

2013 Athletic Hall of Fame Honoree



JOE AMALFITANO

CLASS OF 1951

"If you are ever in San Pedro, California you better not say anything bad about Joe. He is the pride of San Pedro and has never forgotten his roots," says Tommy Lasorda, one of Joe Amalfitano's greatest fans. Joe's career as a sports professional includes 10 years playing in Major League Baseball and nearly 60 years in professional baseball as player, coach and manager. And he's still working today as a roving instructor and special assignment scout for the San Francisco Giants.

But it all began when John Joseph Amalfitano, a native of San Pedro attending Mary Star of the Sea Elementary School, picked up a bat and hit his first baseball at age 10. According to Joe, "We had a very good softball team in grammar school... We were going to play St. John Bosco one day. That was before the freeway was there, to give you an idea of how long ago that was. We went there thinking we were going to play softball, and all of a sudden we saw that they were playing baseball, something we had never done. Our parents had taken us all this way, so we decided to play, and man – I liked it. I hit two home runs that day. We were playing in a huge field, so the ball just kept rolling. When I hit the ball, the bat sounded great and the ball went further. Right there, I got hooked."

"Joey", as many call him, came to St. Anthony as a sophomore in 1948. During his three years on campus, enrollment grew and so did athletic competition. The Athletic Field and Gymnasium were both newly opened, and St. Anthony was increasingly competitive in sports. Joe was a part of that great time. He loved sports and loved to play, participating on four teams throughout his three years - football, basketball, track and baseball. He was an active, well-rounded student beyond sports as well, involved on Student Council and the Letterman Club, serving as Vice President of the class in his senior year. But ultimately Joe settled on baseball as his passion and that is where he made his mark.

Joe Amalfitano signed with the New York Giants as a bonus baby in 1954. The Giants won a World Series championship that year and Joe was a part of that team in his first year of organized baseball. He still wears his ring from the 1954 championship, earned when he was just a 20-year-old infielder. Joe says, "You never forget winning a World Series championship. It stays with you all your life." He would go on to another World Series win with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1988 and earn two more rings as part of the Giants organization in 2010 and 2012.

Joe's relationship with the Giants spans many decades. He played for them in San Francisco from 1960-61 and 1963 and coached from 1972-75, before returning as a special assistant working in player development from 1999-2001, and then again most recently since 2005 in his current role.

Prior to rejoining the orange and black during his current stint, Joe spent three years as a senior advisor to baseball operations for the Los Angeles Dodgers from 2002-2004. He ended his Major League coaching career with the Dodgers, man-

ning the third base coaching box from 1983-98, under manager Tommy Lasorda. His other big league coaching assignments included: the Chicago Cubs (1967-71 and 1978-81), San Diego Padres (1976-77) and Cincinnati Reds (1982).

The San Pedro, California native also managed parts of three seasons with the Cubs from 1979-81, was interim manager at the end of the 1979 season and managed the last half of the 1980 season in Chicago.

During his 10 year big league career with the Giants (1954-55, 1960-61 and 1963), Astros (1962) and Cubs (1964-67) Joe Amalfitano posted a .244 batting average.

Tommy Lasorda continues with this to say, "Joe was my third base coach from 1983 until I retired from managing in 1996. However, he was, and still is, one of my best friends and closest confidants. Joe embodies the Dodger way. He is class on and off the field. He loves the game of baseball, and has been involved in all aspects of the game... I love Joe and wish him and his family nothing but the best. He can go around this country and stand on any street corner with his head held high and yell at the top of his lungs that Tommy Lasorda loves him, and he would be telling the truth."

Joe Amalfitano is a graduate of the University of Southern California and he and his wife of 31 years, Kay, live in Sedona, Arizona. He made his career in Major League Baseball, but says that even if he had not been fortunate enough to have done so, he would have been in baseball somehow, and likely would have been a high school baseball coach.

