



New Polls!



Vote on what contracts ex-Marlins will receive in free agency

Original MLBPA executive director Marvin Miller has strong Hall of Fame case

*As detailed in **Don't Be Afraid to Win**, Marvin Miller had a critical role in transforming the MLB Players Association into what it is today.*

By [Ely Sussman](#) | [@RealEly](#) | Nov 5, 2019, 1:00pm EST



Photo courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

On Monday, the National Baseball Hall of Fame announced its **2019 Modern Baseball Era ballot**. The 10 candidates—including **Marlins** manager **Don Mattingly**—will be evaluated by a 16-member committee at December's Winter Meetings. Whomever receives votes on at least 75% of the ballots cast will be featured in next summer's HOF induction (alongside the conventional baseball writers' selections).

But one candidate in particular stands far apart from the rest for his unique contributions to the sport: Marvin Miller.

Hired as the first executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) entering the 1966 season, Miller was relentless in his pursuit of better working conditions, even if that meant taking battles all the way to the US Supreme Court. He's largely responsible for winning a much-improved pension plan and unrestricted free agency, which in turn led to an exponential increase in player earnings. Prior to his arrival, MLB stars were working second jobs in the offseason to support their families; now, Gerrit Cole and Anthony Rendon are projected to take home \$200-plus million on their next contracts.

As the one-time lead counsel for the MLBPA, attorney Jim Quinn knew Miller well. Quinn is the author of a new book, *Don't Be Afraid to Win: How Free Agency Changed the Business of Pro Sports*, which describes him as such:

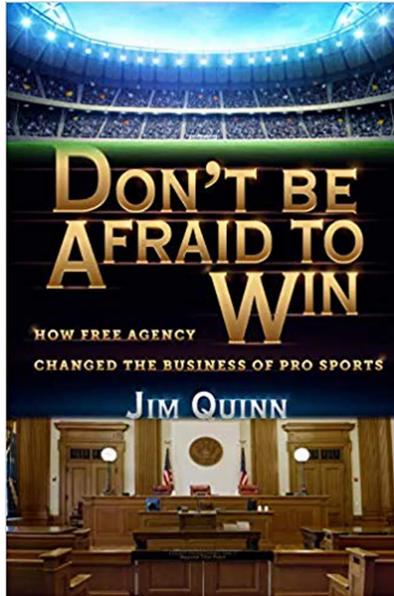
"Miller was brilliant, with a photographic memory and unmatched attention to detail...He was an exceptional labor organizer and teacher with extraordinary communication skills in both the written and spoken word."

Quinn adds, "If you want to know why baseball is alone among the four [North American] major leagues in never having a salary cap, the answer begins with Marvin Miller."

Disagreements between the MLBPA and team owners were frequent and contentious during Miller's decade-and-a-half as union head, escalating into lawsuits and the 1981 midseason strike. In the decades since then, however, even rivals have acknowledged his positive impact. One of those, Ray Grebey, "eventually wrote a letter to the Hall of Fame urging the induction of Miller," according to Quinn.

It's difficult to understand why Miller remains on the outside looking in. Unfortunately, any induction would have to be a posthumous one—he died of liver cancer in 2012 at the age of 95.

Come Dec. 8 in San Diego, the Modern Baseball Era committee has another opportunity to remedy this misstep.



Don't Be Afraid to Win: How Free Agency Changed the Business of Pro Sports

Now available on Amazon.



Radius Book Group / \$25.99 hardcover, \$17.99 paperback

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Released on Tuesday, Jim Quinn's [Don't Be Afraid to Win](#) contains fascinating details about the history of MLB labor negotiations, as well as those in the NFL, NHL and NBA.