

= Mariano Rivera =

Mariano Rivera (born November 29 , 1969) is a Panamanian former professional baseball pitcher who played 19 seasons in Major League Baseball (MLB) for the New York Yankees , from 1995 to 2013 . Nicknamed " Mo " and " Sandman " , Rivera spent most of his career as a relief pitcher and served as the Yankees ' closer for 17 seasons . A thirteen @-@ time All @-@ Star and five @-@ time World Series champion , he is MLB 's career leader in saves (652) and games finished (952) . Rivera won five American League (AL) Rolaids Relief Man Awards and three Delivery Man of the Year Awards , and he finished in the top three in voting for the AL Cy Young Award four times .

Rivera was signed by the Yankees organization in Panama in 1990 , and he debuted in the major leagues in 1995 . Initially a starting pitcher , he was converted to a relief pitcher late in his rookie year . After a breakthrough season in 1996 as a setup man , he became the Yankees ' closer in 1997 . In the following seasons , he established himself as one of baseball 's top relievers , leading the major leagues in saves in 1999 , 2001 , and 2004 . Rivera primarily threw a sharp @-@ moving , mid @-@ 90s mile @-@ per @-@ hour cut fastball that frequently broke hitters ' bats and earned a reputation as one of the league 's toughest pitches to hit . With his presence at the end of games , signaled by his foreboding entrance song " Enter Sandman " , Rivera was a key contributor to the Yankees ' success in the late 1990s and early 2000s . An accomplished postseason performer , he was named the 1999 World Series Most Valuable Player (MVP) and the 2003 AL Championship Series MVP , and he holds several postseason records , including lowest earned run average (ERA) (0 @.@ 70) and most saves (42) .

Rivera is regarded within baseball as one of the most dominant relievers in major league history . Pitching with a longevity and consistency uncommon to the closer role , he saved at least 25 games in 15 consecutive seasons and posted an ERA under 2 @.@ 00 in 11 seasons , both of which are records . His career 2 @.@ 21 ERA and 1 @.@ 00 WHIP are the lowest in the live @-@ ball era among qualified pitchers . Fellow players credit him with popularizing the cut fastball across the major leagues . Along with his signature pitch , Rivera was known for his precise control , smooth pitching motion , and for his composure and reserved demeanor on the field . In 2013 , the Yankees retired his uniform number 42 ; he was the last major league player to wear the number full @-@ time , following its league @-@ wide retirement in honor of Jackie Robinson . Rivera has been involved in philanthropic causes and the Christian community through the Mariano Rivera Foundation . He is considered to be a strong candidate for the Baseball Hall of Fame once he is eligible .

= = Early life = =

Mariano Rivera was born in Panama City , Panama , on November 29 , 1969 , to Mariano Rivera Palacios and Delia Jiron . The couple 's second child , Rivera has one older sister , Delia , and two younger brothers , Alvaro and Giraldo . Supported by Mariano , Sr. ' s job as captain of a fishing boat , the family lived in Puerto Caimito , a Panamanian fishing village that Rivera described as " poor " . As a young man , Rivera played soccer and baseball with his friends on the beach during low tide . Soccer was his favorite sport , while his favorite athlete was Pelé . For baseball games , they substituted cardboard milk cartons for gloves and tree branches for bats , and they fashioned balls by taping worn @-@ out baseballs and wads of shredded fishing nets . Rivera used this makeshift equipment until his father bought him his first leather glove when he was 12 years old . Speaking about his youth , Rivera said that although he stayed out of trouble , he " was hanging with the wrong people " .

Rivera attended Escuela Victoriano Chacón for elementary school and La Escuela Secundaria Pedro Pablo Sanchez for his secondary education , but he dropped out in ninth grade . At age 16 , he began working six @-@ day weeks on a commercial boat captained by his father , catching sardines . The job was " extremely hard " for Rivera , who was more interested in becoming a mechanic . He decided to give up fishing as a career after abandoning a capsizing 120 @-@ short @-@ ton (110 t) commercial boat as a 19 @-@ year @-@ old , and after his uncle died from

injuries suffered on a fishing boat . Rivera continued to play sports during his teenage years but eventually quit soccer after a series of ankle and knee injuries around age 17 . Consequently , he shifted his attention to baseball but considered it just a hobby rather than a possible profession .

In 1988 , Rivera joined Panamá Oeste , a local amateur baseball team , as their shortstop . Scout Herb Raybourn watched him play in a baseball tournament but did not project him to be a major league shortstop . A year later , Panamá Oeste 's pitcher performed so poorly in a playoff game that Rivera was asked to replace him , and despite no experience at the position , he pitched well . Teammates Claudino Hernández and Emilio Gáez consequently contacted Chico Heron , a scout for the New York Yankees . Two weeks after his pitching debut , Rivera was invited to a Yankees tryout camp run by Heron in Panama City . Raybourn , who had returned to Panama to scout as the Yankees ' director of Latin American operations , received a tip about Rivera . Raybourn was surprised to hear he had switched positions but decided to watch him throw . Although Rivera had no formal pitching training , weighed just 155 pounds (70 kg) , and threw only 85 ? 87 miles per hour (137 ? 140 kilometres per hour) , Raybourn was impressed by his athleticism and smooth , effortless pitching motion . Viewing Rivera as a raw talent , Raybourn signed the amateur free agent to a contract with the Yankees organization on February 17 , 1990 ; the contract included a signing bonus of US \$ 2 @, @ 500 (\$ 4 @, @ 528 today) , according to Major League Baseball (MLB) records .

= = Professional baseball career = =

= = = Minor leagues (1990 ? 1995) = = =

After signing his contract , Rivera ? who spoke no English and had never left home ? flew to the United States and reported to the Gulf Coast League (GCL) Yankees , a Rookie level minor league affiliate of the New York Yankees . Feeling lonely and homesick , he wrote home to his parents often , as they did not have access to telephones in Puerto Caimito . At that point in his career , scouts considered Rivera to be a " fringe prospect " at best , but he made progress with a strong 1990 season for the GCL Yankees . Pitching mostly in relief , he allowed only 24 baserunners and one earned run in 52 innings pitched ? a 0 @. @ 17 earned run average (ERA) . The team permitted Rivera to start the season 's final game in order for him to accumulate enough innings pitched to qualify for the league 's ERA title (which carried a \$ 500 bonus) ; his subsequent seven @- @ inning no @- @ hitter " put him on the map with the organization " , according to manager Glenn Sherlock . In the offseason , Rivera returned to Panama , where a tip from him to Raybourn led to the Yankees signing a promising local 16 @- @ year @- @ old player , Rivera 's cousin Rubén . In 1991 , Mariano was promoted to the Class A level Greensboro Hornets of the South Atlantic League , where he started 15 of the 29 games he pitched in . Despite a 4 ? 9 win ? loss record , he recorded a 2 @. @ 75 ERA in 114 2 ? 3 innings pitched and struck out 123 batters while walking 36 batters . New York Yankees manager Buck Showalter took notice of Rivera 's strong strikeout @- @ to @- @ walk ratio , calling it " impressive in any league " and saying , " This guy is going to make it . "

