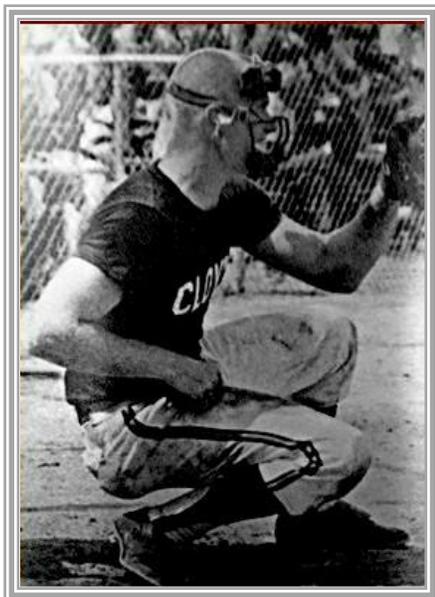


Ed Daniels - HoF - 2004

Ed Daniels, Player - Fresno, CA - By: Joyce A. Pyzik

"You Gotta Love This Game"



As with most other fast pitch greats, Ed Daniels came to the game in a round about fashion. Sometimes a father might introduce his son to the game, something to turn to after any baseball career was over.

Sometimes a friend might ask another friend to come out and help his team for a few games and those few games lead to many years. There are probably other scenarios to begin the story, but in all of them the rest of the story line is the same. The individual falls in love and it is a love that lasts a lifetime.

The love affair is between the player and the great game of fast pitch softball. The story has twists and turns, peaks and valleys, good moments and even some bad ones, but in each the story leads to awesome experiences, wonderful friendships, and memories to last a lifetime. It was no different for Ed Daniels, who will enter the ISC Hall of Fame this summer.

Ed, after graduating from Roosevelt H.S. in California, joined the Coastguard. Ed was asked by a friend to come out and join his softball team. Ed was an outfielder, who on an occasion would catch. One summer, whether by chance or by fate, he ended up on a team playing alongside Wendell Groth. Wendell caught and Ed patrolled the outfield. That winter, Wendell was asked to manage the team and the rest of the story went like this.

One of the first managerial moves Wendell made, and according to him, one of the best managerial moves he ever made was to move Ed behind the plate; and there he stayed for the rest of his softball career.

Ed Daniels career spanned about thirteen years. Like many others he didn't start playing softball until he was 25 years old. During his career, Ed played for KARM Radio, Clovis Cowboys, and Sal Winshells. In all, Ed Daniels played in six ISC World Tournaments. In the six tournaments, he compiled a batting average of .385, collecting 25 hits in 65 at bats. Ed rarely struck out and was a great base runner. He was a superb defensive catcher, with a superior arm. To go along with that, he had a great knowledge and understanding of the game. This is why he was voted to the All World Team three of the six years he appeared at the World Tournament.

According to Ed Daniels, his most memorable moment but also the most disappointing, was finishing runner-up at the 1973 ISC World Tournament, in Rock Island, IL. They were the last undefeated team, but lost two to the Lakewood Jets.

Prior to his nomination and eventual election, Ed Daniels, would have told you his greatest accomplishment in the game was being named three times to the All World Team. Now, he says it is the election into the Hall of Fame, "by a country mile", he adds.

Former teammate and manager, Wendell Groth (who nominated Ed for this prestigious honor) says there was a certain charisma about Ed. He was popular with his teammates, a fan favorite no matter where he played, and was respected by his opponents, Groth recalls.

Today, Ed Daniels is retired from the Fresno, CA. fire department, and regularly plays racquetball and an occasional round of golf. However, softball has not completely disappeared from his life. As with most softballers he has remained active in the game, only now it is slow pitch. He and his travel league team recently won the Senior Softball Winter World Tournament, in Las Vegas.

Ed summed up his conversation with me by saying he played with a great bunch of guys, many of whom are still very good friends. He has warm memories of and will never forget the support from all the wives and children, who rarely missed a game. He says, "We like to say our kids were raised at the ball park, and they couldn't have turned out better!" I have to agree with Mr. Daniels, this seems to be a tradition in fast pitch softball, not seen in many other sporting communities. The author herself, was raised on a softball diamond, and has continued to pass the tradition along to her children, who are also growing up on the softball diamond.

The ending to Ed Daniels story expresses the same wishes and hopes that so many of us share for the future of this great game that we all love so much. Ed would like to see some really good programs started for boys, to teach them how to play, and respect and love the game; so that they may experience the same love affair with the game as he did and to maybe one day enter the Hall of Fame, as he will.

I think all of us in the fastball community hope Ed Daniels wish comes true so that any new stories have happy endings too!