

= Alan Wiggins =

Alan Anthony Wiggins (February 17 , 1958 ? January 6 , 1991) was an American professional baseball player . He was a second baseman and outfielder in Major League Baseball (MLB) for the San Diego Padres and Baltimore Orioles between 1981 and 1987 . A speedy leadoff hitter , Wiggins established a Padres single @-@ season record for stolen bases in 1984 , when they won the National League Championship Series (NLCS) and advanced to the World Series .

Wiggins grew up in California and attended Pasadena City College before being drafted by the California Angels (known later as the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim) in 1977 . He played in the minor league systems of the Angels and the Los Angeles Dodgers , setting a professional baseball single @-@ season record with 120 stolen bases in 1980 . He made his major league debut with the San Diego Padres in 1981 , and he became a regular player within two years . In 1983 , he set the Padres ' single @-@ season stolen base record , a mark which he extended the following season . His 1984 stolen bases total (70) is still a team record as of 2015 .

During his major league career , Wiggins struggled with drug addiction , which resulted in multiple arrests and suspensions from baseball . His drug problems prompted a 1985 trade from San Diego to Baltimore , where Wiggins spent three seasons . After leaving baseball , he was diagnosed with AIDS . He was the first MLB player known to die of AIDS . Long after his death , two of Wiggins ' children ? Candice and Alan , Jr . ? became professional basketball players .

= = Early life = =

Wiggins was born in Los Angeles , California . His mother , Karla Wiggins , raised him as a single parent . He played baseball with his friends at a park across from the Rose Bowl . As a child , Wiggins was a fan of the Los Angeles Dodgers and he looked up to Maury Wills , a Dodgers player known for stealing bases . He graduated from John Muir High School in Pasadena , California ; the school was also the alma mater of baseball star Jackie Robinson . Gib Bodet , a scout for the Montreal Expos , noticed Wiggins in high school . Wiggins was 6 feet 2 inches (188 cm) , taller than a typical infielder . He was only an average hitter and fielder , but his speed stood out to Bodet .

The California Angels selected Wiggins as the eighth overall pick of the January 1977 MLB amateur draft . In 1977 , Wiggins played junior college baseball at Pasadena City College , where he was teammates with future major leaguers Matt Young and Rod Booker . Bodet , who had moved to the Angels scouting staff just before the draft , joined other Angels staff members and worked out with Wiggins after they selected him . Angels coach Bob Clear told Wiggins that his excellent speed would help him to a high batting average even if his hitting skills were not that strong . " If you can hit .200 , you can run the other eighty points . And if you can hit .280 , you can lead off for anybody , " Clear said . Wiggins signed with the Angels in May for \$ 2500 after what Bodet described as " a tough negotiation " . According to Bodet , Wiggins ' mother " did not trust easily " .

= = Baseball career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Wiggins played minor league baseball in 1977 for the Angels rookie @-@ league affiliate in Idaho Falls , where he hit .271 and had 25 stolen bases in 63 games . In 1978 , with the Class A Quad Cities Angels , Wiggins stole 26 bases in 49 games , but his batting average fell to .201 . However , he had a midseason fight with one of his coaches , and was released by the Angels organization in June 1978 . Wiggins feared that his career was near its end , but he reached out to Los Angeles Dodgers scout Gail Henley . After a workout in front of the Dodgers and manager Tommy Lasorda , Wiggins signed with the team before the 1979 season .

In 95 games for the Class A Clinton Dodgers , Wiggins hit .257 and had 43 steals . After having

played exclusively at second base the prior two years , the Dodgers converted him primarily to shortstop that year , but he also appeared in the outfield and at all three of the other infield positions . Playing with the Class A Lodi Dodgers of the California League in 1980 , Wiggins batted .288 and scored 108 runs while stealing 120 bases in just 135 games . His steals established a then professional @-@ baseball single @-@ season record , surpassing the previous minor league mark of 116 set by Allan Lewis in 1966 , as well as Lou Brock 's major @-@ league record of 118 in 1974 . Wiggins caught the eye of San Diego Padres general manager Jack McKeon , who drafted him in the 1980 Rule 5 draft after the Dodgers decided to leave him unprotected . According to the Padres , Wiggins had been arrested for possession of marijuana while with the Dodgers .

= = = San Diego Padres = = =

After having spent most of his minor league career as an infielder , he was used almost exclusively as an outfielder with the Hawaii Islanders of the Pacific Coast League in 1981 . He batted .302 with 73 steals , and received a September call @-@ up to the major leagues . In his first stint with the Padres , he got five hits in 14 at bats . Wiggins began the following season with the Islanders , but he was called up again by the Padres in early May to replace injured outfielder Gene Richards . Wiggins was leading San Diego with 29 stolen bases in 59 games when he was arrested for possession of cocaine in July . He was issued a 30 @-@ day suspension from baseball , and spent a month in a substance abuse treatment facility . The Padres , who were one of the first sports teams to offer an employee assistance program to its players , paid for all of his treatment , and he returned to the team in September . By 1983 , Wiggins had become a regular in the Padres lineup . He batted in the leadoff spot , playing in the outfield for most of the season . Though he was exceptional on defense in left field , he was moved to first base for the last 45 games of the year after Steve Garvey suffered a broken thumb . He hit .276 and picked up 139 hits that year . His 66 stolen bases , good for second in the league , broke the Padres single @-@ season record of 61 set by Richards in 1980 . Wiggins was named the team 's most valuable player that season .

