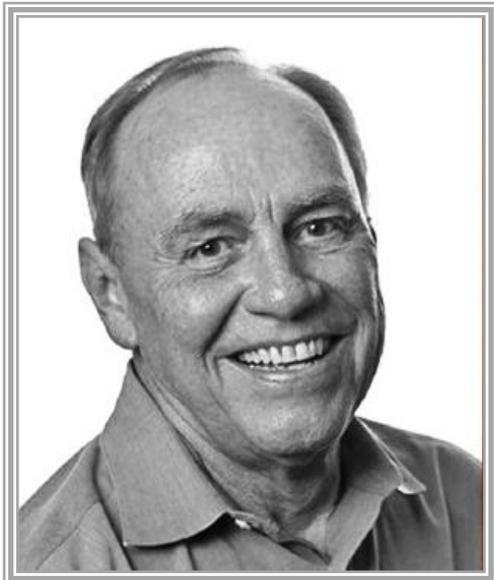


Dick Mason - HoF - 2012

ADMINISTRATOR

DICK MASON, Littleton CO – Past President



Dick Mason was born in Quincy, Illinois, as was another illustrious Quincy native and softball star pitcher-infielder Dick Thompson (I.S.C. Hall of Fame, 2000).

Though they share the same Illinois beginnings, the paths to fast pitch stardom of these two men took different directions and were carved out in different parts of the country.

Dick Mason made his way through St. Frances grade school and then on to Christian Brothers and Quincy High Schools.

He was in the U.S. Marine Corps boot camp when he celebrated his 18th birthday as he left high school early to enlist for a four-year term during his senior year.

Following his boot camp and infantry training in San Diego, young Mr. Mason was trained as an amtrack mechanic and spent time at such Marine outposts as: Camp Pendleton, California; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii; and Okinawa before heading to Viet Nam and such spots as Chu Lai and Danang. He received an Honorable Discharge three months before his term of duty was scheduled to end in order that he might begin college.

Dick Mason's evolution from a tracked vehicle repair expert into a field which would take him to the ultimate position in the Accountancy field (the C.P.A. certification) took him first to Glendale Community College (Arizona) where he received an A.A. (that's Associate of Arts) degree in May, 1969. From that beginning, Dick Mason was then employed by Valley National Bank of Phoenix until he was awarded an academic scholarship to the University of Denver in the fall of 1970. He completed his undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) in early 1972 and within two months he passed the rigorous Certified Public Accountant exam.

With the exception of five years when he held such positions as Chief Financial Officer, President, and Chief Executive Officer of a Denver business, Dick has been in the field of public accountancy since 1970. He has held key positions in several C.P.A. firms in Colorado. Currently he is a Partner in the firm of Haynie & Company (Littleton, Colorado). His professional experience includes such areas as auditing, tax, and financial consulting services. He has served as President of the International Group of Accounting Firms (IGAF Worldwide). Since 1993, he has been appointed by Colorado Governors to serve on the Municipal Bond Supervision Advisory Board for the State of Colorado Securities Commissioner. He has also provided service for numerous civic and community organizations.

Dick Mason's experience with fast pitch softball goes back to 1971 when he began a career with the "fastball" sport which has seen him involved as a player, a coach, a manager, and an administrator of both men's and boy's teams and programs. He played the game from 1971 – 1995; served as a Manager from 1976 – 1995; and as an administrator since 1990. Among his many fastball activities are his role with Ken Hackmeister in coaching the 1995 U.S. Olympic Festival Gold Medal team; his involvement with the 1996 19 and under U.S. National team selection camp, and the 1998 U.S. Men's National team selection camp - - a team which captured the Silver medal. He played the same key role with the 19 and under U.S. National team selection in 2000.

For a quarter-century, Dick has served on the Colorado ASA Hall of Fame Committee as either the chairman or as a member. For two years he served as Deputy Commissioner for men's fastpitch in Colorado.

Dick Mason's involvement with the International Softball Congress began in 1996 when he was appointed Commissioner for the Colorado/Kansas area. He was Treasurer of the I.S.C. from 1999 until 2001 when he was elected President of the organization, a post he held for six years.

In those two latter positions, Mason was a tower of strength and a valuable voice of counsel and reason during some of the most important and difficult times in the history of the I.S.C. He continues to serve the ISC as a Western Region Commissioner.

Dick is married to JoAnn Mason. They are the parents of three children and two grandchildren.

Dick Mason gives back to the game he loves

by Bob Otto, 14 Feb 2012

“Dick’s leadership, CPA background and direction was a huge benefit. His decisions were excellent” – Ken Hackmeister, ISC Executive Director.

LITTLETON, CO – There are those who come into men’s fastpitch softball, feast from the trough until content, and then bid the game farewell. Without so much as a backward glance. Give something back to the sport that’s been so good to them? Nah, don’t have the time. Got better things to do like golf or slowpitch softball.

Well, that might categorize many former fastpitch players, but not Dick Mason.

Mason began playing the sport while attending the University of Denver in the 1970s.

With a few swings of his bat at some sharp-breaking risers and drops, he was hooked.

“I jumped at the chance of playing when the CPA firm I worked for formed a fastpitch team in the summer of 1971,” said Mason, a Certified Public Accountant. “I played the outfield and by the second year even started hitting the ball a little and was hooked.”

Bryan Mason knows his dad pretty well. He followed him to league and tournament games as a youngster. He says his dad played hard and determined, much in the same vein as the hardnosed U.S. Marine and Vietnam veteran that he is.

