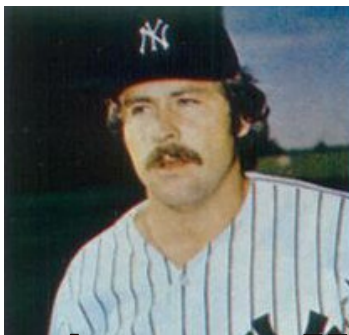




James Augustus Hunter

April 8, 1946 - September 9, 1999

Hertford, North Carolina

James Augustus "Catfish" Hunter died at home in Hertford, North Carolina, on September 9, 1999. He was fifty-three. Born in Hertford on April 8, 1946, he pitched his way from a small-town high school diamond to the center of baseball's free-agency revolution without losing the farm accent.

Charles Finley of the Kansas City / Oakland A's gave him the nickname and a contract; Hunter gave the A's precision control and October innings. He threw a perfect game in 1968, won twenty games repeatedly, and collected World Series rings as Oakland became a dynasty of mustaches and swagger. When a contract clause went unpaid, an arbitrator freed him, and the Yankees signed him for money that rewrote the sport's economy. More pennants followed in the Bronx.

Arm trouble shortened the mound years. He went home to Hertford, hunted, farmed, and stayed visible enough to remain a neighbor who happened to be in Cooperstown (class of 1987). ALS - Lou Gehrig's disease - came late and fast. A fall preceded the final decline. The funeral drew the baseball world back to the town that had raised him.

The nickname was marketing. The control was real. Hertford keeps both.

Services

Died at home in Hertford, North Carolina, on September 9, 1999, of ALS. Interment at Cedarwood Cemetery, Hertford.

NN-OBIT-2026-H046

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