Ex-Islander Now on God's Team

By Bill Kwon Star-Bulletin Sports Editor

The irony didn't escape John Werhas.

The former Hawaii Islander third baseman, the best ever to play that position in the 25-year history of the local Pacific Coast League baseball team, returned last week from Dodgertown at Vero Beach, Fla.

But it was a different kind of a spring training for Werhas, now 46 years old.

It was 25 years ago that Werhas first showed up at Dodgertown. He was a rookie third baseman then, just out of Southern California where he was an All-American in baseball and an A-A honorable mention basketball selection.

This spring he was there as a team chaplain, holding Sunday chapel services for Dodger farmhands, conducting Bible studies and doing one-on-one discipling and counseling.

"I told Al Campanis (the Dodgers' vice president of player personnel) that I'm a lot happier now than when I was a young ballplayer," Werhas said in a telephone interview from Anaheim, Calif., where he now re-

"THE SECOND TIME around in Dodgertown is a lot better. I'm so much in love with what I'm doing now.

"He told me, 'It was a good day that the Dodgers signed

you.' It was nice of him to say that. But I love what I am doing now more. I've been going there pretty regularly for the last five

Werhas is an ordained minister. He is no longer turning over the double play. He's trying to turn young men over to God.

He is a team chaplain to the Dodgers and California Angels



(another team he played with). Also, football's L.A. Rams, Raiders and Express.

Spring, 1969. John Werhas was driving a sports writer from Hawaii on the Harbor Freeway, tooling along in a brand-new Porsche. A typical Southern Californian jock athlete.

"Jack Quinn (Hawaii's general manager) had asked me to come out of retirement to play for the Islanders," said Werhas. "I was disgusted with the game, I quit after two years with the Angels.

But Jack was convincing. I'm investments, Quinn was to say glad he was. Playing in Hawaii was the best years of my life in At that time, the Islanders baseball and playing for Chuck Tanner was a thrill.

"CHUCK TANNER brought a new joy to the game for me. I got kind of bitter that I couldn't make it in the major leagues. Fact of the matter is, I wasn't good enough.'

Clearly, this is a more humble Werhas today. More soul than body. More spirit than flesh.

No more Porsche, either. He now drives a Volkswagen van. Married to the former Kay Miller (they met in Hawaii in 1973), they are parents of two children -John Mark, 9, and Cassie, 6.

"I have never had more contentment in my life," he said. "Accepting Jesus Christ has renewed my life, given meaning to my life."

He now wants to share that love of Jesus Christ with others and he does that wherever and whenever he can.

"I got ordained in a nondenominational church on purpose. I am not affiliated with any church. I am strictly interdenominational. The reason for that is I don't want the fellows to think I'm coming from any one denomination."

WERHAS DECIDED TO play for the Islanders six days before they broke spring camp in El Centro, Calif., in 1969. It proved to be one of his best

owned their own players. Werhas, nicknamed "Peaches" for his effusive, sunshiny manner, played every game (147) for the Islanders in 1969. He was named the PCL's all-star third baseman and led the league with 90 RBI.

All told, he appeared in 435 games for the Islanders over a four-year span—1969-70, 1972-73. He spent 1971 in Japan when the Quinn sold him to the Taiyo

Werhas was the third baseman

Fourth in a Series

on the 1970 Islander team which was the winningest in all of baseball that season with 98 victories. He missed three weeks of that season because of a fractured hand.

The injury was typical of the way Werhas played the game. He was hit by a pitch on the hand in the 14th inning but stayed in the game. He eventually scored the winning run at 12:40 in the morning in the game against Spokane at the old Honolulu Stadium.

WERHAS HAS FOND memories of Hawaii and the old stadi-

"I never played in Ebbets Turn to Page D-2, Col. 1

fone turned my life around. I made a Waikiki Chapel and that's what

purposelessness of my life.
"I met Bob Turnbull of the

shortstop Marty Perez and sec- later and 18,032 in a playoff shortstop Marty Perez and seme on Sept. 6. They had 17 which included an infield of 8, 18,161 on Aloha Night 13 days

of perhaps the grandest Islander The Islanders drew record to my questions. I saw the team of them all—the 1970 club crowds that year—19,673 on Aug.

