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**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: GARY BRINKMAN
-Larry Wolfe**

A native of Ashton, Iowa, Gary Brinkman's family moved to Howard, South Dakota when he was a high school sophomore. He graduated from Howard High where he was on the Tigers' football, basketball and track teams while playing summer baseball and golf. He then went to the University of South Dakota where he majored in Phys. Ed. and minored in Biology. He played baseball for the Coyotes his junior year before deciding to concentrate on the education part of college! Although he says he really never used his Phys. Ed. or Biology expertise after graduating.

After college, he worked for JCPenney for seven years before going into business for himself in the solar heating industry. Gary got the "seven year itch" again and became an auto sales associate for Toyota and Lexus for the next twelve years. During that period he was a seven-time member of the Toyota Gold Sales Society which honors the top sales

people in the region. He then began career number four when he became an owner/operator hauling freight for an international freight forwarding company.

Gary and Dena, his wife of forty-five years, moved to Chandler in 2005 to be nearer to “at least some of the grandkids.” They have others in the Minneapolis and Houston areas. In total they have eight grand children ranging in age from eight to seventeen. Much of their leisure travel involves trips to see the family at those locations.

Gary retired in 2014 and he and Dena moved from Chandler to Sun Lakes. It was then that he resumed his softball career after a hiatus of around eighteen years. Previously Gary played both softball and basketball into his late forties. He was also a very active sports official for many years. He officiated high school basketball, football and volleyball and umpired baseball and softball games. He also refereed women’s college basketball. Gary’s now bringing that experience to Sun Lakes Softball as he’s umpiring as well as playing.

Dena and Gary love hiking and biking together and are active together at church as Bible study teachers and greeters at Arizona Community Church in Tempe. Gary also plays golf while Dena is a marathon runner. She ran in the Boston Marathon this year and in November this year she plans to run “the original marathon course” in Greece. That race begins in the town of Marathon and ends in the Olympic Stadium in Athens. (Dena moved to the US from Greece when she was fourteen and she and Gary have visited Greece several times.)

After a year plus in Sun Lakes, Gary and Dena are really into retirement and the “lifestyle.” He wonders how he ever had time for work and looks forward to many more seasons at the Field of Dreams. He’s enjoying the camaraderie with all the guys and getting to be a kid again, at least on the ball field! PLAY BALL! Again!!