In 1992 , Rivera was promoted to the Class A @- @ Advanced level Fort Lauderdale Yankees of the Florida State League (FSL) . He started 10 games for Fort Lauderdale , compiling a 5 ? 3 win ? loss record and a 2 @. @ 28 ERA . He attempted to improve the movement on his slider pitch by snapping his wrist during his throwing motion , but he inadvertently caused damage to the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) in his right elbow . Rivera underwent surgery in August 1992 to repair the damage , ending his season and interrupting his minor league career . Contrary to popular belief , he did not have Tommy John surgery ; his surgeon , Dr. Frank Jobe , determined that ligament replacement was not necessary and was instead able to repair the frayed UCL . Rivera 's rehabilitation coincided with MLB 's 1992 expansion draft to fill the rosters for two expansion teams , the Florida Marlins and Colorado Rockies . Rivera was left unprotected by the Yankees but was not drafted . He successfully rehabilitated his arm in early 1993 and resumed pitching that year . He first

joined the Rookie level Yankees to make two abbreviated starts , before returning to the Class A level Hornets to start ten more games . Witnessing him rehabilitate , the Hornets ' official scorer Ogi Overman was not optimistic about Rivera 's future , saying , " I thought [he] was on a one @-@ way trip to nowhere . "

In 1994 , he was promoted from the Class A @-@ Advanced level Tampa Yankees of the FSL to the Double @-@ A level Albany @-@ Colonie Yankees of the Eastern League , and then to the Triple @-@ A level Columbus Clippers of the International League . Rivera finished the year with a 10 ? 2 record in 22 starts , although he struggled for Columbus , recording a 5 @. @ 81 ERA in six starts . Beginning the 1995 season with Columbus , he was ranked by sports magazine Baseball America as the ninth @-@ best prospect in the Yankees organization ; by contrast , the publication ranked Rivera 's highly touted cousin Rubén as the second @-@ best prospect in baseball . Mariano 's pitching repertoire primarily consisted of fastballs at the time , although he threw a slider and changeup as secondary pitches .

= = = Major leagues (1995 ? 2013) = = =

= = = = 1995 ? 1997 = = = =

After being called up to the major leagues on May 16 , 1995 , Rivera made his debut for the New York Yankees on May 23 against the California Angels . Starting in place of injured pitcher Jimmy Key , Rivera allowed five earned runs in 3 1 ? 3 innings pitched in a 10 ? 0 loss . He struggled through his first four major league starts , posting a 10 @. @ 20 ERA , and as a result , he was demoted to Columbus on June 11 . As a 25 @-@ year @-@ old rookie just three years removed from major arm surgery , his spot on the team was not guaranteed ; management considered trading him to the Detroit Tigers for starter David Wells . While recovering from a sore shoulder in the minor leagues , Rivera pitched a no @-@ hit shutout in a rain @-@ shortened five @-@ inning start . Reports from the game indicated that his pitches had reached 95 ? 96 mph (153 ? 154 km / h) , about 6 mph (9 @. @ 7 km / h) faster than his previous average velocity ; Rivera attributes his inexplicable improvement to God . Yankees general manager Gene Michael was skeptical of the reports until verifying that Columbus ' radar gun was not faulty and that another team 's scout had taken the same measurements . Afterwards , he ended any trade negotiations involving Rivera . On July 4 , in his first start back in the major leagues , Rivera pitched eight scoreless innings against the Chicago White Sox , allowing just two hits while striking out 11 batters . In five subsequent starts , he was unable to match his success from that game ; after a brief demotion to Columbus in August , Rivera made one last start in the major leagues in September before he was moved to the Yankees ' bullpen . Overall , he finished his first major league season with a 5 ? 3 record and a 5 @. @ 51 ERA in ten starts and nine relief outings . His performance in the 1995 American League Division Series , in which he pitched 5 1 ? 3 scoreless innings of relief , convinced Yankees management to keep him and convert him to a relief pitcher the following season .

In 1996 , Rivera served primarily as a setup pitcher , typically pitching in the seventh and eighth innings of games before closer John Wetteland pitched in the ninth . Their effectiveness as a tandem helped the Yankees win 70 of 73 games when leading after six innings that season . Over a stretch of games between April 19 and May 21 , Rivera pitched 26 consecutive scoreless innings , including 15 consecutive hitless innings . During the streak , he recorded his first career save in a May 17 game against the Angels . Rivera finished the regular season with a 2 @. @ 09 ERA in 107 2 ? 3 innings pitched and set a Yankees single @-@ season record for strikeouts by a reliever (130) . In the postseason , he allowed just one earned run in 14 1 ? 3 innings pitched , helping the Yankees advance to and win the 1996 World Series against the Atlanta Braves ; it was the franchise 's first World Series championship since 1978 . In MLB 's annual awards voting by the Baseball Writers ' Association of America , Rivera finished in twelfth place for the American League (AL) Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award and third for the AL Cy Young Award , which is given to the league 's best pitcher . Commentator and former player Tim McCarver wrote that the Yankees "

revolutionized baseball " that year with Rivera , " a middle reliever who should have been on the All @-@ Star team and who was a legitimate MVP candidate . "

Impressed by Rivera 's pitching , Yankees management chose not to re @-@ sign Wetteland in the offseason , opting instead to replace him as closer with Rivera . In April 1997 , MLB retired the uniform number 42 league @-@ wide to honor Jackie Robinson for breaking the baseball color line , although Rivera was among a dozen players allowed to continue wearing the number per a grandfather clause . Rivera 's transition from setup man to closer in 1997 was not seamless ; he blew three of his first six save opportunities and indicated that he was initially uncomfortable in the role . With reassurance from manager Joe Torre , Rivera settled into the ninth @-@ inning role , and he earned his first All @-@ Star selection with 27 saves and a 1 @.@ 96 ERA at the midseason break . In the 1997 All @-@ Star Game , he pitched a perfect ninth inning to collect his first save in an All @-@ Star Game . That summer , he added a cut fastball to his pitching repertoire after accidentally discovering how to throw the pitch . Rivera finished the regular season with 43 saves in 52 opportunities with a 1 @.@ 88 ERA . His first year as closer ended with a blown save in Game 4 of the 1997 AL Division Series against the Cleveland Indians ; with the Yankees four outs from advancing to the next round of the postseason , Rivera allowed a game @-@ tying home run to Sandy Alomar , Jr . The Yankees eventually lost that game and the next , eliminating them from the postseason .

