



JUNE 2024

**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: RICK BERRY
-Larry Wolfe**

So, who are we profiling this month? Well, the answer my friend is blowing in the wind. Or is that just Rick Berry's awesome beard?

A California native, Rick was born in Pasadena and attended Rosemead High School, which is about 12 miles east of LA. Rick went directly into the work force after high school, working in the landscaping and gardening business. He was married as a teenager and welcomed son Ricky shortly thereafter. Daughter Valerie soon followed. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't work out and at age 25 Rick found himself raising the two youngsters on his own. Luckily, Rick met Joyce, and they married in 1983. It's now been over 40 years and counting. Joyce also has a son, Robert, and daughter, Leah. There are six grandchildren in their blended family.

Moving on from the landscaping business, Rick was hired by the LA County District Attorney's Office in their building maintenance department. After nearly 20 years with the DA's office, he went to the LA County Sheriff's Office, working in their building construction and maintenance department. Rick eventually became a supervisor, then

manager of that department, responsible for 28 stations and 35 substations. In all, Rick worked for LA County for about 40 years, retiring five years ago. (As an interesting aside, one of Rick's friends at the DA's Office was Marsha Clark, lead prosecutor in the infamous OJ Simpson "Trial of the Century!")

Joyce had been visiting her sister in Sunbird regularly for over 20 years, so when it was retirement time, Rick and Joyce bought a home in Sunbird as well. They did, however, keep their home in the LA area and they head back there when our temps really heat up. They also own four rental homes in California, two in LA County and two in San Bernadino, so that continues to keep them busy.

Rick joined our softball program in 2022 but had previously played on numerous teams in California from age 24 to 56. He also umpired for several years in adult fastpitch, intermediate and slow-pitch leagues. Additionally, Rick served as pitching coach for son Ricky's nationally ranked Little League travel teams for a few years.

Besides his interest in softball and baseball, Rick enjoys camping and owns a 45-foot 5th wheeler, the largest allowable on the road. Kind of like hauling your house around! Rick and Joyce make an annual 4th of July pilgrimage to Bonelli Park and Puddingstone Lake where they can watch the fireworks in San Bernadino, 35 miles to the east, and LA, 30 miles to the west.

Since there were no senior softball leagues near where Rick lived in California, he "retired" from the sport for a few years before making a comeback at the Field of Dreams in Sun Lakes. Rick says that he can't say enough positive things about playing in our league. "From the competition to the camaraderie to the Field of Dreams facility, everything is first rate," he said.