



## **SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: BOB CANTOR**

**-by Larry Wolfe**

**Robert “Bob” Cantor is one of the veterans of the Sun Lakes Senior Softball League. This fall he’ll begin play in his 14<sup>th</sup> season. In fact, Bob says that the existence of the softball league was one of the primary reasons he and Gail, his wife of over 49 years, selected Sun Lakes as their retirement location.**

**Bob was born in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, an oil refining town near Philadelphia. Bob is one of three sports stars that was born in Marcus Hook, the other two being Mickey Vernon, former Major League baseball player, and Billy “White Shoes” Johnson of NFL fame. Bob and his family moved to Huntington, West Virginia early in his childhood. He graduated from Huntington High School and then went to Marshall College (now Marshall University) in Huntington where he earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Engineering Sciences. Bob played varsity baseball and JV basketball for the Huntington High School Pony Express and played intramural sports at Marshall.**

**Prior to graduating from Marshall, Bob served in the Navy for four years, including the Korean War years. He was an Electronics Technician and later an Air Traffic Controller with the Naval Security Detachment on Attu Island, the westernmost and largest island in the Near Islands group of the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. Attu was invaded and captured by the Japanese early during World War II, so when the Korean War broke out, the Navy sent Bob and his mates to defend that potential entryway to the U.S. They evidently did a great job, because the Koreans never got near Attu!**

**After his years in the service, Bob began what would be a lifelong career in civil and environmental engineering. His first position as a professional engineer was actually**

**in Phoenix where he worked for the U.S. government on the Central Arizona Project (CAP). (CAP, as many Arizonans know, is a 336-mile system of aqueducts, tunnels, pumping stations and pipelines that provide the largest resource of renewable water in the state of Arizona.) Bob then went back east to Wheeling, West Virginia and spent over 18 years with the Public Health Service (a predecessor of the EPA). He ultimately headed up the Field Operations Department, where he worked on various air and water pollution issues and hazardous waste management. He completed his career in Port Hueneme, California where he worked on environmental projects for the Navy and helped develop, and then teach a hazardous waste management training course for Navy and Marine Corps personnel.**

**It was in California that Bob was bitten by the senior softball bug and that “bug” is still with him today. In addition to playing in the Sun Lakes Senior Softball League, Bob has also played on the traveling Age Group Teams, including the 65’s team that placed third in the 2001 AAA World Championship Tournament.**

**Bob grew up a Philadelphia Phillies fan and his favorite player was former third baseman Willie “Puddin’ Head” Jones. (There must be a reason for someone to have the nickname “Puddin’ Head,” but that’s another story....) Today he follows the D-Backs and likes Eric Byrnes and Orlando “O-Dog” Hudson, due to their competitiveness and all-out style of play. In fact, O-Dog might just be a “slightly younger” version of second baseman Bobby Cantor!**

**Some of Bob’s fondest memories take him back to the midget and junior summer leagues in Huntington. A highlight was being selected to the all-star team and playing under the lights on a field with a real grass infield! Bob also played fast pitch softball for his ship’s team while in Japan. They finished with an 18 – 2 record and Bob led the team in at bats, hits, was third in batting average and, believe it or not, was tied for the lead in stolen bases!**

**Bob does have interests other than softball. His favorite activities include his membership in the Sun Lakes Computer Club. In fact, his involvement in the Computer Club led to his interest in photo editing and ultimately genealogy. He has used the Pro Show Gold software to put together family histories on DVD’s. He incorporates slide shows of old photos along with music and narratives to provide his family members with lasting memories of their history and genealogy. In fact, he has been able to track down information back to 1906 when his grandparents emigrated to the U.S. from Lithuania. He even has information about the ships they came over on and copies of their citizenship papers.**

**Bob certainly still enjoys participating in the Senior Softball League, but his greatest joys are found in his soon-to-be 50-year marriage to Gail and in his relationships with his son, daughter, grandchild and 97-year-old mother. Based upon Mother Cantor’s health and longevity, Bob just might be suiting up for that 2030 softball season! Hope to see you there, Bob!**