

BOB WELBY MEMORIAL RECOGNITION OF SERVICE AWARD

John Miller - Sponsor - 2012

JOHN MILLER, Green Bay WI
John Miller Biography



John was born in Cleveland, Wisconsin in 1938. He moved to Maribel, Wisconsin at the age of 10. Maribel was and is the home of the legendary Fred Fels. This is the village where John was first exposed to fastpitch softball.

Maribel played in the Manitowoc County League and it may as well have been the major league as far as John was concerned. While there his father passed away suddenly. His mother, he, and four brothers moved a few miles away to Larrabee where he began to play fastpitch on a youth team. It helped that his brother, Jim, was a pitcher.

At age 14 the family relocated to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where John soon organized a team, managed it, and secured a sponsor to play in a Minor AA League. The high school years were spent playing ball in various city leagues, both baseball and softball.

After graduation, John joined the Navy where he served aboard the U.S.S. Des Moines where he became a radio operator. Once home he continued playing ball, met his wife, Clare, at the 616 Club (home of many of Green Bay's top softball teams), married and started his family (Mark, Jess, Bill, Lora and Kate). John coached football and basketball at St. Philip's Grade School for many years.

John owned and operated a Rahr's beer distributorship, bought Circle Tap in Denmark in 1967, and constructed a ball diamond where leagues played during the week and tournaments were held on weekends. He continued to play while sponsoring several teams. In 1970, Don Kane and John started and co-chaired a Knights of Columbus Tournament (now known as the Boys of Summer) in Denmark, Wisconsin. John continues to chair or be involved in this tournament to this date.

He bought a bar in Green Bay in 1972 (not coming up with a better name it remains "The Bar" to this day). He and his business partner, John Duckett, sponsored as many as twenty fastpitch men's and women's teams at various levels a season among sponsoring other sports teams. The Bar team won the Classic League Championship at Kimberly and the right to advance to the World Tournament in Sun City, Arizona.

In the late 80's a group of young ballplayers from the Denmark area needed a sponsor and thus the Denmark Dukes were born. This team was comprised of local ball players, predominantly from the Denmark area, and included John's son Bill. The Dukes won many state tournaments and participated in many World Tournaments.

To compete with other successful teams in the State and World Tournaments, the management decided to get pitching help from outside the area. John somewhat defrayed these added expenses by winning blackjack tournaments in Las Vegas. With some coaxing by Darren Derricks and son, Mark Miller, the Dukes are once again planning to play in the Midland World Tournament in 2012.

Staying involved in fastpitch softball was a business decision in earlier years but grew into a gratifying and enjoyable hobby. Along the way many lasting friendships were made.