



APRIL 2019

SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: PAUL ESKRIDGE

-Larry Wolfe

Like Bad, Bad Leroy Brown, Paul Eskridge hails from the south side of Chicago, but he's not "meaner than a junk yard dog." Actually, he's a really nice guy!

Several months after graduating from Thornridge High in Dolton, Illinois, Paul flew from Chicago to Los Angeles on a cold, gray and blustery day in January. When he arrived at LAX, he saw the blue skies and sunshine and decided he was done with winter and was never going back to Chicago. And he didn't, except to pack up and move to California.

Paul worked in the air conditioning business in California for ten years before moving to Arizona and opening up his own business, Comfort Engineering, an HVAC company. He operated that business for over

ten years before joining the Johnstone Supply cooperative as a member-owner of a store in Mobile, Alabama. Johnstone Supply is often described as the “Ace Hardware of the HVAC/Refrigeration industry” with over 400 locations nationwide. Paul and his wife owned and operated their business for twenty-three years before “selling out,” retiring and moving to Sun Lakes last year.

Paul met his then wife-to-be, Jennifer, during his first stint in Arizona while he was playing softball in Apache Junction. The story goes that Jennifer asked someone watching, “Who’s that guy playing shortstop?” And the rest is history! Jennifer was a member of the Mesa Police Department for ten years which allowed Paul to play on their softball team. He’d previously played in city leagues in Chicago and for other Arizona teams. Paul just joined our league last year and has proven to be a solid player, even though he hadn’t played in nearly 30 years. At last look, he was hitting over .600 and playing stellar defense in left field.

Tennis is still Paul’s number one sport although softball may be gaining ground. He says, “That’s because it’s easier to find one guy to play tennis than twenty to play softball!” His other major interest is flying. He earned his pilot’s wings as a 24-year-old and has owned a dozen small planes over the years. His most recent was a single-prop Mooney. He still flies, but is currently “between planes.”

Jennifer and Paul have two sons. Their oldest lives in Lake Havasu with his wife and the three grandkids, while their younger son lives in Orlando.

The Eskridges plan to start traveling more now that they’re pretty much fully retired. They have a motor home waiting to hit the road this summer to escape our 115 degree temps. Paul says that he naturally loved the hot Arizona summers when he owned his A/C business here, but now, “not so much!”

With his background in the HVAC, refrigeration and plumbing business, Paul can install and repair a wide range of things. He still loves doing handyman projects and says that “I can fix just about anything but the crack of dawn, the break of day and a broken heart!”