Wiggins was moved to second base in 1984 . That move made room for rookie Carmelo Martínez in the outfield . Until that season , Martínez had been a first baseman , but the Padres already had a strong player there with Garvey , and they wanted to get Martínez 's bat into the lineup to improve their outfield 's home run production . Wiggins retained the leadoff spot in the lineup , hitting ahead of Tony Gwynn . During a May game , Wiggins became the fifth 20th @-@ century MLB player to steal five bases in one game , tying an NL record . In an August game , Wiggins unwittingly became a party to a series of fights . Wiggins was hit with the first pitch of the game by Atlanta Braves pitcher Pascual Pérez . The teams retaliated against each other throughout the game with brushback pitches and beanballs . The tension resulted in three fights and several ejections .

Wiggins finished second in the league in runs scored (106) , establishing a Padres single @-@ season record and helping the team to their first division championship . He finished the season with 70 steals , extending his team record from the previous season . Benefitting from the higher number of fastballs opposing pitchers threw in response to Wiggins ' speed , Gwynn batted above .400 when his speedy teammate was on base , and hit .351 overall for the first of his eight career batting titles . The duo was one of the biggest reasons behind San Diego 's success . They could score fast with Wiggins getting on first , stealing second , and Gwynn singling him home . Wiggins batted .316 in the 1984 NLCS against the Chicago Cubs , going two @-@ for @-@ three with two runs scored in the fifth and deciding game . In the 1984 World Series against the Detroit Tigers , Wiggins batted .364 and scored twice . His eight hits were the most of any Padres player in the series . The Tigers defeated the Padres in five games . According to manager Dick Williams , Wiggins was " absolutely the most valuable player in the National League in 1984 " .

Before the 1985 season , the Padres signed Wiggins to a four @-@ year contract extension worth nearly \$ 3 million . His agent described him as one of the highest @-@ paid NL second basemen . Wiggins missed the last two weeks of spring training after injuring his knee during a double @-@ play attempt on defense when a baserunner slid into him . He was unavailable for the start of the season , but returned to the lineup after being out for five games . Wiggins was batting .054 and

without a stolen base two weeks into the season , when he was suspended by the Padres following a relapse into cocaine dependency . After Wiggins completed a drug rehabilitation program , the Padres did not want to reactivate him , but baseball 's joint review board cleared him to return to baseball . In June , Donald Fehr of the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) announced that he intended to file a grievance against the Padres if they did not promptly activate Wiggins . The Padres sought to trade Wiggins , and the Baltimore Orioles showed interest . As the trade deadline approached , however , the Orioles were reportedly only offering two minor league players in exchange for Wiggins .

On June 27 , 1985 , Wiggins was traded to the Orioles for pitchers Roy Lee Jackson and Richard Caldwell . Padres owner Joan Kroc said that the team had warned Wiggins that he would not remain with the team if he had further problems with drugs . She stated that it would have been self @-@ serving to keep Wiggins after his relapse when he could instead pursue a fresh start with another team . Nonetheless , Gwynn felt that Wiggins had been shortchanged by the Padres .

= = = Baltimore Orioles = = =

Wiggins spent a few days in the minor leagues before being called up to Baltimore . In his first game with the Orioles , he started at second base and was the team 's leadoff hitter , reaching base three times , driving in a run and scoring a run . After the game , Wiggins commented that he felt welcome on the team and did not feel like he was starting out with anything to prove . In 76 games for Baltimore that year , Wiggins hit .285 , scored 43 runs and finished eighth in the American League with 30 stolen bases . That year , he was sometimes criticized for perceived laziness . Wiggins later said that he had been depressed because he missed his wife and children , who were still living in San Diego .

In 1986 , Wiggins fell into disfavor with manager Earl Weaver . His contentious behavior had alienated many of his teammates . At the height of his difficulties , Wiggins was tagged out with the hidden ball trick . The next day , he made three errors , two of which occurred in the same inning . After the two @-@ error inning , Baltimore fans booed as portions of his picture were revealed on the scoreboard during a " Who Am I " feature at the ballpark . Wiggins was angered at the response of the fans because he had family members at the game that day . Weaver said that Wiggins " had more chances than anyone who ever wore an Orioles ' uniform " . He batted .251 with 21 stolen bases and 30 runs scored , played only 71 games , and was reassigned to the Triple @-@ A Rochester Red Wings at one point in the season .

