

Catawba College graduate and former major league pitcher **Benny Callahan**, an outstanding baseball and basketball player at the Salisbury, North Carolina, college passes away on January 9, 2007, in Concord. He was only 49 years old.

A native of Mt. Airy, North Carolina, Callahan receives the Kirkland Award as Catawba's top male athlete in the senior class of 1980 and is inducted into the school's Hall of Fame in 1994. At 6-foot-7, 230-pounds, he was a power pitcher and power hitter for the school's baseball teams.

In four seasons with the Indians, always starting his diamond duties late due to his commitment to the school's basketball team, he hits 23 home runs, including 14 his senior year.



Transferring to Catawba after originally signing with Pembroke State, he averages 7.6 ppg as a sophomore on a talent-laded Carolinas Conference championship team. The next two years he earns First-team All-Carolina Conference honors averaging 20.8 points as a junior and 22.2 as a senior. For his career, he hit on 53.1 percent of his field-goal attempts and 80.4 percent of his free throws. Despite playing only three seasons, he ranks 16th among school career scoring leaders with 1,352 points while averaging 16.7 points a game.

Drafted by the New York Yankees in the 31st round of the 1980 MLB June Amateur Draft. In 1981, he is 17-8 for Fort Lauderdale of the Florida State League and is named the "top right-handed pitcher" in the Yankee farm system. On June 15, 1983, he is traded to the Oakland Athletics.

He makes his first major league start against the Kansas City Royals on June 27, 1983. He stifles a Royals lineup missing George Brett, allowing one earned run on only three hits when he is relieved in the seventh. Back in the minors for two more seasons, arm injuries bring an end to a once promising career.