The Islanders drew record my life. The purposelessness of my life.

the old stadium in Honolulu was Field but I always thought that Continued from Page D-1

Werhas Was Best-Ever Third Baseman for Islanders



John Werhas, Islanders' all-time third baseman

Field but I always thought that the old stadium in Honolulu was the closest to it," Werhas said.

The fans there were the greatest and my most nostalgic feeling in baseball is when I think about the old ball park. There wasn't anything like it.

"It was really sad for me when I went back to Hawaii for a visit recently and saw that the stadium was no longer there. It felt like a part of me was miss-

team of them all—the 1970 club which included an infield of shortstop Marty Perez and second baseman Doug Griffin, who both went on to play in the majors. Chuck Vinson was at first and Werhas at third. Winston Llenas, one of the purest hitters in the minors, spelled Werhas at third and Tanner tried to get him in the lineup whenever possible because of his the bat that good.

bat. Llenas would have been a ing." Werhas was the team captain designated hitter's DH' he swung Grimsley.

Growing Pains: 1965-1970

Islanders Player Directory

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD—Francis
H. II Brown. PRESIDENT—Chinn Ho.
GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn.
FIELD MANAGER—Chuck Tanner.
PARENT CLUB—California Angels.
REGULARS—First Base: Chuck Vinson (136 games). Second Base: Doug Griffin (134). Third Base: John Werhas (110). Shortstop: Marty Perez (100). Outfielders: Rich Barry (120), Winston Llenas (95), Wayne Redmond (82), Tomas Silverio (76). Catcher: Merritt Ranew (91), Dave Adlesh (46).
OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—Don Wilkinson, Hank McGraw, Nate Oliver, Ray Oyler, Jarvis Tatum, Jim Saul, Randy Brown, Jim DeNeff.
PITCHERS—Dennis Bennett, Tom Bradley, Juan Pizarro, John Purdin, Archie Reynolds, Dale Roberts, El Roy Face, Phil Ortega, Greg Wasburn, Dave LaRoche, Ed Sukla, Steve Kealey, Ron Kline, Gary Kroll, Bob Allen, Gary Bell, Rickey Clark, Larry Loughlin, Harvey Shank, Walter Wolf.

Rickey Clark, Larry Loughlin, Harvey Shank, Walter Wolf.

RECORD: 98-48. (South champ). POST-SEASON: Spokane swept Hawaii, 4-0, in best-of-7 PCL championship series. ATTENDANCE: 467,217.

PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS. Pure

PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Runs Batted In: Llenas 108; Hawaii 732. Most Strikeouts (Batting): Barry 121; Hawaii 959. Runs: Hawaii 812. Bases on Balls: Werhas 98; Hawaii 659. Games Started (Pitching): Bennett 32 (tied with one other). Games Won: Bennett 18 (tied with one other). Home Runs Allowed: Bennett 27.

1969
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD—Francis
H. Ii Brown. PRESIDENT—Chinn Ho.
GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn.
MANAGER—Chuck Tanner. COACH:
Jimmie Reese. PARENT CLUB—California Angels

fornia Angels.

REGULARS—First Base: Chuck Vinson (96), Jim Spencer (47). Second Base: Larry Rojas (76), Winston Llenas (69). Third Base: John Werhas (147). Short-

Third Base: John Werhas (147). Shortstop: Marty Perez (115). Outfielders: Jarvis Tatum (136), Floyd Robinson (138), Tomas Silverio (135). Catcher: Orlando McFarlane (52), Bob Rodgers (39), Dave Adlesh (39), Jim Saul (20).

OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—BIII Bethea, Ethan Blackaby, Mel Corbo, Terry Cox, Dan Loomer, Gordy Lund, Mike Stubbins, Don Wikinson.

PITCHERS—Bo Belinsky, Lloyd Allen, Dennis Bennett, Bobby Locke, Phil Ortega, Bob Priddy, Minnie Rojas, Ed Sukla, Ken Tatum, Greg Washburn, Jim Weaver, Bill Boehlert, Tom Bradley, Rickey Clark, Vern Geishert, Bill Harrelson, Clark, Vern Geishert, Bill Harrelson,

RECORD: 74-72-1 (third in South). ATTENDANCE: 280,477.

PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Times PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Times At Bat: Hawaii 4,894. Total Bases: Hawaii 1,949. Home Runs—Hawaii 107. Bases on Balls—Hawaii 524. Runs Batted In—John Werhas 90. Hit by Pitcher: Robinson 11 (Tied with one other). Winning Percenagfe (Pitching): Belinsky .706 (12-5). Games Won: Bennett 13 (Tied with 5 others. Player in Every Game: Werhas 147.

1968

1968
PRESIDENT—Francis H. II Brown.
VICE PRESIDENTS—Chinn Ho, Sakae
Takahashi, Bishop Harry Kennedy.
GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn.
FIELD MANAGER—Bill Adair. COACH
—Ted Beard. PARENT CLUB—Chicago
White Sov

REGULARS-First Base: George Kernek (121). Second Base: Jim Stewert (78), Ernie Fazio (32). Third Base: Bill Melton (60), Gene Freese (27), Stewert (21), Billy Williams (20). Shortstop: Rich Morales (144). Outfielders: Joe Gaines (75), Walt "No Neck" Williams (72), Billy Williams (66), Angel Bravo (60), Jose Ortiz (48) Stewart (43). Catcher: Jim Napier (71), Ed Herrmann (41).

OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—Buddy

Booker, Gail Hopkins, Dick Kenworthy, Danny Napoleon, Cotton Nash, Dick Littleton, Marv Breeding, Curt Fontenot,

tleton, Mary Breeding, Curt Fontenot, Bill Voss, Steve Whitaker.

PITCHERS—Bo Belinsky, Don Notte-bart, Gerry Nyman, Danny Osinski, Larry Sherry, Bill Fischer, Bobby Locke, Aurelio Monteagudo, Danny Lazar, Don Dennis, Paul Edmondson, Fred Klages, Danny Murphy Billy Wynne.

Danny Murphy, Billy Wynne.

NO-HIT GAME—Belinsky blanked
Tacoma, 1-0, on August 18. RECORD: 78-69 (second in West) AT- **TENDANCE: 255,569**

PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Stolen Bases: Hawaii 138. Sacrifice Flies: Ker-nak 9; Hawaii 43.

Bases: Hawaii 138. Sacrifice Files: Kernak 9; Hawaii 43.

1967

PRESIDENT—Francis H. Ii Brown.
VICE PRESIDENTS—Chinn Ho, Sakae
Takahashi, Bishop Harry Kennedy, Le
Roy Bush. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT—Mackay Yanagisawa. GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn. FIELD
MANAGER—Wayne Terwilliger. PARENT CLUB—Washington Senators.
REGULARS—First Base: Bob Chance
(108). Second Base: Frank Coggins (141).
Third Base: Gene Freese (123). Shortstop: Jim Mahoney (137). Outfielders:
Willie Kirkland (142), Jay Walrath (118),
Hector Lopez (98). Catcher: Jim French
(85), Larry Himes (52).

OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—Dick
"Pup" Phillips, Barry Shetrone, Dave
Hirtz, John Orsino, Paul Ratliff.
PITCHERS—Dick Bosman, Marshall
Bridges, Carlos Medrano, Buster
Narum, Dick Nold, Bill Pleis, Dave Stenhouse, Ruperto Toppin, Casey Cox, Pete
Craig, Jim Duckworth, Jim Hannan, Bill
Haywood, Jack Jenkins, Frank Kreutzer, Bill Spanswick.
RECORD: 60-87 (sixth in West). AT-

er, Bill Spanswick.
RECORD: 60-87 (sixth in West). AT-TENDANCE: 218,983.
PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Times

At Bat: Coggins 584; Hawaii 4,923. Hits (Batting): Coggins 168. Total Bases: Kirkland 252. Home Runs: Kirkland 34. Runs Batted In: Kirkland 97. Sacrifice Hits: Hirtz 11 (fied with one other; 3 for Hawaii, 8 for Denver). Consecutive Games Lost: Pleis 8 (fied with two others)

others).

1966

PRESIDENT—Francis H. II Brown.

VICE PRESIDENTS—Chinn Ho, Sakae
Takahashi, Bishop Harry Kennedy, Le
Roy Bush. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT—Mackay Yanagisawa. GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn. FIELD

MANAGER—George Case. PARENT
CLUB—Washington Senators.

