.

The field's new name also honors the memory of Cook's son, Christopher Lance Cook '88, who died in 2014 after a long illness. Christopher earned a bachelor's

degree in finance in 1988 from Fairfield's Charles F. Dolan School of Business, rising to the position of vice president and general manager of indirect equipment finance at Hitachi Capital America Corp. A scholar athlete, Christopher played baseball throughout his college career at Fairfield (1985-88), and ranked among the Stags' batting leaders, following in his father's footsteps.

For nearly 50 years, Don Cook's tenure in college athletics has included serving as athletics director at three Connecticut institutions: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University and the University of Hartford. Cook is currently executive director of athletics, emeritus, at Sacred Heart University, as a consultant to the university's Advancement and Athletics departments.

Cook retired from Sacred Heart after 21 years as director of athletics and executive director of athletics. Under his leadership, the university saw expansion in varsity sports and facilities, including the construction of the William H. Pitt Health and Recreation Center. Cook also led the Pioneers' move to Division I, which began in 1999 as a full member of the Northeast Conference.

He served as athletic director at Hartford from 1986-92, where he oversaw the building of an athletics complex and the program's emergence as a Division I institution. In May of 2014, he was inducted into the Hartford Athletics Hall of Fame.

"As a student-athlete, as a coach, as director of athletics and as an alumnus, Don Cook has been a loyal, proud and exemplary steward of Fairfield University and Fairfield Athletics for more than 60 years," said the Vice President for Athletics Paul Schlickmann. "We are blessed to have Don in the Fairfield Stags family and excited to bestow upon him this well-deserved honor."

Cook served as board president of the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC) in 1990 and was honored with the 1998 ECAC Athletics Administrator of the Year Award, and received the 2013 Commissioner's Award. He is also a member of the Fairfield County Sports Commission Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Northeast Conference Hall of Fame.

Building upon Cook's legacy with the loyal support of Friends of Fairfield Baseball, Stags Baseball has grown to become a national force under the leadership of Head Coach Bill Currier.

In the Fall of 2016 Friends of Fairfield Baseball dedicated a new baseball stadium and varsity locker room featuring new bleachers with red chair back seats, expanded dugouts, a press box and new fencing, wooden lockers, showers, a bathroom area, built-in speakers and updated technology. Recent additions to the baseball complex include an indoor batting facility and an enhanced and modernized weight room.

The Fairfield University Baseball team's 2024 schedule will feature 24 home games in their 52-game slate, beginning with a weekend series against UNC Greensboro on Feb. 16 with the Stags returning to Cook Field one month later for their home opener against Army West Point.

The Stags return 26 letterwinners to a team that went 37-18 last season including a 16-5 mark in the MAAC in grabbing their third-straight regular season crown—becoming the first MAAC program to win three-straight regular season titles outright. Fairfield also won 30 games for the fourth-straight season, winning 34 regular season contests, the most in program history.

A dedication ceremony to officially rename the field will take place this spring.

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Fairfield University is a modern, Jesuit Catholic University, rooted in one of the world's oldest intellectual and spiritual traditions. More than 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students from 36 states, 47 foreign countries, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are enrolled in the University's five schools. In the spirit of rigorous and sympathetic inquiry into all dimensions of human experience, Fairfield welcomes students from diverse backgrounds to share ideas and engage in open conversations. The University is located in the heart of a region where the future takes shape, on a stunning campus on the Connecticut coast just an hour from New York City.