

## Kerby Ellis

### Baseball

For many athletes, the glamour of a professional career in any sport is hard not to accept. The lure of competition, travel and, yes, money is sometimes too difficult to pass on. Kerby Ellis could have followed the pro baseball route following his senior year at Messick High School. He held contract offers from the likes of the Los Angeles Dodgers, Houston Astros, Cincinnati Reds and then-Washington Senators. Kerby, however, took a different path.

After a stellar career at Messick High School, Kerby signed with then-head coach Al Brown and hometown Memphis State, choosing the Tigers over Georgia Tech, Missouri and Mississippi State. In his prep career with the Messick Panthers, Kerby was a standout on the mound. As a senior in 1962, he was an All-Memphis Team pick and posted several games with 15 or more strikeouts. One of those games was a 16-strikeout performance in a 4-1 win over Whitehaven that sent the Panthers to their first Tennessee state tournament appearance.

Before his time at Messick, Kerby honed his craft on the hump at Sherwood Junior High School. During that time, he posted an impressive career 18-1 record with two no-hitters.

When Kerby moved to the collegiate ranks at Memphis State, he proved just as impressive while toeing the rubber. Kerby had a 20-8 career record as a Tiger — including a 5-2 mark on the freshman team — and led the 1965 squad in strikeouts. Kerby posted a career 2.50 ERA and had nine complete games.

In 1963 and 1964, Kerby was selected to play summer ball for teams that were sponsored by the St. Louis Cardinals. In those two summers, Kerby had a 10-2 record and led the team in strikeouts both years.

After graduation from Memphis State, Kerby joined the military and entered the Air Force Training School in 1967. He served in the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars and was a Mission Commander on Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircrafts, logging more than 3,600 hours. After 27 years of service in the Air Force, Kerby retired from dutifully serving his country in 1994.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame, for baseball — Kerby Ellis.