REGULARS—First Base: Bob Chance
(57), Dick Phillips (50), Brant Alyea (49).
Second Base: Chuck Cottier (92), Frank
Gable (24). Third Base: Dave Hirtz (95),
Hank Allen (51). Shortstop: Tim Cullen
(111). Outfielders: Barry Shetrone (134),
Allen (99), Jerry Kushner (90), Alyea
(86). Catcher: Nick Brumley (92), Jim
Saul (46).

Saul (46).

OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—Dick
"Pup" Phillips, Ron Cox, Jim French.
PITCHERS—Dave Baldwin, Peter
Craig, Jim Duckworth, Dave Stenhouse,
Don Williams, Bennie Daniels, Carlos
Medrano, Marshall Bridges, Tom
Cheney, Frank Kreutzer, Don Loun,
Buster Narum, Doug Ritter, Diego
Senui.

RECORD: 63-84 (fifth in West). AT-TENDANCE: 191,367. PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS—Total

Bases: Allen 288. Home Runs—Hawaii 136 (tied with Portland). Games Pitched—Medrano 60. Games Lost—Daniels 15.

1965
PRESIDENT—Francis H. II Brown.
VICE PRESIDENTS—Chinn Ho, Sakae
Takahashi, Bishop Harry Kennedy, Le
Roy Bush. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT—Mackay Yanagisawa. GENERAL MANAGER—Jack Quinn. FIELD
MANAGER—George Case. PARENT
CLUB—Washington Senators.
REGULARS—First Base: Dick Nen
(81), Brant Alyea (32). Second Base:
Dick "Pup" Phillips (87) Chuck Cottier
(75). Third Base: Dave Hirtz (147). Shortstop: Tim Cullen (142). Outfielders: Fred
Valentine (147), Alyea (107), John Wolcik (95), Barry Shetrone (87). Catcher:
Joe McCabe (69), Don Leppert (38),
Orlando McFarlane (26), Jim French Orlando McFarlane (26), Jim French

OTHER POSITION PLAYERS—Andy Miyamoto, Bob Chance.

PITCHERS—Dave Baldwin, Marshall Bridges, Casey Cox, Jim Duckworth, Eli Grba, Jim Hannan, Howie Koplitz, Dick Lines, Don Loun, Carlos Medrano, Peter Craig, Don Williams, Bob Olson, Dave

NO-HIT GAME—Dick Estelle, Tacoma, blanked Hawaii, 6-0, on May 11.
RECORD: 75-72 (fourth in West). AT-

TENDANCE: 174 600 CL STATISTICAL LEADERS-Runs: Valentine 116. Stolen Bases: Valentine 53; Hawaii 162. Hit by Pitcher: Valentine 17; Hawaii 49. Hit Batsmen: Craig, Williams

The Islanders drew record crowds that year-19,673 on Aug. 8, 18,161 on Aloha Night 13 days later and 18,032 in a playoff game on Sept. 6. They had 17 games with 10,000 or more fans that season.

Summer, 1984. John Werhas gives the invocation for the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame induction ceremonies at the downtown Los Angeles Hyatt. He talks about the Apostle Paul's "Hall of Faith" from Hebrews, Chap ter 11. "I never heard a baseball player who could talk like that," said Associated Press sports writer Will

Asked about his conversion, Werhas said that his spiritual "Damascus" occurred in Hawaii.

"I just got back from a year in Japan and there was a tremendous void in my life. There were a lot of dead-end areas in my life. There were only bad answers to my questions. I saw the purposelessness of my life. Everything seemed so empty.

"I met Bob Turnbull of the Waikiki Chapel and that's what turned my life around. I made a commitment to Jesus Christ and He proved to be totally real. He gave meaning to my life.

Werhas attended seminaries in Colorado, San Bernardino and Long Beach for the next three years after getting married in 1974. He was ordained on July 4, 1982, a date he duly notes in his well-worn Bible.

"I really have no title. You could call me reverend, I guess, but I shudder at that.'

But for a lot of fans, John Werhas will always be regarded as the best who ever played third base for the Islanders. Amen.

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