

Former FAMU baseball coach Robert Lucas dies at 72

Jordan Culver, Democrat staff writer 5:59 p.m. ET Feb. 14, 2017



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(Photo: Democrat files)

Former Florida A&M baseball coach Robert Lucas was the type of coach players can easily recall today.

Brett Richardson, who worked as an assistant with Florida A&M for 18 years under four different coaches, said he easily remembers Lucas' style. The veteran coach was kind and open – and Richardson, now the head coach at Alcorn State, said he does his best to emulate Lucas.

At the very least, he recalls the one thing Lucas always said to get him in line.

"He always used to say to me, 'Boy, you better listen to me! I'm older than you!'" Richardson said with a laugh.

"(Lucas) became like a father figure to me after my father passed away in 2000. There wasn't anything I couldn't talk to him about, be it about baseball, life, anything. He was a mentor in every sense of the word. He loved baseball and he loved people. He'd give you the shirt off his back."

Lucas, who was staying in an assisted-living facility in Atlanta after suffering a stroke two years ago, died last Wednesday. He was 72.

"It was still a shock when I found out he passed," said Richardson, whose brother called to inform him of Lucas' death.

Richardson was brought to Florida A&M by Lucas while the latter was still the head coach of the Rattlers in 1990. Lucas was FAMU's head coach twice – from 1986 until 1990, and then again from 2007 until 2010. He was an assistant under FAMU legend Costa Kittles in 1977.

Lucas was also a scout for the Atlanta Braves from 1990 until 2006.

When Florida A&M made a run — the first in program history — to the NCAA tournament in 2015, Richardson dedicated the opportunity to Lucas, among other FAMU greats who never had the chance to compete in the national tournament.

FAMU assistant coach Anthony Robinson attended Lucas' funeral in Atlanta on behalf of FAMU's baseball team. The baseball team also had a moment of silence before its alumni game on Saturday.



The FAMU baseball team and alumni observe a moment of silence Saturday for former Rattlers baseball coach Robert Lucas, who recently passed away. (Photo: Photo provided by Bryan Henry)

Richardson, was also at the funeral, said he visited Lucas before heading to Alcorn after the 2015 season. He was glad to visit his former head coach, but said the once-vibrant leader wasn't himself.

"It was difficult to see him," Richardson said. "At that time, he wasn't the same guy he'd always been. It was kind of tough to see him that way, but it was something I had to do. He'd had meant so much to me.

"I don't think he ever knew I got the job at Alcorn."

Now, Richardson dedicates much of his coaching style to Lucas.

"I lot of things I do, I do in memory of him," Richardson said. "From the way I interact with the kids to how I conduct practices and interact with boosters, I take a whole lot of things he taught me. He didn't have to take the time to show me the things he did, but that was just the kind of guy he was."

"He might be gone but his memory, his spirit, that'll live on forever."