The following season , Cal Ripken , Sr. , replaced Weaver as manager of the Orioles . Baltimore signed Rick Burleson to play second base and Ray Knight to play third base . The moves seemed to leave Wiggins battling for an outfield spot , but after he hit .413 during spring training , Ripken made comments that suggested he was thinking of using Wiggins as a utility player . Just before the season started , Wiggins was not happy with Ripken 's idea of using him in a utility role , feeling that his spring performance should have secured him a starting position . He believed that he could be an asset in the leadoff batting slot .

At the start of the 1987 regular season , Wiggins spent some time as a designated hitter (DH) and shared second base duties with Burleson . Rookie second baseman Billy Ripken joined the club on July 10 . Burleson was cut , but general manager Hank Peters said , " We 're not bringing [Billy Ripken] up here to sit on the bench . " Wiggins was hitting .242 on July 10 , and he played mostly DH after the rookie 's arrival . In early August , Wiggins received a three @-@ day suspension after he got into an altercation with teammate Jim Dwyer and grabbed the shirt of Ripken Sr.

On September 1 , MLB indefinitely suspended Wiggins for a behavior issue . An anonymous Orioles official told the media that the suspension resulted from a positive drug screen . Wiggins was released from the Orioles on September 29 . The Orioles had to pay him two @-@ thirds of his \$ 800 @,@ 000 salary for 1988 . He was hitting .232 at the time of his release . MLBPA officials announced that they would not issue grievances related to Wiggins ' suspension or his subsequent release , noting that Wiggins wanted to be released by that point .

= = Later years = =

Though Wiggins did not give up hope for a return to baseball , he began to study the real @-@ estate market after his suspension from the game . In the late 1980s , Wiggins began to suffer from health difficulties related to AIDS , though the diagnosis was not publicly disclosed while he was alive . He was receiving deferred payments from his baseball career , and he began to make plans for the financial future of his children . He told one of his former teammates that he was getting into computer work . Gwynn said that he had seen Wiggins in the spring of 1990 and was struck by his visible weight loss .

In his final months , he sold his home in Poway , California , moving to Pasadena . Though he often stayed with friends , some of his longtime friends felt that he died in seclusion , embarrassed by what had happened with his life . In November 1990 , Wiggins was hospitalized with pneumonia and tuberculosis at Cedars @-@ Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles . After lapsing in and out of consciousness for a month , he died at the hospital on January 6 , 1991 .

Wiggins ' family initially attributed his death to lung cancer that had led to respiratory failure . Family members said that he had gotten sick with a cough and that his condition had worsened quickly . Wiggins weighed under 75 pounds at the time of his death . Several days later , a physician disclosed that Wiggins ' health problems were complications of AIDS . Wiggins stated that he had contracted the disease via intravenous drug use . He became the first baseball player known to have died from AIDS .

After Wiggins died , several well @-@ known baseball figures commented on his death . Longtime Oriole Frank Robinson said , " He was a very bright individual , and you could like the guy . But there was always something there to back you off . " Former Padres player Garry Templeton said that he might have been Wiggins ' closest friend , but he said that he did not know that Wiggins had been ill .

= = Personal life = =

Wiggins met his wife Angela when they were in junior high school , and they both graduated from John Muir High School . Two of Wiggins ' three children became professional basketball players . Candice was an All @-@ American at Stanford University and joined the Los Angeles Sparks as the third overall pick in the 2008 WNBA Draft . She has served as a spokesperson for the Greater Than AIDS campaign . Alan , Jr . , played college basketball at the University of San Francisco and has played professionally in several countries . His oldest daughter , Cassandra , played basketball in college as well at New York University .

The Los Angeles Times reported that Wiggins had experienced marital strife , but that he would not entertain the thought of divorce ; he wanted to ensure that his children did not grow up in a single @-@ parent household like he did . Wiggins and his mother were very close , and her 1983 Alzheimer 's disease diagnosis may have contributed to his drug problems . He was devastated that she would not be able to enjoy his success in the major leagues . In the last few years of Wiggins ' life , he enjoyed a closer relationship with his father , Albert , and he often took his children on visits to see their grandfather . Wiggins had a very difficult time with his father 's death in May 1990 .

Wiggins enjoyed stubbornly engaging in debates with his teammates , particularly Padres teammate Eric Show , just to provoke reactions from them . Tony Gwynn suggested that Wiggins was sometimes misunderstood . " To not like Alan Wiggins , is to not know Alan Wiggins , " Gwynn said . Wiggins ' agent , Tony Attanasio , said that Wiggins became deeply depressed in Baltimore . He had always been reserved and had a difficult time trusting other people . Attanasio said that Orioles players often actively avoided Wiggins . While Wiggins enjoyed reading books and newspapers , Attanasio said that teammates were turned off by his intellect . The Orioles once gave an IQ test , and Wiggins scored higher than everyone except for Weaver . According to Attanasio , players in Baltimore also resented Wiggins because he replaced Rich Dauer , who had been a well @-@ liked member of the team . Lee Lacy was one of his only friends in Baltimore .