

# On This Date

# December 19, 1954

Seattle Rainier general manager Dewey Soriano announces that the team has signed former Pittsburgh Pirate farmhand and Ex-GI **Tony Martinich** to a free agent contract for the 1955 season. The Stamford, Connecticut, native signs for \$700 per month.

Martinich draws national attention when he leaves the Air Force in 1953, following three outstanding seasons of service ball. Following his discharge, Martinich hits .308 with five home runs in 27 games with the Del Rio Indians of the Big State (B) League.

Ten teams reportedly offer the 6-0, 190-pound outfielder a contract after he hits .477 with 15 doubles and 16 home runs in 34 games for Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Texas. In his three years in the military, Martinich hits .402 with 42 home runs and 210 RBIs

Martinich will play in only 12 games for the Rainiers in 1955 - his final season in the minor leagues. Plagued by arm trouble, he is primarily used as a pinch-hitter and has three hits in 13 at bats (.231) with two RBIs for the Rainiers when he is released on May 23, despite not being counted towards the team's roster limit as a result of being a "national defense" ball player.

Having played four seasons in the minor leagues prior to his serving in the military, Martinich hits .251 with 12 home runs and 226 runs batted in in six minor leagues. Despite receiving offers from several local semipro teams, Martinich announces on June 7 that he is retiring from baseball at the age of 25.

