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Sports

Riggleman Remembers a Rockville Like a Rockwell

Washington Nationals manager is a graduate of Richard Montgomery High.

By [David Driver](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 17, 2011

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Did you see Riggleman play at RM? Do you remember other county products who made the big leagues? Have you seen the Nats play this year? Where will the Nats finish in the standings? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Washington Nationals manager Jim Riggleman invoked the name of an iconic American painter when discussing his days as a boy in Rockville.

"Growing up in Rockville in the 1960s, it was like a Norman Rockwell painting," Riggleman said in an exclusive interview with Rockville Patch before Saturday's game against the Florida Marlins.

"I am sure a lot of people feel the same way about the town they grew up in," said Riggleman, who graduated from [Richard Montgomery High](#). "It was a great community for children and there was interest in a lot of activities."

In a recent interview with [ESPN 980](#), Riggleman noted that former NFL star [Mike Curtis](#), who played linebacker for the Baltimore Colts, Seattle Seahawks and Washington Redskins from 1965 to 1978, went to Richard Montgomery.

So did Rockville native [Goody Coleman](#), who played in the major leagues with the Cincinnati Reds and Cleveland Indians from 1959 to 1967.

Riggleman, who was born in Fort Dix, NJ, grew up watching the Washington Senators play at RFK Stadium and playing youth sports. "There was Little League and a Rockville football league," he said. "It was really well organized. There was a great support group."

Riggleman said that he has driven past the new Richard Montgomery High but has not been inside since renovations were done. After high school he attended Frostburg State College, where he played for coach Bob Wells.

He earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from Frostburg State, where he is a member of the athletic Hall of Fame. He still holds the school record for home runs in a game with three.

[John Philbin](#), the strength and conditioning coach for the Nationals, is also a graduate of Frostburg.

"His resume speaks for itself," Riggleman said of Philbin, who has worked with Olympic athletes and the Washington Redskins and occasionally trains athletes at [Champion's Fieldhouse](#) in Rockville.

[Riggleman](#) was drafted out of college by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the fourth round in 1974 and [played several years in the minor leagues](#). Riggleman was the manager of the Seattle Mariners, the Chicago Cubs and San Diego Padres before joining manager Manny Acta's staff in Washington for the 2009 season.

Riggleman was named interim manager of the Nationals on July 14, 2009 after Acta was fired. He was named manager on Nov. 12, 2009. This is his second full season as skipper.

"This has been a dream of mine. It's Washington baseball. It couldn't be better for me. It is where I wanted to be," Riggleman said when he was named manager before the 2010 season. "I am very grateful. This happens to be my hometown. To end up coming here after several stops is very exciting."

Although he lives in Florida in the offseason, Riggleman tries to stay in touch with his Rockville roots. He has been very involved in raising funds for the [Rockville Express](#), which plays in the wood bat [Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League](#).

He is slated to be the special guest at 7 p.m. on June 19 at the Glenview Mansion as Rockville Community Baseball hosts the annual Rockville Express Collegiate Baseball Benefit Auction and Dinner.

"We have a day game that day [at home with the Orioles] so I should be able to make it," Riggleman said.

"He was there last year," said Rockville resident Brad Botwin, the Express's vice president. "He remembers his roots. He said he played on the grounds of Glenview Mansion when he was a kid. It is just a terrific story of a-good-guy-does-well. He likes coming back and seeing friends from the community that he grew up with. He liked it so much he offered to do it again."

Riggleman, who also made an appearance on behalf of the Express when he was a manager with Seattle, stayed a long time after the dinner last year to meet with fans, Botwin said.

For information on tickets to the contact Botwin at 240-447-1884 or bb67chev@aol.com.

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