



Jack Lander talks about his life of service to charitable and community organizations. (Photo courtesy of Core Photography.)

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AND SUN LAKES SOFTBALL FOUNDER JACK LANDER

By Larry Wolfe

Jack Lander organized the first Sun Lakes softball team in 1985, but this article is not about softball—it's about Jack Lander.

Jack Peter Lander has dedicated his life to organizations that help others. It's people like Jack that make a community more than just a place to live.

After a stint in the Army Air Corps, including over two years in Italy during World War II, Jack returned to civilian life in the Bay Area of California. He briefly co-owned a Union Oil gas station before taking advantage of the GI Bill to pursue an education at San Mateo College and Stanford University. He worked full-time for the YMCA while attending college, and ultimately served three California Y's in various capacities, concluding a sixteen-year career with the Y's as General Director.

In 1964 Jack and his family relocated to El Paso, where he was Executive Director of the United Fund. Four years later they returned to California where Jack served as an Associate Director of the Santa Clara United Fund. He later began a ten-year career with the American Cancer Society, serving as Area Executive Director. After that he was named Western States Area Director for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

In 1984 Jack and his wife, Patti, moved to Arizona where he held the position of Fund Development Director for Planned Parenthood, and then worked for the Hospice of the Valley. They built a home in the then relatively-new area called Sun Lakes in 1985 and have lived in that home ever since. Jack finally retired in 1989, but he didn't stop devoting his time to the community and worthy organizations—he just stopped getting paid!

Jack helped in the development phase of the Sun Lakes Sheriff's Posse and organized the first Block-Watch Program. He served as Fund-Raising Chairman for Neighbors Who Care, was an advisor for two battered women/abused children agencies and was a volunteer with the Hemlock Society, an End-of-Life organization. For two years he was the statewide coordinator for chapter development for that organization. In his spare time, he organized the Sun Lakes Senior Pentathlons competition. He also continued his involvement in Sun Lakes softball, serving as the Monday-play coordinator until early 2007. Wife Patti has the same volunteerism spirit as Jack. She organized Sun Lakes' first Friendly Greeters program and has helped organize other community organizations, including the Sun Lakes Community Theater.

Jack's career choices and volunteer work all have a common theme: helping others. Whether it was raising money for United Way charities, working for and with specific charitable foundations or helping the Hospice of the Valley reach its fund development goals, the result was the same. That result was that the community Jack lived and worked in became a better community for all its residents.

Jack finally "really retired" in 2007, although the vestiges of his organizational skills and volunteerism are "still working" in Sun Lakes and everywhere else that Jack lived and worked.