



September 2016

**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: BILL STANICK**  
**-Larry Wolfe**

**When you think “California native,” you envision someone from the land of palm trees, beaches and high-priced houses, but Bill Stanick is a different type of California native. You see Bill grew up in a four-room shack (his description!) on the Monongahela River in California, Pennsylvania in the land of steel mills and coal mines. California, PA is thirty-five miles south of Pittsburgh; that’s quite a ways from that “Other California!”**

**Bill graduated from California High where he was a star tennis player for the Trojans, winning three Western Pennsylvania championships. He was then drafted into the Army at the height of the Vietnam War, serving with the 278<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He spent a year in Vietnam at a small camp north of Pleiku Air Base as a radio operator and “jack-of-all-**

trades,” including “riding shotgun” and performing various guard and security functions.

After completing his military service, he returned to his hometown area and worked in the production department of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Company for many years. After the demise of the steel industry, Bill was a State Security Officer for a few years before working as a Private Investigator for two years. He then worked in a paper mill in Roscoe, Pennsylvania before joining the Sony Corporation as a Security Officer.

Bill married his late wife Penny in 1971; they had two sons and a grandson. After retiring in 2007, Bill and Penny moved to Arizona to escape the harsh winters of western Pennsylvania. Sadly, Penny lost a battle with cancer in 2012, so their retirement years together were cut short. Fortunately, a couple years later Bill met his “significant other,” Sally, whom he calls “his Godsend.”

Bill says he was born with a bat and ball in his hands and has loved baseball and softball ever since. He’s been a Pirates fan since he was about four and still roots for them. He played industrial league softball into his late 30s before hanging up his cleats. He was MVP of a state softball championship team in the early 80s and also played two years of semi-pro baseball. Bill dusted off his cleats after he retired and is now playing both tournament ball and in our Sun Lakes League. He’s a sweet-swinging lefty line-drive hitter and versatile fielder who can play both infield and outfield positions.

Besides softball, Bill played basketball and was an avid small game and deer hunter back in PA. But the little round ball with stitches has always been number one with Bill. He even has a “shrine” in his home, which he affectionately calls the “Hall of Shame,” featuring photos of many of his former teammates and teams. He calls baseball and softball “the best games ever invented. They’re team sports, but feature individual battles between the pitcher and batter...the best of both worlds!” The other thing he loves about the sport is the camaraderie among the players. His motto is “once a teammate, always a teammate.” Well said.