



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: ED SOWNEY
-by Larry Wolfe

Ed Sowney, an Atlantic City native, had a rough start in life, being orphaned at age 10; however, his life experiences have been mostly positive ever since. He was brought up by his older sister and graduated from Wilkinsburg High, east of Pittsburgh. After graduation, he began a long and interesting career in the Army. He was a radio operator and photographer prior to being commissioned as a quartermaster officer. He had overseas tours in Germany (twice), Italy, Korea and Vietnam, experiencing both good times and bad while serving his country. The good included the chance to see the world and allowed him to meet his future wife, Karen, during his tour in Italy. Karen was also in the military at the time; however, Ed maintains that they were “just friends.” (It would be several years later before they would hook up again.) The bad times included his Vietnam tour during the peak time of the conflict. During that tour he was a Supply Officer at the Army’s main logistics depot at Long Binh, near Saigon. Like many wartime vets, Ed doesn’t talk a lot about those experiences, but he was proud to serve and happy to come home afterwards.

After Vietnam and a period of transcontinental courtship, Ed and Karen were married and settled in New Jersey. Ed served stateside for several more years before retiring as a major and entering the civilian

workforce. He then spent nineteen years with Datapro Research Corporation, a McGraw-Hill subsidiary in New Jersey before retiring (again!) in 1999. He “let” Karen work on for awhile before they relocated (and retired yet again!) in Sun Lakes in 2007.

While in the military, Ed played softball, flag football and tennis and was a championship-caliber bowler. He then played softball for many more years in an industrial league. In fact, he recently attended the 25-year reunion of the 1984 league champions back in Jersey. He’ll begin his third season of Sun Lakes softball this fall.

Besides sports, Ed has been involved in many other interesting activities. He’s a past member of Toastmasters International and was an actor in over sixty plays with the Pittsburgh Playhouse and with the military. He even directed one play: “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” He and Karen are also genealogy buffs; she is the current Vice-President and Past-President of the local Genealogy Club and has traced her ancestry way back to the Vikings while Ed is from Irish/German stock. Since the Vikings conquered Ireland in 839 A.D., Karen claims that she is the “master” and Ed the “slave!”

Here are some other interesting tidbits: Ed loves ocean bodysurfing; he provided staff and equipment support for the 1968 movie, “The Devil’s Brigade;” he once met President Lyndon Johnson; and, he’s a huge ABBA fan. But the topper may be that he just became a first-time grandfather at the age of 70! Congratulations, Major Grandpa!