== == 1998 ? 2001 == ==

After spending two weeks on the disabled list with a groin strain during the opening month of the 1998 season , Rivera continued to establish himself as one of the major leagues ' best closers . Moreover , he became the central figure of a Yankees bullpen that , supported by middle relievers Jeff Nelson and Mike Stanton , contributed to the team 's late @-@ 1990s dynasty . That year , Rivera made the cutter one of his primary pitches , and it quickly became his signature , earning a reputation for breaking hitters ' bats with its sharp lateral movement . He saved 36 games in 41 opportunities in the regular season and finished with a 1 @.@ 91 ERA . In the 1998 postseason , he pitched 13 1 ? 3 scoreless innings and saved six games , three of which came in the 1998 World Series against the San Diego Padres . Rivera 's save in Game 4 of the series clinched the Yankees ' championship , capping off a season in which they won an MLB @-@ record 125 games combined in the regular season and the postseason . By season 's end , Rivera had allowed only two earned runs in 35 career postseason innings pitched ? a 0 @.@ 51 ERA ? and by passing 30 innings pitched , he qualified for the major league record for lowest postseason career ERA ; it is a record he still holds through 141 innings pitched .

In 1999 , Rivera was selected for the All @-@ Star team for a second time with 23 saves and a 2 @.@ 29 ERA in the first half of the season . That summer , the Yankee Stadium scoreboard production staff began playing the song " Enter Sandman " by heavy metal band Metallica as Rivera 's entrance music . Staff members selected the song after witnessing in the previous year 's World Series how enthusiastically San Diego fans reacted to closer Trevor Hoffman entering games accompanied by AC / DC 's " Hells Bells " . Although Rivera was indifferent about his entrance music , " Enter Sandman " soon became as much a part of his identity as a closer as his cutter did . After recording three blown saves and a 7 @.@ 84 ERA in July , he allowed just one earned run over his last 30 appearances . He finished the season with a 1 @.@ 83 ERA and 45 saves in 49 opportunities , his first time leading the major leagues in saves . He received his first AL Rolands Relief Man Award , an annual award for the league 's best closer based on their statistics . In the 1999 World Series against the Braves , Rivera recorded a win and two saves , the second of which clinched the Yankees ' championship title , his third overall . For his performance against Atlanta , he received the World Series MVP Award . Rivera finished 1999 by pitching 43 consecutive scoreless innings in the regular season and postseason combined , and he placed third in voting for the AL Cy Young Award . After the season , he revealed tentative plans to retire and become a minister after playing four more seasons , though he backed off these plans the following year .

In the offseason , Rivera lost his arbitration case , in which he requested an annual salary of \$ 9

@. @ 25 million , but the \$ 7 @. @ 25 million salary that the arbitrators awarded him instead set a baseball record for the highest arbitration award . In the 2000 season , Rivera was selected as an All @- @ Star for the third time . On July 8 , he saved two games played in two different ballparks as part of a day @- @ night doubleheader against the New York Mets at Shea Stadium and Yankee Stadium . He ended the season with 36 saves in 41 opportunities and a 2 @. @ 85 ERA . In the postseason , Rivera saved six games , allowed three earned runs in 15 2 ? 3 innings pitched , and broke two major league records : he eclipsed Dennis Eckersley 's record for postseason saves with the 16th of his career ; he also broke Whitey Ford 's record for consecutive scoreless innings pitched in postseason play , a streak that ended shortly thereafter at 33 1 ? 3 innings . In the 2000 World Series against the Mets , Rivera clinched a championship for his team for the third consecutive year . It was his fourth World Series title overall . By this point , he had established a reputation as an exceptional postseason performer ? journalist Jack Curry called him the " infallible weapon " and " the greatest reason the Yankees [were] three @- @ time champions " .

With Rivera 's contract set to expire after 2001 , the Yankees signed him to a four @- @ year , \$ 39 @. @ 99 million deal prior to the season , marking the first long @- @ term contract of his career . In 2001 , he was selected for the All @- @ Star team for a third consecutive year . His final numbers included a 2 @. @ 34 ERA , a closer career @- @ high 80 2 ? 3 innings pitched , and an MLB @- @ leading 50 saves in 57 opportunities ? the second time he led the majors in saves . This earned him his second AL Rolands Relief Man Award . Despite having what sportswriters deemed an " aura of invincibility " in the postseason , Rivera failed to close out the decisive Game 7 of the 2001 World Series against the Arizona Diamondbacks . In one of his most infamous moments , he blew a save in the bottom of the ninth inning , in part due to his own throwing error , and he lost the Series later in the inning by allowing Luis Gonzalez 's bloop single with the bases loaded to score the winning run . It was Rivera 's first and only loss of his postseason career , and it snapped his record streak of 23 consecutive postseason saves converted .

= = = = 2002 ? 2005 = = = =

On May 19 , 2002 , Rivera recorded his 225th career save , surpassing Dave Righetti as the Yankees ' franchise leader in saves . Over the next few months of the season , injuries limited his playing time . He was first placed on the disabled list in June due to a groin strain , though his first @- @ half numbers , which included a 1 @. @ 47 ERA and 21 saves , earned him an All @- @ Star selection . In a game on July 14 , Rivera endured one of his worst outings , allowing six earned runs , including a walk @- @ off grand slam . One week later , he was placed on the disabled list with a shoulder strain . Rivera was activated on August 8 after receiving a cortisone shot but returned to the disabled list after a recurrence of shoulder tightness . Overall , he finished the season with a 2 @. @ 74 ERA and 28 saves in 32 opportunities in just 46 innings pitched .

To placate the Yankees ' concerns about his durability , Rivera followed a strength and conditioning program in the offseason , instead of throwing . Torre said that he would try to reduce Rivera 's workload during the 2003 season to minimize the injury risk to his closer . However , Rivera suffered a groin injury before the season began , causing him to miss the first month . After returning on April 30 , he pitched well in the season 's first half , saving 16 games in 17 opportunities . His save on June 12 against the St. Louis Cardinals secured the 300th career win for starter Roger Clemens . Rivera slumped early in the second half ; over one stretch , he blew five of eleven save opportunities , but he rebounded to convert his final 15 of the season . He finished the 2003 regular season with a new career best in ERA (1 @. @ 66) , along with 40 saves in 46 opportunities . In the 2003 AL Championship Series against the arch @- @ rival Boston Red Sox , Rivera had one of the most memorable postseason performances of his career ; in the decisive Game 7 , he entered in the ninth inning with the score tied 5 ? 5 and pitched three scoreless innings , his longest outing since 1996 . He became the winning pitcher after Aaron Boone hit an eleventh @- @ inning walk @- @ off home run that clinched the Yankees ' series victory and advanced them to the 2003 World Series . Rivera celebrated by running to the pitcher 's mound and collapsing in joy to thank God , as Boone rounded the bases and was met by his teammates at home plate . Rivera was named the AL Championship

Series MVP for recording two saves and a win in the series . The Yankees lost the World Series to the Florida Marlins ; Rivera saved five games and allowed only one earned run in 16 innings pitched that postseason .

