



## **Ruppert Jones**

Ruppert was a 5-tool player who battled a variety of injuries to put together a solid 12-year career in the major leagues. He debuted briefly in the big leagues as a 21-year old for the Kansas City Royals in 1976 and was promptly plucked off their roster by the Seattle Mariners as the first overall pick of the expansion draft, thus becoming the first ever Mariner.

He quickly became a fan favorite in Seattle with fans chanting “ROOP”. He was named an all-star that first season. In his second season, he had his first of many surgeries, this one for an appendectomy which slowed his progress but he came back strong in 1977 and set career highs with 109 runs scored, 78 RBI and 33 stolen bases. He played so well that the New York Yankees traded for Jones.

Rupe was batting second in the Yankee line-up and playing centerfield when in May, he became violently ill as a result of adhesions from his appendectomy causing a blockage and he needed surgery again. Then in August he chased a fly ball at full speed into the cement outfield wall in Oakland. He lay motionless on the turf and stopped breathing. Once revived and taken to the hospital, he was diagnosed with a severe concussion and a separated shoulder. Jones has no recollection of the following 24 hours.

Ruppert was dealt to the San Diego Padres for the 1981 season. Again he was named to the all-star team in 1982 and became a free agent after the 1983 season. He signed with the Detroit Tigers for the 1984 season and displayed his prodigious power by becoming the 13<sup>th</sup> player in MLB history to hit a ball completely out of the stadium over the right field roof. That season, he won a World Series championship but the Tigers balked in contract negotiations and Jones chose to sign with the California Angels. He made it back to the playoffs with the team in 1986 but lost a heart-breaker to the Boston Red Sox. After three seasons in Anaheim, he was done in the major leagues. Ruppert then finished his playing career with a season in Japan with the Hanshin Tigers.

Jones now spends much of his time sharing with others about his personal experience with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Mental Health has long been a subject that has not been spoken about openly in society due to a misguided stigma. Ruppert wants to change that and is doing his part. He speaks about how his body could no longer do what he wanted it to after his injury. “I never got over it”, he states. Ask for help.

Book Ruppert Jones to speak with your group.