

Ed Kirner



Ed Kirner with his wife Carole in 2021

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By: Gordon Wise - - - ISC Information Officer

ED KIRNER - - - Man of Many Hats – Many Talents – Many Achievements

The dictionary defines the word “Versatile” as: Capable of turning easily from one to another of various tasks. It defines the word “Valuable” as: Of considerable use, service, or importance.

Those two words might BEGIN to describe the career of one ED KIRNER. Doubt it? Just take a listen to some of roles he has filled in his long career with the sport of men’s fastball:

Start with player, coach, manager, general manager, team organizer and founder, umpire, league secretary, public relations director, editor (and publisher) of a softball newspaper, free-lance writer, publicity director - - - plus the role of ISC Commissioner and the title as the “longest serving President” that organization has ever had!.

And that is just for tasks he has performed for the sport of fastball!

Want more? How about journeyman printer, fund-raiser, promoter of professional wrestling matches and of harness racing!!

And how about his role as a state finalist in the MILE RUN as a sophomore in high school!!

And Ed Kirner had a mighty hand in breaking the barrier which kept many of the nation's top teams from competing in both ASA and ISC competition.

Not bad for a guy who endured heart trouble as a young man - - - troubles which cut short his playing career and re-directed his energies to - - - - well, you can see the rest, can't you?

Kirner's nomination to the International Softball Congress Hall of Fame came from ISC pioneer Marv Casteel. He was elected to the Hall in 1989.

In Casteel's nomination of Kirner, he noted that, "In 1980, through the efforts of Carroll Forbes, Ed Kirner, and Chuck Lockinger, Aurora Home Savings and Loan entered the ISC. They became the first ASA team of national level competition to do so. This opened the door and now nearly all teams play in both the ISC and ASA."

Ray Anderson, a legend of the game for his longtime publishing of the Fastpitch Softball News Bulletin, observed of Ed Kirner: "I am in constant contact with teams and their PR people. Whenever any media called on Ed for information about the Aurora team, Ed was quick to furnish it efficiently and quickly - - was a big help in the publicity for the game - - Ed is one of the best, if not THE best, in the game. Fact is, if all teams had a PR man like Ed Kirner, the game would be much more prominent in the sports world."

Dan Murr, then Sports Editor of the Aurora Beacon News, wrote a feature article focusing on Kirner. Some of the career highlights which Murr mentioned included:

* Associated with the sport since his graduation from high school (East Aurora H.S. – class of '51);

* Secretary of the Aurora City League for seven years;

* Associated with Hartman's Supermarket team through eight city championship seasons;

* Publicity/Public Relations Director for the Home Savings and Loan team beginning in 1973;

* Publisher/Editor for 15 years of Grand Slam Fastpitch, a newspaper dedicated to men's fastpitch - - each year spending three months selling ads, writing stories, and soliciting articles from teams across the U.S. and Canada - - with all profits going to help finance the Aurora team;

* Raised more than \$9,500 to help weather a financial storm for Ray Anderson and his Fastpitch Softball News Bulletin;

* Developed the concept of a team "Yearbook" in 1981; wrote all the contents; sold the ads, did the layouts and paste-ups, and sold the books to finance the Aurora team's trip to Japan for that year's Friendship Series.

When Dale Lancaster, former Sports Editor of the Aurora Beacon News, wrote a weekly column for the Kendall County Sentinel, he focused on the "hats" which Kirner was wearing (or had worn) with such comments as: "Ed Kirner is

a man full of hats". Lancaster noted that Kirner had organized the May Jeweler softball team shortly after his high school graduation; had developed and supplied press releases for the Home Savings and Loan team to 70 newspapers and broadcast media; and had been honored for "Outstanding Contributions to Softball" by the National Associations of Softball Writers and Broadcasters on two separate occasions.

Ed Kirner has been involved with the I.S.C. since that memorable year of 1980 and , as noted earlier, holds the distinction of serving as President for the I.S.C. for longer (12 years) than any other President.

Kirner was honored in 1992 by the Aurora Men's Fastpitch Association as "Man of the Year" and was cited "for Outstanding Contribution to Fastpitch Softball" - - certainly an award richly deserved.

Hats off to ED KIRNER - - - Hall of Famer; versatile and valuable, a walking testimony to service to his sport and to the greatness of the sport of fastball!