Prior to the 2004 season , with a year remaining on his contract , Rivera signed a two @-@ year extension worth \$ 21 million , with an option for a third year . That season , Rivera surpassed 300 career saves and made his sixth All @-@ Star team with 32 saves at the midseason break , then an AL record . His final numbers for the year included a 1 @. @ 94 ERA and a career @-@ high 53 saves in 57 opportunities ; it was his third time leading the major leagues in saves . Along with winning a third AL Rolands Relief Man Award , he placed third in the AL Cy Young Award voting . Following the Yankees ' victory in the 2004 AL Division Series against the Minnesota Twins , Rivera returned home to Panama to mourn two relatives who had died in an accident in his swimming pool . Despite his status being in doubt for the 2004 AL Championship Series against the Red Sox , he returned to New York for Game 1 after attending the funeral in Panama earlier in the day . He recorded a save that night , as well as in Game 2 . Although the Yankees led three @-@ games @-@ to @-@ none in the series , Rivera blew saves in Games 4 and 5 , and the Red Sox won both games in extra innings to avoid elimination . In Game 4 , Boston 's Dave Roberts pinch ran and stole second base against Rivera , eventually scoring on a single to tie the game . In Game 5 , Rivera entered with a one @-@ run lead with runners on base and allowed a sacrifice fly to tie the score . Although he allowed just one earned run in the 2004 postseason , he blew three of five save opportunities in the two series . Boston 's comeback victories helped them become the first team in MLB history to win a best @-@ of @-@ seven series in which they trailed three @-@ games @-@ to @-@ none .

Following a career high in appearances in 2004 , Rivera did not throw during the offseason , unlike previous years . His 2005 season began on a low note . After missing time in spring training with elbow bursitis , he blew his first two save opportunities of the season against the Red Sox , marking four consecutive blown opportunities against Boston dating back to the previous postseason . Fans at Yankee Stadium booed Rivera , and baseball journalists speculated if his days as a dominant pitcher were over . He was subsequently cheered by Red Sox fans during pre @-@ game introductions at Fenway Park the following week , in recognition of his struggles against the Red Sox . He responded to the ovation with a sense of humor by tipping his cap to the crowd .

Rivera rebounded in dominating fashion and finished 2005 with his greatest season to that point . He was selected to the All @-@ Star team , converted 31 consecutive save opportunities , and finished the season with 43 saves in 47 opportunities . He set new career bests in many statistical categories , including ERA (1 @. @ 38) and walks plus hits per inning pitched , or WHIP (0 @. @ 87) . Rivera limited opposing hitters to a batting average against of .177 , then the best mark of his closer career . In addition to winning a fourth AL Rolands Relief Man Award , he placed second in voting for the AL Cy Young Award behind starter Bartolo Colón , and ninth for the AL MVP Award ? his best finishes in voting for both awards . During the postseason , MLB announced the Latino Legends Team , a fan @-@ voted all @-@ time roster of the greatest Latino players ; Rivera was named the team 's relief pitcher .

== = 2006 ? 2008 == = =

Rivera began 2006 with a 3 @. @ 72 ERA and two losses in April , but his numbers improved in subsequent months . On June 6 , he saved his 391st career game , passing Dennis Eckersley for the fourth @-@ most saves in major league history . Rivera was selected to his third consecutive All @-@ Star team with a 1 @. @ 76 ERA and 19 saves entering the midseason break . He saved the AL 's comeback victory in the 2006 All @-@ Star Game for his third career All @-@ Star save , tying him with Eckersley for the most ever . On July 16 , Rivera achieved another milestone by becoming the fourth MLB pitcher to reach 400 saves . Although a throwing elbow strain sidelined Rivera for most of September , he finished the 2006 season with 34 saves in 37 opportunities and an ERA of 1 @. @ 80 ? his fourth consecutive season with a sub @-@ 2 @. @ 00 ERA . For a second consecutive year , fans voted him the Delivery Man of the Year .

With his contract set to expire after the 2007 season , Rivera sought an extension with the Yankees during spring training . Team management refused to negotiate near the start of the season , prompting him to respond that he would consider free agency at the end of the year . In April , Rivera blew his first two save opportunities , compiled two losses , and surrendered nine earned runs in 7 2 ? 3 innings pitched . Concerned sportswriters attributed his struggles to infrequent use , as the Yankees presented him with few situations to enter a game . Rivera saved 30 of his next 32 opportunities and posted a 2 @.@ 26 ERA over the final five months of the season . In addition , he passed John Franco for third place on the all @.@ time saves list with his 425th career save . Still , Rivera finished 2007 with closer career worsts in earned runs (25) , hits (68) , and ERA (3 @.@ 15) , and his 30 saves in 34 opportunities were his second @.@ lowest total since 1997 . After the Yankees were eliminated from the playoffs in the opening round , Rivera stated his intentions to test the free agent market . He initially indicated that his decision of where to sign would be influenced by whether long @.@ time manager Joe Torre was re @.@ signed . Although Torre did not return , Rivera remained with the Yankees by agreeing to a three @.@ year , \$ 45 million contract , making him the highest @.@ paid reliever in baseball history .

Rivera rebounded in 2008 and began the year with 16 consecutive scoreless innings pitched and 28 consecutive save opportunities converted , both personal bests to start a season . His first @.@ half performance , highlighted by a 1 @.@ 06 ERA and 23 saves in as many opportunities , garnered him his ninth All @.@ Star selection . Leading up to the 2008 MLB All @.@ Star Game , which was held at Yankee Stadium in the venue 's final year of existence , a few sportswriters proposed making Rivera the AL 's starting pitcher as a tribute to him and his home ballpark . He instead was used as a reliever in the AL 's extra @.@ inning win . In the final month of the season , he recorded two milestones : on September 15 , he recorded his 479th save to pass Lee Smith for second all @.@ time in regular season saves ; on September 21 , in the final game at Yankee Stadium , Rivera threw the final pitch in the venue 's history , retiring Brian Roberts of the Baltimore Orioles on a ground @.@ out . After the Yankees missed the postseason for the first time in his career , Rivera disclosed that he had suffered from shoulder pain throughout the year . Tests revealed calcification of the acromioclavicular joint in his throwing shoulder , for which he underwent minor arthroscopic surgery in the offseason .

