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**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: MIKE WILLITS
-Larry Wolfe**

With roots in both Nebraska and Colorado, Mike Willits was born in the Cornhusker State, but lived in Ft. Collins and Greeley, Colorado before returning to Cozad, Nebraska where he played high school basketball and football for the Haymakers. He also played American Legion baseball in the summers. It was then back to Colorado where Mike attended Colorado State College, majoring in math and physics (“Which,” he says, “I never used!”)

Instead, with a small loan, he purchased a local feed store in Eustis, Nebraska. He operated that for about seven years before returning to what the locals call “Greality.” That is, Greeley, Colorado! He joined his Dad’s trucking company in what would be the start of his new career. Over the years, he was involved in all aspects of the business and eventually bought the company when his Dad retired in 1989. He ran the business for twenty-seven years, growing the operation to include

forty-two trucks and ninety refrigerated trailers. The company specialized in long hauls to California markets, delivering meat to the West Coast and bringing back produce to Colorado. Mike was also heavily involved in the Colorado Motor Carriers Trade Association, serving as Chairman for one term.

When Mike and Pam retired, they knew Sun Lakes was where they wanted to be. Mike's folks had retired here in the late '90s so he was very familiar with the area. They do still go back to Greeley in the summer months where they have a townhouse as well as some investment properties to look after. Mike also enjoys working at the public golf courses, usually mowing the fairways, while there.

Mike played in young men's softball leagues for many years before "retiring" for about ten years. He then started playing senior softball when he reached 50 and has continued through today. Mike played on the ScrapIrons travel team out of Denver before joining our league in 2013; he's noted for his speed, excellent defense and smooth left-handed batting stroke.

One of Mike's "Claims to Fame" is that he's attended twenty-eight consecutive MLB All-Star Games going back to his first at Angels Stadium in 1989. He's already working on number twenty-nine which will be played in Washington, DC next July. He and Pam make a mini-vacation out of each trip, seeing the local sights in addition to the game. They also enjoy taking trips with their Fifth Wheel RV, usually traveling three to four thousand miles each summer. They normally take at least one "really long trip" along with several local trips around Colorado.

Mike's also a "tinkerer" and is currently in the process of doing major re-modeling of their Sun Lakes house. He says some of his favorite memories are from when he worked for local farmers as a youngster, learning how things work and how to fix them when they didn't. Those lessons proved valuable when he was running his own company back in "Greality!"