“My dad always seemed oddly proud of his injuries,” Bryan Mason said. “He’d slide into third base and tear up his knee, or get bruised ribs from running into the right field fence, or jammed fingers. He wore them as a badge of honor.”

LEADERSHIP SKILLS EMERGE

Mason’s playing career spans three decades. But while he was playing, steadily emerging was another side – a leadership side. He began managing teams, organizing tournaments, and went on to chair the Colorado ASA Softball Hall of Fame Committee.

In 1994, he organized a team to play the USA Men’s National Team in a training camp in Colorado Springs. And he was selected as a coach for the 1995 Olympic Festival in Denver.

At the festival, he met Ken Hackmeister, the current International Softball Congress (ISC) Executive Director. They soon became fastpitch colleagues and good friends. Hackmeister convinced Mason that he should join the ISC as the Colorado Commissioner.

MASON JOINS ISC

“In 1995, I was in Sioux City (Iowa) seeing my first ISC World Tournament at Ken’s suggestion,” Mason said. “I guess at a meeting, commissioner Russ Callahan resigned to move to Oklahoma. Milt Stark (then the ISC Executive Director) called me that fall to ask if I wanted to join the ISC. At first I was reluctant, but agreed a couple of months later.”

Mason rose from Colorado Commissioner to the ISC Treasurer in 1999. And finally to one of the most demanding jobs in all of fastpitch: president of the ISC. A post he held for six years (2001 – 2006). And one requiring astute managerial skills.

“Dick’s leadership, CPA background and direction was a huge benefit,” Hackmeister said. “As president, one of his primary responsibilities was to assign committee chairmen and committee members. His decisions were excellent. Several top-notch administrators were created from this selection process.”

And Mason’s leadership qualities, added Hackmeister, were sorely needed during some difficult times: a reorganization in 2006-’07, an overhaul of the budget and financials, and an expansion of teams when the ISC introduced the ISC II program.

Mason, through his association with both the Colorado ASA and ISC was also able to “bring many people from both sides into a cooperation mode rather than an adversarial one,” Hackmeister said. “It opened the door for more cooperation between the ISC and ASA in other states.”

HOURS OF COMMITMENT

Bryan Mason looks back in time. He can still see his dad sitting at the kitchen table with his laptop working thousands of hours on tournaments and administration duties.

“I would say he spent 70-percent of his time on organizational and bureaucratic management,” Mason added, “25-percent on politics, working to develop an agenda of and for the future. And 5-percent as Boy Scout den mother (because) at times grown men can act like kids.”

Dick Mason says he proud of what he helped the ISC accomplish, a few of which include: insisting that the Executive Committee read and learn Roberts Rules of Order, which helped

bring order and fairness to meetings; and the introduction of the PRAWN rule – a controversial issue at the time.

“There were lots of good people on both sides of the (PRAWN) issue and lots of heated debate,” Mason said. “One of my duties as president was to be involved with all committees. When Michael White brought his PRAWN rule to the player rep committee, I thought it was a great alternative to more out of area restrictions, and I encouraged the Player Representative Committee and Board of Directors to debate and pass PRAWN.

“There was a great deal of debate and process before PRAWN was finally passed. I think it was a creative and effective rule to provide some parity.”

Through the years, Mason has sadly witnessed men’s and boys’ fastpitch in decline. Numbers drop steadily year by year. He says what needs to be done to reverse the trend, likely won’t happen:

“Both male and female fastpitch needs to become an official sport of the Olympics,” he said. “I think that ship has sailed when we lost female fastpitch, and instead of replacing baseball with fastpitch.”

MASON’S ALL-TIME LIST

Over the years, Mason has seen many of the top ISC teams and players. Some of the greatest in the history of the sport.

He picks County Materials (Marathon, Wisc., 2005-'06 World Tournament champions) as the strongest team ever; the Farm Tavern (Madison, Wisc., 1997-'99 World Tournament champions) as the most consistently great team. And he picks St. Joseph, Missouri’s Frontier Casino (2002 World Tournament champions) as the most inspirational team.

And were he to wear the managerial hat again, who would he like toeing the rubber? “Michael White, Darren Zack and Todd Martin have to be in the conversation, and I would also include Ty Stofflet,” Mason said. “My position players would include Mark Sorenson, Shawn Rychcik and Colin Abbott as (the very best), and 15 or 20 as (extremely talented) in my book.”

And managing Mason’s collection of all-stars and ISC Hall of Fame players would be Larry Lynch, Rod Peterson and Denny Bruckert. “They would be my top three,” he said.

Mason has spent over 40 years giving back to the game he loves. But as with all things, the end eventually comes. With a heavy heart, he decided to retire in 2006. But the ISC hasn’t forgotten him.

MASON GETS JUST REWARD

At the ISC World Tournament in Midland, Mich. (Aug. 10-18), Mason will be inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame. He will take his honorary place with a Hall of Fame class that includes Paul Algar (pitcher), Todd Budke (infielder), Shawn Rychcik (outfielder / infielder), Adam Smith (infielder) and John Miller (sponsor).

“After being a husband to JoAnn and a father to Bryan, Brandi and Brandt, it will be the biggest honor of my life,” Mason said, who was also inducted into the Colorado ASA Softball Hall of Fame in 2000. “The ISC Hall of Fame has the greatest collection of athletes, administrators, umpires and technicians I can imagine. It is a great honor.”

There are those players that come into men’s fastpitch, feast at the trough, then take their leave. But Dick Mason isn’t one of them.

“If it weren’t for people like Dick making the transition from player to administrator,” Hackmeister said, “I seriously question the state of the game we currently enjoy.”