Rivera finished 2008 with one of his best individual seasons . Along with a 1 @.@ 40 ERA and 39 saves in 40 opportunities , he set career bests in multiple statistical categories , including WHIP (0 @.@ 67) , on @.@ base plus slugging (OPS) -against (.422) , batting average against (.165) , save percentage (97 @.@ 5 %) , walks (6) , earned runs (11) , and blown saves (1) . He averaged 9 @.@ 81 strikeouts per 9 innings pitched , his best mark as a closer . He pitched with such control that his 12 @.@ 83 strikeout @.@ to @.@ walk ratio made him the second MLB pitcher ever to record a figure that high in a season (minimum 50 innings pitched) . He placed fifth in the AL Cy Young Award voting .

== == 2009 ? 2012 == ==

In his first 12 appearances of 2009 , Rivera surrendered four home runs and had a 3 @.@ 97 ERA , leading to speculation about his cutter 's effectiveness and his shoulder 's health at age 39 . As the season progressed , his numbers improved , and he reached a milestone on June 28 by becoming the second pitcher with 500 regular season saves . In the same game , while batting against fellow closer Francisco Rodríguez , he collected his first career run batted in by walking with the bases loaded . With 23 saves in 24 opportunities and a 2 @.@ 43 ERA in the season 's first half , Rivera was selected an All @.@ Star for the tenth time . At the 2009 MLB All @.@ Star Game , he set a record by saving his fourth career All @.@ Star Game . In the season 's second half , Rivera allowed earned runs in only two of his final 40 appearances , while he set a new personal best for consecutive save opportunities converted with 36 . He finished the regular season with a 1 @.@ 76 ERA , 44 saves in 46 opportunities , and a 0 @.@ 90 WHIP . In the postseason , he pitched 16 innings , allowing one earned run and saving five games , and he clinched the Yankees ' victory in the 2009 World Series against the Philadelphia Phillies ? his fifth championship . He was the only

closer who did not record a loss or blown save that postseason . Rivera collected several awards at season 's end , including his third Delivery Man Award , his fifth AL Rolands Relief Man Award , and the 2009 Sporting News Pro Athlete of the Year Award . Reflecting on the decade 's end , ESPN.com 's Jerry Crasnick called Rivera the most valuable major league pitcher of the previous 10 years .

In 2010 , Rivera and two of his " Core Four " teammates , Derek Jeter and Jorge Posada , became the first trio in any of the four major sports leagues in North America (MLB , NFL , NBA , or NHL) to play together on the same team for 16 consecutive seasons . Rivera began with one of his best first halves , compiling a 1 @. @ 05 ERA , 20 saves in 22 opportunities , and 0 @. @ 64 WHIP before the All @- @ Star break , and in June , he set a personal best streak with 24 consecutive batters retired . He earned an 11th All @- @ Star selection but withdrew from the game due to lingering oblique and knee injuries . In the second half , he was less effective ? he struck out batters half as often , and in September , he compiled three blown saves and a 4 @. @ 76 ERA . Rivera finished 2010 with a 1 @. @ 80 ERA and 0 @. @ 83 WHIP , numbers that were among his career bests , though his 33 saves in 38 opportunities and 6 @. @ 75 strikeouts per 9 innings ratio were below his career averages . In the postseason , he pitched 6 1 ? 3 scoreless innings while saving three games . After becoming a free agent in the offseason , Rivera agreed to a two @- @ year , \$ 30 million contract to remain with the Yankees .

That same offseason , Trevor Hoffman retired as the all @- @ time regular season saves leader with a final tally of 601 , leaving Rivera as the active leader in saves and 42 behind Hoffman 's record to start 2011 . Rivera 's season was marked by several milestones . He broke the all @- @ time record for games finished , and in May , he became the 15th pitcher to make 1 @, @ 000 appearances and the first to do so with a single team . He was named an All @- @ Star for the 12th time with a 1 @. @ 85 ERA and 22 saves in 26 opportunities at the midseason break , but for the second consecutive year , he skipped the game to rest injuries . His pursuit of Hoffman 's saves record reached a climax in the final month of the season ; on September 13 , he collected his 600th save , making him just the second pitcher to accomplish the feat . Four days later , he saved his 601st game , tying him with Hoffman for the most in MLB history . Rivera broke the record on September 19 at Yankee Stadium by closing out a 6 ? 4 win against the Twins , the final out by strikeout . After the game , Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli called him to offer his congratulations . Rivera finished the season with a 1 @. @ 91 ERA , a 0 @. @ 90 WHIP , and 44 saves in 49 opportunities , making him the first pitcher over the age of 40 to save at least 40 games in a season . In the offseason , he underwent throat surgery to remove polyps from his vocal cords .

Rivera began the 2012 season by blowing a save on Opening Day but followed it with eight scoreless innings and five saves for the remainder of April . After just nine appearances , his season was prematurely ended by a freak injury ; prior to a May 3 game against the Kansas City Royals , Rivera twisted his right knee on the field 's warning track while shagging balls during batting practice , causing him to tear his right anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) . Speculation grew that the injury would end his career , as he had hinted at retirement in spring training . Rivera put those concerns to rest the following day when he announced his intentions to return , saying , " Write it down in big letters . I 'm not going down like this . " He successfully underwent ACL reconstructive surgery on June 12 , while his meniscus , previously thought to have been damaged , did not need to be repaired . Rafael Soriano filled in as closer in Rivera 's absence and saved 42 games in 46 opportunities . Rivera signed a one @- @ year , \$ 10 million contract in the offseason to remain with the team .

== == 2013 == ==

After successfully rehabilitating his knee in the offseason , Rivera announced on March 9 , 2013 , that he would retire after the 2013 season , his 19th in the major leagues . Throughout his final year , Rivera spent time during visits to each ballpark meeting privately with fans and unsung team employees to hear their stories and thank them for supporting baseball . He explained : " It was important for me to meet the people who make baseball what it is , the people who work in the game

every day . They have given me far more than I have given them . " Each opposing team returned the favor by honoring Rivera with a gift during his final visit to their city : in Cleveland , the Indians teamed up with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to present Rivera with a gold record of his entrance song " Enter Sandman " ; the Minnesota Twins commissioned a rocking chair made of broken bats , many broken personally by Rivera 's cutter , called the " Chair of Broken Dreams " ; the rival Boston Red Sox gave him a painting and several artifacts from Fenway Park . Many teams made donations to the Mariano Rivera Foundation , the pitcher 's charitable organization . Corporate sponsors of the Yankees paid tribute as well ; Delta Air Lines dedicated a Boeing 757 airplane with Rivera 's signature and uniform number 42 on the exterior , while Hard Rock Cafe retired " Enter Sandman " from its song system at all locations except for its Yankee Stadium restaurant .

