

Mike Piechnik Victoria, BC



Conrad Margolis, executive with the Vancouver Grey Sox, introduced “a man that I have known and admired for 20 years – Mike Piechnik. In the early days, Mike was one of the best in BC, and then his fame spread across Canada, and now, he’s one of the best ever.”

Margolis recalled the “gigantic battles in BC that pitted Mike with Darren Zack and that as a human being – “Mike is a fine person – a family man, a devout Christian – and a pitcher that I would not hesitate to take in any single game match-up with any team.”

Mike is a nine-time ISC All-World selection, 4th in career pitching wins (49) and was the starting pitcher the last time Canada won the ISF World Championship in Manila in 1992.

Mike provided an emotional response, recalling this is the moment that “started out as a game of catch with my brother in the back yard. I feel like a ‘fish out of water’ – because now I can’t play. I’m happy to sit on the bench tonight – and I never liked to sit on the bench. Thanks to the Vancouver Grey Sox for one game this tournament – what a class softball organization.”

Piechnik recalls that he got the nick-name “Peaches” from the late Russ Boice – perhaps because Boice had difficulty getting the linguistics correct on “Piechnik”.

Mike thanked his first coach Ron Hill who “made the game fun and exciting. When we win a tournament or I receive an award, I always phone and continue to thank him. Coaches can make a difference in some-one’s life – and Ron Hill did for me.”

To the surprise of many in the audience, Piechnik confessed that he actually “announced my retirement in the early 1990s. Then the accident happened (death of Paul Magan) and I got called to play in Sioux City. I have been so blessed since 1993.”

Mike continued - “Sometimes, to myself I sing that Johnny Cash song – ‘I’ve Been Everywhere.’” He thanked venerable Rod Peterson for “giving me my start in the game in 1985 – he taught me about life and integrity in this sport. As well, he blessed me with time with his Dad, a guy with great wisdom. I love elderly wisdom.”

Mike thanked two ISC catchers who contributed to his career success – “Doug Chase (HoF 2008) brought the very best out of me, and Tim Wahl (HoF 2007) should be on the all-universe team. Those two and others have provided me with the best of the best catchers.”

Mike acknowledged the importance of the “many great umpires – and many of them are here this morning”. He followed up, with tongue in cheek – “What did you expect? - I might be still playing next year” resulting in a good-natured round of laughter.

In closing, a visibly emotional Mike stated “my wife Heather loves this game – she supported my desire to play – and gave me her personal encouragement to ‘throw smoke, work hard and have fun’ - anyone playing this game realizes that when you leave the house with that kind of family support it means so much. God has given me a gift that I have been blessed with.”