

BOB WELBY MEMORIAL RECOGNITION OF SERVICE AWARD

Neil Fennel - Administrator - 2002

NEIL FENNELL, CHAIRMAN PERTH SHOOTOUT



Neil Fennell grew up in farm country in the small town of Picton which is south of Belleville. The drive east from Picton to Perth, Ontario is a two hour drive for most folks.

However the journey for Neil Fennell from his home in Perth to places visited in his role as Founder and Chairman of the Perth Shootout covered a lot more ground, beginning in 1989 until the final year of the Perth Shootout in 2001.

Although Neil was never more than an intermediate-level player during his youth he did gain a greater appreciation for the game of fastpitch softball as well as the athleticism displayed by some of the outstanding players he saw perform on local teams.

From 1974 when Neil joined the Ontario Provincial Police, until 1989 he worked at establishing a presence in the community while improving his organizational skills.

It was during this time that Neil Fennell began to dream of organizing a world-class fastpitch softball tournament in Perth. A tournament that would emphasize exciting entertainment in an alcohol-free, family oriented, environment.

Beginning in 1989, Neil traveled extensively throughout the USA and Canada to visit with softball teams, sponsors, fans and tournament organizers, continually seeking new ways to make the Perth Shootout even more appealing. The 1990 tournament was intended as a one-time event but was so successful and talked about by teams and fans that it continued for another eleven years.

Strong club teams from the Ottawa Valley and southwestern Ontario attracted the local fans. Neil Fennell's commitment to excellence in bringing in quality teams attracted other teams from throughout the rest of Canada along with powerhouse squads from across the USA. Thereafter national teams from Canada, New Zealand and the United States would also make the journey to compete in the prestigious Perth Shootout.

Neil Fennell and the Perth Shootout were leaders in establishing a formal recognition for honoring those who had contributed to the game of fastpitch, on and off the field of play. In the mid 1990's Neil organized an annual meeting during the ISC World Tournament to bring together teams and tournament organizers to co-ordinate event planning in order to avoid conflicts between major men's tournaments.

His commitment to the ISC brand of fastpitch softball was at times a source of irritation to others in Ontario's fastpitch community, but Neil never wavered in believing the ISC had the best to offer in his community and throughout North America.

In a recent conversation Neil Fennell stated, "The success of the Perth Shootout is the result of hard work by a group of dedicated individuals within our community of Perth. Without this group of people working as a unit, the Perth Shootout would never have been the success it was. My recognition by the ISC is really an acknowledgment of the Perth Shootout Committee maintaining such high standards year after year. They, along with my wife and daughter are as much a part of the success of our tournament as I am."

In recognition of his dedication and commitment to promoting the ISC brand of fastpitch softball, Neil Fennell will be inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame at Kitchener, Ontario during the ISC World Tournament in August 2002.