Rivera 's 10 saves in 10 opportunities in April were his highest total for the opening month of a season . He converted his first 18 save attempts of the season until blowing a save against the Mets on May 28 ; it was the first time that he blew a save and lost a game without recording an out . Rivera entered the midseason break with 30 saves in 32 opportunities and a 1 @. @ 83 ERA , and he was named an All @- @ Star for the 13th time in his career , the second @- @ most All @- @ Star selections for a pitcher behind Warren Spahn 's 17 . During the All @- @ Star Game , held at Citi Field in New York , Rivera was called upon to pitch in the eighth inning for his final All @- @ Star appearance . As he trotted onto the field , players from both teams remained near their dugouts and joined fans in giving Rivera a standing ovation as he stood alone on the field . Rivera retired all three batters he faced , preserving his 0 @. @ 00 career ERA in All @- @ Star Games . He was named the All @- @ Star Game MVP , making him the first reliever selected to an All @- @ Star team to ever receive the award , as well as the first pitcher since Pedro Martínez in 1999 and the second Yankee ever after Derek Jeter in 2000 . He became the first MLB player to be named the MVP of a World Series , League Championship Series , and All @- @ Star Game . Rivera 's performance dipped in the second half of the season , as he blew five save opportunities in the last two months , including three consecutive chances for the first time in his career . In a Fox Sports documentary chronicling his final season , entitled Being : Mariano , Rivera said that his farewell to baseball had mentally and physically drained him and that by September , he had " no desire " left for the sport .

On September 22 , 2013 , a day that Mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg declared " Mariano Rivera Day " , the Yankees held a 50 @- @ minute pre @- @ game tribute to Rivera at Yankee Stadium . In a ceremony attended by former teammates , Yankees staff , and members of Jackie Robinson 's family , Rivera 's uniform number 42 was retired by the team , making him the first active Yankee to receive that honor . Metallica performed " Enter Sandman " live as he walked onto the field during the festivities . The team presented a video montage and several gifts to Rivera before he addressed the crowd to offer his thanks . Four days later against the Tampa Bay Rays , he pitched in the final game of his career before a home crowd at Yankee Stadium . Entering in the eighth inning to a pre @- @ recorded introduction by late Yankees public address announcer Bob Sheppard , Rivera pitched 1 1 ? 3 innings without allowing a baserunner . In the ninth inning , after retiring Yunel Escobar on a pop fly for the second out , Rivera was removed from the game ; with permission from the umpires , Yankees manager Joe Girardi ceremonially delegated the substitution duty to Rivera 's long @- @ time teammates Andy Pettitte and Derek Jeter . After they reached the mound to make the pitching change , the normally reserved Rivera tearfully embraced his teammates for nearly a minute . Walking off the field to a standing ovation from fans and players , he saluted the crowd and then took a curtain call . After the game , he visited the mound for a final time and grabbed a handful of dirt as a memento . Rivera finished his final season with a 2 @. @ 11 ERA , 1 @. @ 05 WHIP , and 44 saves in 51 opportunities , earning him the AL Comeback Player of the Year Award , among several awards . During the World Series , he was honored as the 13th recipient of the Commissioner 's Historic Achievement Award for his accomplished career and for being " a great ambassador of the game " .

= = Player profile = =

= = = Pitching style = = =

Rivera 's signature pitch was a cut fastball or " cutter " , which exhibited lateral movement towards left @-@ handed hitters similar to that of a slider but with the velocity of a fastball . The sharp , late movement of Rivera 's cutter prevented hitters from making contact with the ball on the sweet spot of their bats , leading to them not only making weak contact on batted balls but also frequently breaking their bats ; according to a tally by columnist Buster Olney , Rivera broke 44 bats during the 2001 regular season . Chipper Jones , who once witnessed teammate Ryan Klesko break three bats in one plate appearance against Rivera in the 1999 World Series , called the pitch a " buzz saw " . Rivera 's long fingers and loose wrist contributed to the pitch 's movement , allowing him to impart more spin on the ball . Describing his grip of the cutter , he said , " it 's really a four @-@ seam fastball with pressure on the middle finger " . By adjusting the pressure that he applied to the ball with his fingertips , Rivera could vary the pitch 's movement . He threw four @-@ seam and two @-@ seam fastballs as complimentary pitches but primarily used his cutter ; according to baseball statistics website Fangraphs , 83 @. @ 3 % of his pitches in 2010 were cutters . All three pitches typically reached a velocity in the low @-@ to @-@ mid 90s mph .

Early in his major league career , Rivera was a " power pitcher " who relied on an overpowering four @-@ seam fastball that topped out at 96 mph (154 km / h) to retire hitters . By enticing them to swing and miss at pitches high in the strike zone , he accumulated strikeouts at a high rate . Rivera changed his pitching style after accidentally discovering how to throw a cutter in June 1997 ; during his daily warm @-@ up tosses with teammate Ramiro Mendoza , Rivera noticed that his fastballs were moving sharply and unpredictably , a problem that began to occur in games as well . After unsuccessfully spending a month trying to eliminate the movement , Rivera relented and incorporated the cutter into his pitching repertoire , eventually making it one of his primary pitches in 1998 . When asked about the pitch 's origin , he explained , " It was just from God . I didn 't do anything . It was natural . " As he came to rely on the cutter , Rivera began to record more outs on batted balls . Consequently , his strikeout rate decreased in subsequent years , dropping from 10 @. @ 87 strikeouts per 9 innings in 1996 to 5 @. @ 3 in 1998 , but at the benefit of more efficiency ; his pitches per inning rate dropped from 18 @. @ 7 in 1995 to 14 @. @ 9 in 1998 .

Rivera had an impeccable ability to accurately locate pitches and consistently throw strikes , particularly on the inside and outside edges of the strike zone . This strength offset his reliance on one pitch and hitters ' anticipation of it . His former catcher Joe Girardi said , " He was so easy to catch because he always put the ball right there . I don 't think there 's ever been a pitcher that great who was so easy to catch . " Rivera 's 4 @. @ 10 career strikeout @-@ to @-@ walk ratio in the regular season ranks fourth @-@ best in major league history . His control was a byproduct of his smooth , easily repeated pitching motion , which some opposing hitters found to be deceptive ; Darrin Fletcher said in 1999 that Rivera " almost kind of lulls you to sleep with his delivery . It gives you a false sense of security , and then the ball is on you and it 's exploding . "

Rivera 's cut fastball was a respected pitch among major league hitters . Jim Thome called it " the single best pitch ever in the game " . In 2004 , ESPN.com ranked his cutter as the best " out pitch " in baseball . Olney described his cut fastball as " the most dominant pitch of a generation " . Although switch @-@ hitters usually bat left @-@ handed against right @-@ handed pitchers to better see the ball 's release point , switch @-@ hitters occasionally batted right @-@ handed when facing the right @-@ handed Rivera to avoid being jammed on their hands by his cutter . Similarly , some managers , such as Bruce Bochy in the 1998 World Series , sent right @-@ handed batters to pinch hit for left @-@ handed batters against Rivera , thinking that the cutter would be more difficult for lefties to hit . Opposing batters occasionally chose to face Rivera with backup or batting practice bats , rather than risk their best bats being shattered by his cutter .

