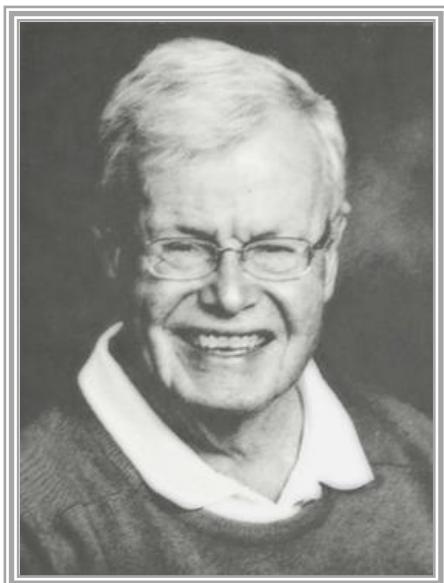


Gordon Wise - HoF - 2008

GORDON L. WISE - - - - Administrator



Gordie Wise was exposed to the game of fast pitch softball (hereafter known only as "fastball") at the age of 18. Immediately after high school graduation, the left-handed first baseman attended an early practice of the local semi-pro baseball team and noticed another group of athletes on an adjacent field playing a quite different game - - you guessed it - - fastball!

That group turned out to be the local Grange softball team who immediately invited the well-known high school athlete to take a look at their game. It took about 30 minutes later that evening to convince Wise that playing on the smaller diamond with the larger ball was really FUN, and the next Sunday he found himself patrolling left field and falling in love with a brand new sport.

Sports had always been a big part of his life from lying on his back listening to Waite Hoyt describe Cincinnati Reds games through discovering basketball as he headed to junior high (he was to be the captain of his high school basketball sectional tournament championship team) as well as playing high school baseball.

Though he played the game of fastball at varying levels for over two decades, he is quick to deny that there is any Hall of Fame credential to be found in his "20+ years spent mostly as a mediocre left-handed pitcher"

Following the high school graduation of his oldest son, it was determined by a family decision that the best way for Wise and his two sons, Kent and Kevin, to stay involved with the diamond sport was to revive the game of fastball in Piqua, Ohio.

The community had once flourished as a hotbed of fastball activity, but the sport had been dormant locally for more than 10 years. That decision led to the formation of the Piqua Fastballers with Wise as General Manager (and Field Manager for the first couple of seasons); with his son and other local 19-year-old athletes in the mix together with a sprinkling of older local and area athletes who had played the sport.

Bolstered by an occasional "import" on the mound, the Fastballers had a nine-year run which included an ISC World Tournament appearance (1985), two berths in the ASA Major Nationals ('86 and '87), and frequent contests against national and international powerhouses. Making the ISC World Tourney in those years was tough since Ohio was dominated by juggernauts from Ashland (Faultless Rubber and E.S.S.)

Gordie's ISC involvement began with the 1984 season. Introduced to the ISC by Larry Fisher, Wise recognized the ISC as the ideal vehicle to insure facing the best possible competition. When the Buckeye Classic Fastpitch Conference was born as an ISC Travel League, Wise was appointed as Commissioner of the league. The Ohio league regularly sent strong champions to the ISC World Tournament.

A Professor of Marketing (Wright State University), Wise was appointed in 1985 to the post of Director of Marketing for the ISC - - a position he held until 2000. There were many adventures and projects associated with that position. Several projects involved extensive survey research done among fans, players, and managers over the years to provide input for decision-making by the ISC Board of Directors. Those research projects were always targeting areas related to improving the "product" of the organization as well as its promotion to the market of sports fans and the ever-present search for additional corporate sponsors.

Some of these activities involved attempts to get television coverage of World Tournament games (with a significant near-miss in an effort with ESPN). In his later capacity as Information Officer, he authored hundreds of press releases between 2001 and 2006. He served as ISC Parliamentarian in several later years, a post which placed him at the heart of some crucial ISC decisions. For several seasons, he crusaded (finally successfully) for rules mandating and enforcing contrasting uniform colors in an effort to enhance fan interest and enjoyment.

One aspect of Wise's role as Director of Marketing was his authorship of many profiles and biographies of players, managers, and others of the ISC family which prompted his Hall of Fame nomination to cite "many feature articles he has written about the game, articles about the famous and not-so-famous individuals who make up the game and the number of stirring and heartfelt tributes to members of the ISC family, both living and dead". His tribute articles on Frank Porth and Bob Welby are prime examples of this wordsmanship. He is the author of the feature story on Rod Peterson which appears in the 2008 World Championship Guide.

Less tangible contributions are bound up in Wise's nomination. In his nominating letter, Larry Fisher referred to Wise's "ability to quietly serve as a 'voice of reason' while providing calming yet agenda-free advice to ISC officers as well as the ISC Board of Directors - - a characteristic which earned him the respect and admiration of all."

In his non-fastball life, Wise is a "semi-retired" college professor (Now Emeritus Professor of Marketing, Wright State University, in Dayton, Ohio) who remains in the college classroom with a rather full-time teaching load ("I need my 19-year-old fix that these kids provide"). He is looking forward to his 40th basketball season as the P.A. announcer for the Wright State Raiders men's team. A founding member and the first Chairman of the WSU Athletic Council, prior to his retirement for 18 years he was the University's Faculty Representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

For the past 12 years he has been a volunteer mentor to a series of teenage boys with felony convictions in a rehabilitation program at an area juvenile prison. Gordie is still active as a market research consultant in some of his "spare" time. He is proud to claim the unique distinction of having won the intramural free throw shooting championship of no fewer than THREE colleges (Miami University; Wright State; and at Indiana University – where he had to hit 97 of 100 to claim the crown).

Married to his "Sweetheart Susie", who has been a patient and loyal fastball wife (She was heart and soul of that Piqua Fastballer franchise). They celebrated their 25th anniversary recently. With their seven kids, and now 14 grandkids, there is hardly any time to slow down. Susie and Gordie are active in their United Methodist church and in numerous community activities.