Rivera was considered an exceptional athlete , distinguished by his slender physique and durability . His propensity to shag balls during batting practice convinced scouts he could be a top AL center fielder . Olney compared Rivera 's regimen of physical preparation and guidelines for staying healthy to Satchel Paige 's " Rules for Staying Young " .

== Personality ==

Rivera exhibited a reserved demeanor on the field that contrasted with the emotional , demonstrative temperament of many of his peers . Hall of Fame closer Goose Gossage said that Rivera 's composure under stress gave him the appearance of having " ice water in his veins " . Commenting on his ability to remain focused in pressure situations , Rivera said , " When you start thinking , a lot of things will happen ... If you don 't control your emotions , your emotions will control your acts , and that 's not good . " His ability to compartmentalize his successes and failures impressed fellow reliever Joba Chamberlain , who said , " He 's won and lost some of the biggest games in the history of baseball , and he 's no worse for the wear when he gives up a home run . " Rivera explained the need to quickly forget bad performances , saying " the game that you 're going to play tomorrow is not going to be the same game that you just played . " Derek Jeter called him the " most mentally tough " teammate with whom he had ever played .

During his playing career , Rivera was regarded as a team leader within the Yankees organization , often mentoring younger pitchers and counseling teammates . He had a team @-@ first mindset and deferred most discussions about individual accolades to team goals and his teammates , praising them for making his presence in games possible . When once asked to describe his job , Rivera put it simply , " I get the ball , I throw the ball , and then I take a shower . "

== Legacy ==

Rivera was a dominant reliever throughout his career , pitching with a consistency and longevity uncharacteristic of a role commonly marked by volatility and high turnover . In his 17 @-@ year tenure as the Yankees ' closer , Rivera compiled considerable career numbers . A 13 @-@ time All @-@ Star , he is the majors ' all @-@ time regular season leader in saves (652) and games finished (952) . Rivera holds or shares several records for the most seasons of reaching various save milestones , including seasons with at least : 20 saves (sixteen) ; 25 saves (fifteen consecutive , sixteen non @-@ consecutive) ; 30 saves (nine consecutive , fifteen non @-@ consecutive) ; 35 saves (twelve) ; 40 saves (nine) ; and 50 saves (two) . Rivera 's career ERA (2 @.@ 21) and WHIP (1 @.@ 00) are the lowest of any MLB pitcher in the live @-@ ball era (minimum 1 @,@ 000 innings pitched) , making him one of the top pitchers since 1920 at preventing hitters from reaching base and scoring . He recorded an ERA under 2 @.@ 00 in 11 seasons , tying him with Walter Johnson for the most such seasons (minimum 60 innings pitched each) . Rivera also ranks first in career adjusted ERA + (205) , a statistic that adjusts ERA for league and ballpark to allow comparisons of players across different epochs on the same baseline .

In addition to his strong regular season numbers , Rivera excelled in the postseason . He had an 8 ? 1 win ? loss record and a 0 @.@ 76 WHIP in the postseason , and he holds numerous postseason records , including : lowest career ERA , minimum 30 innings pitched (0 @.@ 70) ; most saves (42) ; most consecutive scoreless innings pitched (33 1 ? 3) ; most consecutive save opportunities converted (23) ; and most games pitched (96) . No pitcher saved half as many postseason games as Rivera did . Joe Torre , who managed him for most of his career , said , " Let 's face it . The regular season for Mo is great , but that 's the cupcakes and the ice cream . What separates him from everybody else is what he 's done in the postseason . " Rivera 's dominance in the postseason often led to him being utilized for two @-@ inning appearances , as he saved a record 14 postseason games in this manner . Between 1998 and 2008 , he recorded 26 postseason saves of four or more outs ; the second @-@ highest total by any other pitcher during that time was four such saves , and the rest of baseball combined had 33 . At the start of the 2011 playoffs , Rivera ranked first all @-@ time in win probability added in the postseason with 11 @.@ 62 , more than three times the total of the next @-@ closest player . In a 2009 ESPN.com poll , Rivera was voted one of the top five postseason players in MLB history .

Rivera achieved a reputation as an all @-@ time great reliever among baseball experts and his peers . Hall of Fame starter @-@ turned @-@ closer Dennis Eckersley called him " the best ever , no doubt " , while Trevor Hoffman said he " will go down as the best reliever in the game in history "

. Torre said , " He 's the best I 've ever been around . Not only the ability to pitch and perform under pressure , but the calm he puts over the clubhouse . " Writer Tom Verducci said , " Rivera is definitively the best at his position by a wider margin than any player at any position in the history of baseball . There is Rivera , a gulf , and then every other closer . " He compared Rivera 's reputation for being the best at his position to that of Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky . MLB Commissioner Bud Selig said , " Clearly unequivocally , he 's the greatest relief pitcher of all time , and did it in a way that was remarkable . " Speaking about Rivera 's looming presence at the end of games , Alex Rodriguez said , " He 's the only guy in baseball who can change the game from a seat in the clubhouse or the bullpen . He would start affecting teams as early as the fifth inning , because they knew he was out there . I 've never seen anyone who could affect a game like that . " Gossage said that Rivera " might be the greatest closer of all @-@ time " but suggested that the modern closer 's job has become too specialized and easy compared to multiple @-@ inning " firemen " from Gossage 's era ; Rivera had only one regular season save of seven @-@ plus outs in his career , whereas Gossage logged 53 . Although the Baseball Writers ' Association of America has historically been reluctant to elect relievers into the Baseball Hall of Fame , sportswriters anticipate that Rivera will be elected in his first year of eligibility . In 2016 , ESPN.com ranked Rivera 49th on its list of the greatest MLB players .

Rivera is well respected throughout baseball for his professionalism . Fellow closer Joe Nathan said , " I look up to how he 's handled himself on and off the field ... You never see him show up anyone and he respects the game . I 've always looked up to him and it 's always a compliment to be just mentioned in the same sentence as him . " Michael Young said of Rivera , " I respect Mo more than anybody in the game . The guy goes out there , gets three outs and shakes [Jorge] Posada 's hand . You appreciate someone who respects the game like he does , respects the people he plays with and against , and obviously his results speak for themselves . " In a Sports Illustrated cover story about Rivera that was published in the final week of his career , Verducci said of the pitcher , " Few players in any sport have retired with more reverence from his peers . " Rivera was the last MLB player to wear the uniform number 42 on a regular basis ; at the time of his retirement , he was the only player still grandfathered by the league to wear Jackie Robinson 's retired number . Speaking about Rivera 's connection to her husband , Robinson 's widow Rachel said , " [Rivera] carried himself with dignity and grace , and that made carrying the number a tribute to Jack ... I 've always been proud and pleased that Mariano was the one chosen to wear that number because I think he brought something special to it . " Presenting him with the Commissioner 's Historic Achievement Award , Selig said : " Throughout his illustrious career , he has represented his family , his country , the Yankees and all of Major League Baseball with the utmost class and dignity . It is wholly appropriate that Mariano was the last Major League player to wear Jackie Robinson 's sacred number 42 . I am pleased that our entire sport can pause on our greatest stage to thank him and his family for all of his contributions to our national pastime . "

Several of Rivera 's colleagues credit him with popularizing the cutter among major league pitchers . Fellow closer Jason Isringhausen , who adopted the pitch later in his career , said , " I think he 's been an influence on everybody that throws it . Everybody saw what [Rivera] could do , basically with one pitch . Nobody could throw it like he did , but now , you talk about the evolution of the cutter ? just ask hitters about it and they tell you everybody 's throwing one . And they hate it . " Al Leiter , whose signature pitch was a cutter , echoed Isringhausen 's sentiments : " Now , everybody throws it and Mo has had a huge influence on that . Pitchers watched him and marveled at what he did with one pitch . "

= = Personal life = =

Rivera and his wife Clara have known each other since elementary school , and they were married on November 9 , 1991 . They have three sons : Mariano III , Jafet , and Jaziel . The family lived in Panama until 2000 , when they relocated to Westchester County , New York ; they currently reside in Rye , New York . Mariano III pitched for Iona College in New Rochelle , not far from his home . He was drafted by the Yankees with the 872nd pick in the 2014 MLB draft , but decided to return to Iona

for his junior year . In the following year 's draft , Mariano III was selected by the Washington Nationals in the 4th round with the 134th overall pick .

Over the course of his professional career , Rivera learned English , beginning in 1991 with the Greensboro Hornets , when he realized none of his teammates spoke his native Spanish . He is now a proponent of Latino players learning English and of American press members learning Spanish , in order to bridge the cultural gap .

= = = Religion and philanthropy = = =

Rivera is a devout Christian . During his childhood , neither he nor his family attended church , but after a born @-@ again experience around the age of 21 , Rivera became religious and converted from Catholicism to a Pentecostal faith . His parents followed his lead after seeing the difference it made in him . Rivera believes that God has a reason for everything that happens . For example , he found his failure in Game 7 of the 2001 World Series easier to deal with when he learned of the consequences it had for teammate Enrique Wilson . Had the Yankees won the series , Wilson would have remained in New York for the championship parade and would have departed for his native Dominican Republic on American Airlines Flight 587 , which crashed shortly after takeoff and killed all 260 people aboard . Rivera told Wilson , " I am glad we lost the World Series , because it means that I still have a friend . " Rivera 's pitching glove was inscribed " Phil . 4 : 13 " , in reference to the Bible verse Philippians 4 : 13 (" I can do all things through Christ , who strengthens me ") .

Rivera is involved with philanthropic contributions in his native Panama , which include building an elementary school , providing Christmas gifts to children , and developing a program that provides computer access and adult mentors to youths . The Mariano Rivera Foundation , which helps provide underprivileged children with an education , distributes more than \$ 500 @,@ 000 annually in the US and Panama through church @-@ based institutions . In addition to funding church start @-@ ups in Panama , Mexico , the Dominican Republic , California , and Florida , Rivera opened a church in New Rochelle in March 2014 that his foundation renovated at a cost of \$ 3 million . The church , named Refugio de Esperanza (" Refuge of Hope ") , has Rivera 's wife Clara as its pastor and hosts a Pentecostal congregation that previously met at the Rivera home . Since retiring from baseball , Rivera has dedicated himself to philanthropy and his churches . He and Clara have twice awarded a scholarship in their names to a student at the local College of New Rochelle . In 2012 , the Giving Back Fund estimated that Rivera donated \$ 627 @,@ 500 to charity in 2010 , ranking him as the 25th @-@ most generous celebrity on a list that the fund compiled . He won the 2013 Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award , which is given to the MLB player " who inspires others through his on @-@ field performances and contributions to his community " .

= = = Business interests and endorsements = = =

Rivera was an investor in two New York area restaurants : " Clubhouse Grill " , which opened in New Rochelle in 2006 as " Mo 's New York Grill " ; and Siro 's , which opened in Manhattan in 2012 . Both restaurants have since closed . In 2015 , he opened a Toyota and Scion car dealership in Mount Kisco , New York . Rivera has been a celebrity spokesman for several companies , including : Nike sports apparel ; Canali , a premium men 's clothing company , as their first athlete spokesperson ; Skechers footwear ; and Hartford Financial Services Group , Inc . A 2011 list by the marketing firm Nielsen ranked Rivera as the second @-@ most marketable player in baseball ; the list accounted for personal attributes such as sincerity , approachability , experience , and influence . Based on sales figures from Majestic Athletic , he had the 18th @-@ best @-@ selling MLB jersey in 2011 , and the top @-@ selling jersey in the second half of 2013 . Rivera earned approximately \$ 169 @.@ 6 million in salary during his baseball career .

= = Post @-@ baseball life = =

In March 2014 , Rivera was twice recognized for his philanthropic efforts , receiving the ROBIE

Humanitarian Award from the Jackie Robinson Foundation , as well as a Jefferson Award for Public Service . Later that month , the " Legends Series " , comprising two MLB exhibition games between the Yankees and Miami Marlins , was played in Rivera 's native Panama to " honor [his] legacy " ; he helped promote the games , which were supplemented by charitable events and a gala benefiting his foundation . On April 9 , 2014 , MLB announced that a new annual award for relief pitchers , the Reliever of the Year Award , would replace the existing Delivery Man of the Year Award , and that the AL honor would be named after Rivera . The following month , a section of River Avenue bordering Yankee Stadium at 161st Street was renamed " Rivera Avenue " in the pitcher 's honor . This coincided with the release of his autobiography , The Closer : My Story , co @-@ authored with Wayne Coffey . New York University bestowed an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree upon Rivera during its commencement ceremony at Yankee Stadium on May 21 , 2014 . During the 2015 Little League World Series , he was inducted into the Little League Hall of Excellence . The Yankees will dedicate a plaque to Rivera in Yankee Stadium 's Monument Park on August 14 , 2016 .

= = Baseball accomplishments = =

= = = Awards and honors = = =

= = = Records = = =